



# OUR VISION & MISSION

As one of the largest employers in Chicago, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is dedicated to expanding and diversifying its supply chain. The Office of Business Diversity (OBD) supports the District's goals of 30% Minority Owned Business Enterprise (MBE) and 7% Women-owned Business Enterprise (WBE) participation. Through strategic planning, partnerships, data analysis, and research, the OBD ensures these goals are met within the District's budget.

Our mission is to provide Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Businesses with clear, accessible pathways to work with CPS. This newsletter keeps our vendor community informed on key opportunities, events, and resources to help navigate CPS contracting and procurement processes.

With great intentionality our office's aspirations are driven with community stakeholders in mind and the children we serve. These efforts are to stay engaged and create opportunities for economic impact throughout Chicago Public Schools.

**CURRENT BIDS**

*Click each listing to view more information*

RFQ | 2nd Supplemental RFQ for Sustainable Community Schools Initiative

**Close Date: Mar 7, 2PM\***

\*All deadlines are in Central Standard Time (CST)

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For more information and to apply, visit our Bonfire page at:

<https://cps.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=openOpportunities>

# MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we celebrate Black History Month, I am incredibly excited to announce the forthcoming renaming of our office. The Office of Business Diversity will be renamed to **the Office of Business Enterprise Development and Environmental Social Governance, with the acronym "OBED-ESG"**. The naming reflects the work of our office with business enterprise, entrepreneurship, social impact, environmental responsibility, and the governance to ensure we are delivering the highest and best services to the children of Chicago.

We are resilient and diligent with our work to continue expanding our aspirational goals to include certified Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) with spending for products, services, goods, and construction for one of the largest school districts in the United States. Please stay tuned for more information and the rollout of the OBED-ESG.

Warmest Regards,



**TEENA LORIE HARRIS**

Executive Director

The Office of Business Enterprise Development and Environmental Social Governance (OBED-ESG)

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2025

Black History Month, observed every February, is a time to honor and reflect on the profound contributions, achievements, and resilience of Black Americans throughout history. The tradition of Black History Month was actually inspired in Chicago in 1915 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the “Father of Black History”. Originating as “Negro History Week” in 1926, the observance has grown into a month-long celebration that recognizes the rich cultural heritage, and the pivotal role African Americans have played in shaping our society.

In Chicago, Black history is deeply woven into the city's fabric. From the Great Migration, which brought thousands of Black Americans to Chicago in search of better opportunities, to the legacy of iconic figures like Ida B. Wells, Percy Julian, Lorraine Hansberry, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Harold Washington, the first Black mayor of Chicago, the city has long been a beacon of Black culture and activism. Chicago's neighborhoods, such as Bronzeville, known as the “Black Metropolis,” have been hubs of Black excellence, fostering innovation, art, and community spirit.

The month of February provides many opportunities to explore Chicago's rich Black heritage through visiting historic landmarks, museums, and events. It's a time to reflect on the past, acknowledge the ongoing journey towards equality, and inspire future generations to continue the legacy of resilience and achievement.

## CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY EVERY DAY IN CHICAGO

Chicago offers numerous ways to immerse yourself in of vibrant history and culture all throughout the year. Here are some suggestions on activities, landmarks to explore and Black-owned businesses to patronize in our wonderful city!

### Explore Local History

- **DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center:** The nation's oldest independent African American museum, located in Washington Park, boasting more than 15,000 photos, artworks, and artifacts
- **Bronzeville Neighborhood:** “The Black Metropolis” has no shortage of historic Black artifacts, on a solo walking tour you can find the Monument to the Great Northern Migration, the Bronzeville Walk of Fame, the Victory Monument, the Ida B. Wells-Barnett House, and more.
- **Chicago Mahogany Tours:** Discover the history and cultural highlights of Chicago's Bronzeville, Englewood, and North Lawndale communities with Chicago's award-winning urban historian Sherman “Dilla” Thomas all month long.

### Support Black Businesses

One of the best ways to celebrate Black History Month is by patronizing a local Black-owned businesses. Chicago is home to a community of countless Black-owned restaurants, theatres, shops, and beyond.

#### Restaurants & bars

- [Bronzeville Winery](#)
- [Nobody's Darling](#)
- [The Soul Food Lounge](#)
- [Majani Soulful Vegan Cuisine](#)
- [Ina Mae Tavern](#)

#### Cafes, bakeries, and coffee

- [TeaPotBrew Bakery](#)
- [Ain't She Sweet Cafe](#)
- [Sweet Maple Cafe](#)
- [Tubby's Taste Vegan Cookies](#)
- [Momentum Coffee and Coworking](#)

#### Shopping

- [Essential Elements](#)
- [The Silver Room](#)
- [Djenne Collection](#)
- [Wesley's Shoes](#)
- [Vintage Frills](#)

(\*) The background image is the home of the Chicago Defender, “The World's Greatest Weekly”, and then became a daily newspaper for the Black Community.



# CHICAGO BLACK HISTORY MAKERS

Discover the inspiring stories of Chicago's own Black history makers in our special collage feature below. From trailblazing activists to groundbreaking artists, these individuals have left a long-lasting mark on our city, our country and beyond!





# VALENTINE'S DAY 2025

Valentine's Day is a day to celebrate love in all its forms, including the love you have for yourself. Embrace this opportunity to prioritize your needs and enjoy your own company with self-love and self-care. Here are simple and joyful things to do for yourself:

- **Self-love is not selfish.** Taking care of yourself is essential for your overall well-being.
- **Limit social media.** Avoid comparing yourself to others and getting caught up in the pressure to have a "perfect" Valentine's Day.
- **Attitude of Gratitude.** Practice gratitude by listing three good things that you are grateful for.
- **Connect with loved ones.** Spend time with friends or family who make you feel good about yourself.
- **Focus on the positive.** Think about all the things you love about yourself and your life.



## HYGGE ("HOO-GAH"): HOW TO ENJOY WINTER

As winter settles in, finding joy in the season's coziness can help make the cold months more delightful.

**Hygge**, ("hoo-gah") a Danish concept of comfort and contentment, is all about creating a warm and inviting atmosphere. Here are some tips to bring hygge into your life this winter:



### Embrace the Warmth of Hygge This Winter

- **Embrace the cozy.** Wear warm and fuzzy clothing.
- **Cuddle yourself in comfort** with a dreamy blanket and fluffy socks.
- **Scented candles, and soft lighting** to create a warm inviting atmosphere.
- **Brew a yummy tea** or gorgeous hot beverage to drink.
- **Being creative** with writing poetry, reading poetry, reading books, and enjoying picture books.
- **Delight in luxurious rich comfort food.** Eat foods that are roasted, baked, creamy, crunchy, and cheesy.
- **Spend time in nature.** Yes, going outside and taking an "awe" walk. Embrace the beauty of winter outdoors.

Want to learn more about Hygge? Read "The Little Book of Hygge" by Meik Wiking

# COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



**Chef Erick Williams**

Erick Williams, the culinary genius behind **Virtue Restaurant** in Chicago's Hyde Park, is celebrated for his masterful approach to Southern-inspired cuisine. As the Chef and Owner, Williams combines a deep respect for the traditions of **Southern cooking with a modern flair** that has earned him widespread acclaim and recognition in the culinary world. His dedication to hospitality and his community shines through in every dish he creates, making Virtue a beloved dining destination that embodies warmth, comfort, and the spirit of Southern hospitality.

Chef Williams has been recognized as a leader in the culinary arts, earning accolades such as the **James Beard Award for Best Chef: Great Lakes**. His restaurant, Virtue, is more than just a place to dine; it's a space where culture, history, and cuisine converge, creating a rich and inviting atmosphere for all who visit.

Now, we invite you to experience one of his signature dishes: **Southern Macaroni and Cheese**. This recipe, a testament to his roots and expertise capturing the essence of Southern comfort and the excellence that has made him a standout figure in Chicago's vibrant food scene.

(\* This recipe was provided by Chef Williams's online [website](#)

## Ingredients

- 1 lb Elbow macaroni
- 1 cup Whole Milk
- 1 cup Evaporated Milk
- 2 lbs Extra Sharp Cheddar, shredded, about 32 oz
- 4 oz Cream Cheese
- 1 tsp Garlic Powder
- 1 tsp Onion Powder
- 1 tsp Smoked Paprika
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1/2 tsp Black Pepper

## SOUTHERN MACARONI AND CHEESE

### Directions

- Heat oven to 400 degrees. Place a medium saucepan over medium heat and add the evaporated and whole milk (you want to bring the milk to a light simmer). Whisk in the spices: garlic, onion, paprika, salt, and pepper. Once incorporated, whisk in 1 1/2 pounds of the sharp cheddar and 4 ounces cream cheese.
- Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil (it should have a little less salt than seawater). Add macaroni and cook according to package directions until a little under al dente, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a colander and drain.
- Mix all the macaroni with the cheese sauce. Add half the macaroni mixture to a 9-by-13-inch baking dish in an even layer. Sprinkle 4 ounces of cheddar evenly on top. Spread the remaining macaroni mixture on top in an even layer and add the remaining cheddar. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven and bake for 10 minutes allowing the top to melt.
- Remove from the oven. Serve warm.



# FUTURE BID SOLICITATIONS

Here is a preview of upcoming solicitations to look out for from January to March in 2025! Click "and more" at the bottom of each category to view the full list of the Chicago Public Schools' Sourcing Plan.

## RFPS

- Unit Pricing Construction Management Services
- Data Center Services
- Project Portfolio Mgmt (PPM) Tool
- Student Transportation Services (School Bus Services)

**AND MORE**

## CPORS

- Facilities Absence Management Software
- Policy & Board Rules Translation Services

**AND MORE**

## RFQS

- Construction Material Testing and Inspection
- Various Trade Work
- Fleet Purchasing For C-Suite/Drivers Education Vehicles
- EV Bus Charging Station Infrastructure

**AND MORE**