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## Welcome New Business Blue Margarita's Mexican Restaurant



Please welcome Blue Margarita's Mexican Restaurant to Highland Park! Enjoy traditional, *hecho en México* (made in Mexico) cuisine in a colorful and vibrant setting. [Blue Margarita's Mexican Restaurant](#) is open and ready for *comida y buenos momentos* (food and good times)!

## Valentine's Day Marketing Opportunities



Is your business offering any Valentine's Day specials? Our marketing team will be highlighting these promotions on our [Enjoy Highland Park](#) website. If you'd like to be included, please send the details of your promotion to Marketing Coordinator, Diane Larson via email: [dlarson@cityhpil.com](mailto:dlarson@cityhpil.com).

## New Exterior Improvement Grant Program

The City is pleased to announce the ***Exterior Improvement Grant Program***, to provide both assistance and incentive to commercial property owners and sales-tax-generating local businesses citywide to improve the look and functionality of their properties and businesses. The following are key features of the program:

- 50/50 cost share between the applicant and the City.
- 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 eligible improvements must be visible from the right-of-way

The annual Program Budget is \$100,000 and available on a first-come first-served basis.

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).

## 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](#).

## Made in Illinois Manufacturing Grant Program

Governor JB Pritzker, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center launched \$1 million in funding for the Made in Illinois Grant Program. The Made in Illinois program provides up to \$50,000 in matching grant funding to small and mid-sized Illinois manufacturers.

Applications are open through March 31, 2024, and manufacturers are encouraged to explore the benefits offered by the Made in Illinois Grant Program by visiting [www.imec.org/madeinillinois](http://www.imec.org/madeinillinois).

## 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.](#)

## 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).

## 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.

## Art In Bloom: A Student Art Walk Experience



On behalf of the 112 Education Foundation, the District 112 Art Teachers and the PTO President's Council, your business is invited to participate in the first "Art in Bloom" Student Art Walk Experience. Spring forward with the talented emerging artists in District 112! By displaying students' artwork in your windows, you can help harness senses of creativity and pride for our town's youth. If you would like to participate in this community initiative, please email [danajweiss@gmail.com](mailto:danajweiss@gmail.com) by February 14.

## "Take Care Packages" To Support Newly-arrived Migrants

# "TAKE CARE" PACKAGES

Highland Park student volunteers with SaLT (Service and Learning Together) are working to collect donations for ["Take Care" packages](#) for newly-arrived migrants while they await transfer to the Chicago Processing Center. SaLT volunteers are partnering with the City of Highland Park and the Rotary Club of Highland Park/Highwood to collect donations that will be used to create these thoughtful "Take Care" packages.

Donations may be dropped off at City Hall (1707 St. Johns Ave.) and [other convenient locations](#) throughout Highland Park, including First Bank of Highland Park and Highland Park Bank & Trust.

# 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](#)

[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](#)

[U.S. Small Business 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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