



CHICAGO REGIONAL GROWTH CORPORATION

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Business and Government Leaders Launch Chicago Regional Growth Corporation

Unprecedented new organization brings together leaders from seven counties, the City of Chicago and the business community to advance economic development in northeastern Illinois

(CHICAGO, IL - January 18, 2018) Distinguished business and government leaders today launched Chicago Regional Growth Corporation (CRGC), a regional economic development organization that drives collaboration among public and private partners in order to generate inclusive growth and prosperity across northeastern Illinois.

CRGC will provide a platform for collaboration and prioritize, align and manage the region's economic development initiatives, unifying programming and the region's identity. CRGC includes leadership from Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties and the City of Chicago, as well as industry leaders from manufacturing, food processing, finance and higher education. The new organization will strengthen the regional economy and better connect resources to generate economic opportunity and prosperity.

"The economic growth of cities, from neighborhoods to suburbs is highly interdependent," said CRGC founding Executive Director Tom Hulseman. "We have a huge opportunity to capitalize on our resources and bring all of the players to the table to set an economic development agenda that works for the entire region, with a strong emphasis on inclusive economic growth throughout all of CRGC's programs and initiatives."

CRGC will put the Chicago region at the forefront of the economic development field, connecting the region's assets and building from within. The organization will add capacity to the economic development efforts of individual organizations with new programs and resources, which will make the region more efficient and reduce intra-regional competition.

"In 2013, I brought our neighboring county leaders together to explore how we could better combine resources and collaborate to advance the Chicago region's economy," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "This regional working group has developed programs and initiatives that have already benefitted residents throughout the region. By formally creating CRGC, we are providing a single voice for the region that will benefit businesses and residents and grow the economy throughout northeastern Illinois."

Already, the working group that has become CRGC collaborated on initiatives including coordinating a regional response to Amazon's search for an HQ2, bringing together leaders from all seven counties to nominate sites and combine resources.

Once work begins this month, CRGC will take on a variety of initiatives, facilitating regional collaboration including:

- Leading programs to increase exports, including the successful Metro Chicago Exports grant program, pitch competitions and ExporTech curriculum.
- Developing new programs to attract foreign investment to the region and build stronger relationships with existing foreign-owned enterprises in northeastern Illinois.
- Convening regionally important industry clusters to discuss common issues and identify new opportunities for growth, such as Chicago Metro Metals Consortium, which strengthens the fabricated metal and machinery sectors in the Chicago region.
- Coordinating regional networks to improve systems, such as the group's effort to enhance the region's freight transportation system by standardizing permitting and other initiatives.
- Growing small companies in the region's economically distressed communities to create high-quality, wealth-building jobs for residents.

CRGC builds on the Global Cities Initiative, a joint project of the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase, that aims to strengthen the international economic connections and competitiveness of city-regions. GCI participants develop and implement strategies that boost global trade and investment, forge partnerships among U.S. and international metropolitan areas, share promising practices, jointly solve problems, and advance supportive public policy changes.

"CRGC puts Chicago at the vanguard of regional economic development, where regional collaboration to build on shared global assets will lead to growth and inclusion," said Amy Liu, vice president and director, Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings.

JPMorgan Chase and CMAP are founding supporters of CRGC, along with each county and the City of Chicago.

CRGC will add value and complement the work of other economic development organizations, resulting in a cycle of investment, training, employment and wage growth and a strong, more prosperous economy. The founding board, announced today, includes:

- Andrez Beltran, Economic Development Coordinator Kendall County
- John Carpenter, President & CEO, Choose DuPage
- Nim Chinniah, Executive Vice President, Northwestern University
- Nelda Connors, Chairman & CEO, Pine Grove Holdings
- Kevin Considine, President & CEO, Lake County Partners
- Steve Davis, President & Chairman, The Will Group
- John Greuling, President & CEO, Will County Center for Economic Development
- Mike Jasso, Chief, Cook County Bureau of Economic Development
- Michael Moskow, Vice Chairman & Distinguished Fellow, Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- Aneesa Muthana, President, Pioneer Services
- Alberto Paracchini, President & CEO, Byline Bank
- Ann Rondeau, President, College of DuPage
- Jim Roof, President, Joliet Banking Center First Midwest Bank
- Michael Skala, County Board Member, McHenry County
- Joe Slawek, Chairman, FONA International

- Mark VanKerkhoff, Director, Kane County Development and Community Services
- Andrea Zopp, President, World Business Chicago

The executive leadership from the seven counties and City of Chicago will advise *ex officio* the board and executive director:

- Dan Cronin, Chairman, DuPage County
- Rahm Emanuel, Mayor, City of Chicago
- Jack Franks, Chairman, McHenry County
- Scott Gryder, Chairman, Kendall County
- Chris Lauzen, Chairman, Kane County Board
- Aaron Lawlor, Chairman, Lake County
- Toni Preckwinkle, President, Cook County
- Larry Walsh, Executive, Will County

For more information visit ChicagoRegionalGrowth.com.

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NOTE: Additional quotes available in attached addendum.

Chicago Regional Growth Corporation, Addendum to Press Release 1-18-18

Quotes from Partner Organizations

CMAP (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning)

"Metropolitan Chicago's economy benefits from significant specializations and a large, diverse, and well-educated workforce—but the region has the opportunity to better leverage these strengths for broader economic success," said Joseph C. Szabo, executive director, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. "CMAP is pleased to see regional leaders take the important step of creating the Chicago Regional Growth Corporation (CRGC), which will have a laser-like focus on the drivers of regional prosperity, and hone in on strategies to grow the region's economy."

Cook County

"In 2013, I brought our neighboring county leaders together to explore how we could better combine resources and collaborate to advance the Chicago region's economy," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "This regional working group has developed programs and initiatives that have already benefited residents throughout the region. By formally creating CRGC, we are providing a single voice for the region that will benefit businesses and residents and grow the economy throughout northeastern Illinois."

DuPage County

"It's refreshing to be a part of local government efforts to collaborate, rather than trying to compete with one another. Together, we know we can more effectively leverage the assets of our region than we can working alone," said DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin. "We are eager to continue to foster young businesses and grow economic opportunities that benefit us all."

Kane County

"One big gap for Kane County, our communities and the region is the absence of regional marketing and promotion of the many assets that might be located in one county, but benefit all," said Kane County Board Chairman Chris Lauzen. "We believe that all 275 municipalities in our counties will benefit by being able to be found in the regional context that CRGC will provide."

Lake County

"This collaborative effort gives us the ability to capitalize on tremendous strengths and leverage complementary assets across the region, to drive the entire economy forward," said Lake County Board Chairman Aaron Lawlor.

McHenry County

“If the cooperation that was forged in the effort to pitch the Chicago region to Amazon for its second headquarters showed us anything, it’s that we can take job creation and economic development to a new level – a level that benefits everybody – if we work together,” said McHenry County Board Chairman Jack Franks. “The region already boasts a world-class infrastructure and a world-class workforce. Creating the Chicago Regional Growth Corporation will forge government and the private sector into a powerful, unified voice to attract job creators and investment.”

Will County

“This first of its kind economic development collaboration in the Chicago region is very significant and will pay dividends to our communities for many years,” said Jim Roof, President, Joliet Banking Center First Midwest Bank and CRGC board member from Will County.

World Business Chicago

“World Business Chicago supports the efforts of the Chicago Regional Growth Corporation to drive collaboration in economic development, increasing the competitiveness of the entire northeastern Illinois region on a global scale,” said Andrea Zopp, president and CEO of World Business Chicago. “Collaboration is essential for inclusive growth – a concept core to our mission at World Business Chicago – and happens best when public and private leaders work together to create jobs, support businesses and connect people with the resources they need to grow and succeed.”