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## New Exterior Improvement Grant Program

The City is pleased to announce the ***Exterior Improvement Grant Program***, an expansion of the Small Business Façade Program. The Small Business Façade Grant Program was established in 2002 to provide both assistance and incentive to commercial property owners and local businesses citywide to improve the look and functionality of their properties and businesses. As of January 1, 2024, the Program title changed from the Small Business Façade Grant Program to the ***Exterior Improvement Grant Program***. The following are key changes:

- The grant maximum increased from \$5,000 to \$20,000 for eligible improvements, although it still requires a 50% cost-share from the applicant.
- Applicants may apply for a maximum Grant of \$20,000 toward eligible improvements annually for up to five consecutive years up to a maximum of \$100,000; grant funding for the same type of eligible expense will not be considered within the same 5-year period.
- The Program will expand from small businesses to allow eligible businesses of all sizes.
- The eligible improvements will expand from only frontage along the right-of-way to eligible improvements visible from the right-of-way.
- The eligible improvements will expand to include purchasing outdoor dining furniture and décor, landscaping, and installing parklets for outdoor

dining.

- The annual Program Budget will increase from \$15,000 to \$100,000 to accommodate the Program expansion.

The **Exterior Improvement Grant Program** is an excellent opportunity to reinvest in your business and property and enhance its appearance and the City's business districts. If your business or property needs a refresh, please visit [Exterior Improvement Grant](#) to learn more about the **Program** and download the **Application**.

If you have questions about the Program, please contact Business Development Manager Carolyn Hersch at 847.926-1027 or via e-mail at [chersch@cityhpil.com](mailto:chersch@cityhpil.com).

## Welcome New Business Pets4Life



Attention pet parents! Please welcome new business [Pets4Life](#), to Downtown Highland Park. [Pets4Life](#) is a unique, full-service pet care center serving all of a pet owner's needs, including a first class veterinary practice, grooming and pet-spa services, vet-recommended health and retail products, and training and other pet education events. Your pets are first priority at [Pets4Life](#)!

661 Central Ave. / 224.434.2745

**Share Your Feedback On The Lot Designs Through January 19!**

# Pick Your Lot Concept!



The City of Highland Park is undergoing a design process to provide a permanent and enriching presence for The Lot. Based on community feedback, The Lakota Group has prepared two new, refined design concepts for public review and input! The City is exploring the potential permanent buildout of a park-like plaza to host festivals and other community events in The Lot. The design concepts and accompanying survey are available to [view and complete online](#) and at City Hall (1707 St. Johns Ave.) **The in-person exhibit will be available at City Hall now through January 19, 2024.**

Information obtained from this round of community engagement will be presented to the public and City Council during the first quarter of 2024.

## Metra Ticketing Change Effective February 1



Starting in February 2024 Metra will be ending sales of tickets at the remaining operating ticket agent offices. Customers will be directed to the Ventra app and

Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) that are currently being installed at Metra stations.

## North Shore Women's Business Networking Night at Soulshine



Are you an entrepreneurial woman looking to network with other North Shore women? [Soulshine Boutique and Healing Sanctuary](#) invites you to a free networking night on **Thursday, January 11, from 7:30-8:30pm**. Soulshine is a co-op of entrepreneurial women who are discovering and exploring their skills, talents, and gifts while growing their businesses. They want to help network and refer people of all professional backgrounds so they too can grow their businesses. Bring your cards and brochures and come connect with other women.

[Click here to RSVP!](#)

459 Central Ave. / 224.805.1390

## Small Business Development Center: Low and No-Cost Business Services



[Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDC) are located throughout the state and provide information, confidential business guidance, training, and other free resources for start-ups and existing small businesses. If you need help with a business plan, marketing, financial bookkeeping, finding grants, starting and growing a business, click [HERE](#). To find a Center near you, click [HERE](#). Please note that many SBDCs do provide Spanish assistance. If you need help finding an SBDC that provides Spanish assistance, please contact Diana Alfaro at [diana.alfaro@illinois.gov](mailto:diana.alfaro@illinois.gov).

## Community Navigator Business Support Program

[Community Navigators](#) is a support program to assist small businesses, particularly minority, women, rural, and veteran-owned businesses. They provide outreach to raise awareness on federal and state programs, and provide 1:1 technical assistance, etc. For more information, please click [HERE](#).

## Hello Alice Small Business Grant Program



Discover small business grants for every stage of your small business adventure. Grant opportunities are recommended based on your unique profile and delivered to your inbox weekly. The search for free money doesn't get any easier! In partnership with the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) and with funding from Etsy and Progressive, [Hello Alice](#) is a free online platform that helps businesses launch and grow through every step of their entrepreneurial journey. The Small Business Growth Fund provides small business owners with knowledge, funding, networking opportunities, and peer-to-peer connections with more than one million small business owners.

[Learn about Hello Alice funding opportunities.](#)

## SCORE Mentoring at the Highland Park Public Library & Free Webinars

**SCORE offers in-person or virtual sessions using phone, email, or video**



All sessions are free and confidential. SCORE mentors are successful business professionals, some retired, some working, from all industries and experiences.

SCORE recently added a new [YouTube channel](#) where all previously recorded webinars can be accessed.

To schedule an in-person or virtual session, visit [score.org/northchicago](https://score.org/northchicago) and register to “Find a Mentor”. You will be asked to provide the nature of your business interest. Please include whether you prefer in-person or virtual mentoring (phone, email, video) and note the **Highland Park Public Library** even if you prefer a virtual session.

**Upcoming January Webinar:**

- **January 18: 2024 Hottest Business Ideas, Trends & Markets**

[Click here for more information](#)

## **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service: January 15**



Join us on Monday, January 15, at the Recreation Center of Highland Park for the 15th annual [Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service](#) to pay tribute to Dr. King’s legacy through service. A drive-through donation event will be held in the Rec Center parking lot from 9 - 10:30 AM, with the program and service projects beginning at 10 AM.

Information regarding organizations participating in the donation drop-off portion **from 9-10:30AM** (including wish lists) is available at [cityhpil.com/mlk](https://cityhpil.com/mlk).

## "Take Care Packages" To Support Local Migrants

# "TAKE CARE"

# PACKAGES

In partnership with the City of Highland Park and HP/HWD Rotary Club, SaLT invites you to participate in their latest initiative – "Take Care" Packages for migrants. Designed to assist migrants, who recently have been arriving via bus from Texas to Highland Park, while they await transfer to the Chicago Processing Center, the "Take Care" Packages will be a tangible expression of our community's care for others.

"Take Care" Packages will include non-perishable food items, hygiene products, first aid kits, blankets, children's school supplies/books/toys/games, and gift cards for local grocery stores or pharmacies. Each "Take Care" Package will be a symbol of our community's commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all.

For more details, a list of requested items, drop off locations, and volunteer opportunities, please contact SaLT at 847.612.3815 or [visit this link](#).

## Contacting the Office of Business Development

This newsletter is produced by the City of Highland Park's Office of Business Development. The City encourages business owners and managers to share information regarding upcoming events, promotions or news for possible inclusion in the City's marketing modalities, including [The Weekender](#), [Enjoy Highland Park](#), and [social media](#). Please send these items to the City via email to: [businessdevelopment@cityhpil.com](mailto:businessdevelopment@cityhpil.com). The City reserves the right to edit and/or filter submissions.

For general business inquiries and assistance, contact Business Development Manager Carolyn Hersch at [chersch@cityhpil.com](mailto:chersch@cityhpil.com) or 847.926.1027.

## Additional Resources

[Available Commercial Space](#)

[U.S. Small Business](#)

[Business Directory](#)

[City of Highland Park Business Development Strategic Plan](#)

[Chamber Of Commerce](#)

[College of Lake County Small Business Development Center](#)

[Hello Alice](#)

[SCORE](#)

[SCORE YouTube Channel](#)

[Administration](#)

[Job Center of Lake County - Business Services](#)

[Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity:](#)

- [Small Business Development Centers of Illinois](#)
- [Community Navigator Business Support Program](#)
- [Grant Opportunities](#)

[Visit Lake County](#)

[Women-in-Business Resources](#)

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