NOF Submittable.com Application Walkthrough

NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY FUND

ONLINE TOOLKITS

How do I apply for a NOF grant?

All applications must be completed through DPD's online platform on Submittable.com. Create an account with an email address you will have reliable access to. If you have applied for City grants in the past, you can use the same account for your NOF application.

This toolkit will walk you through the process of creating your NOF grant application on Submittable.com

When you click the link to the application, you will be taken to the Submittable.com page pictured here:
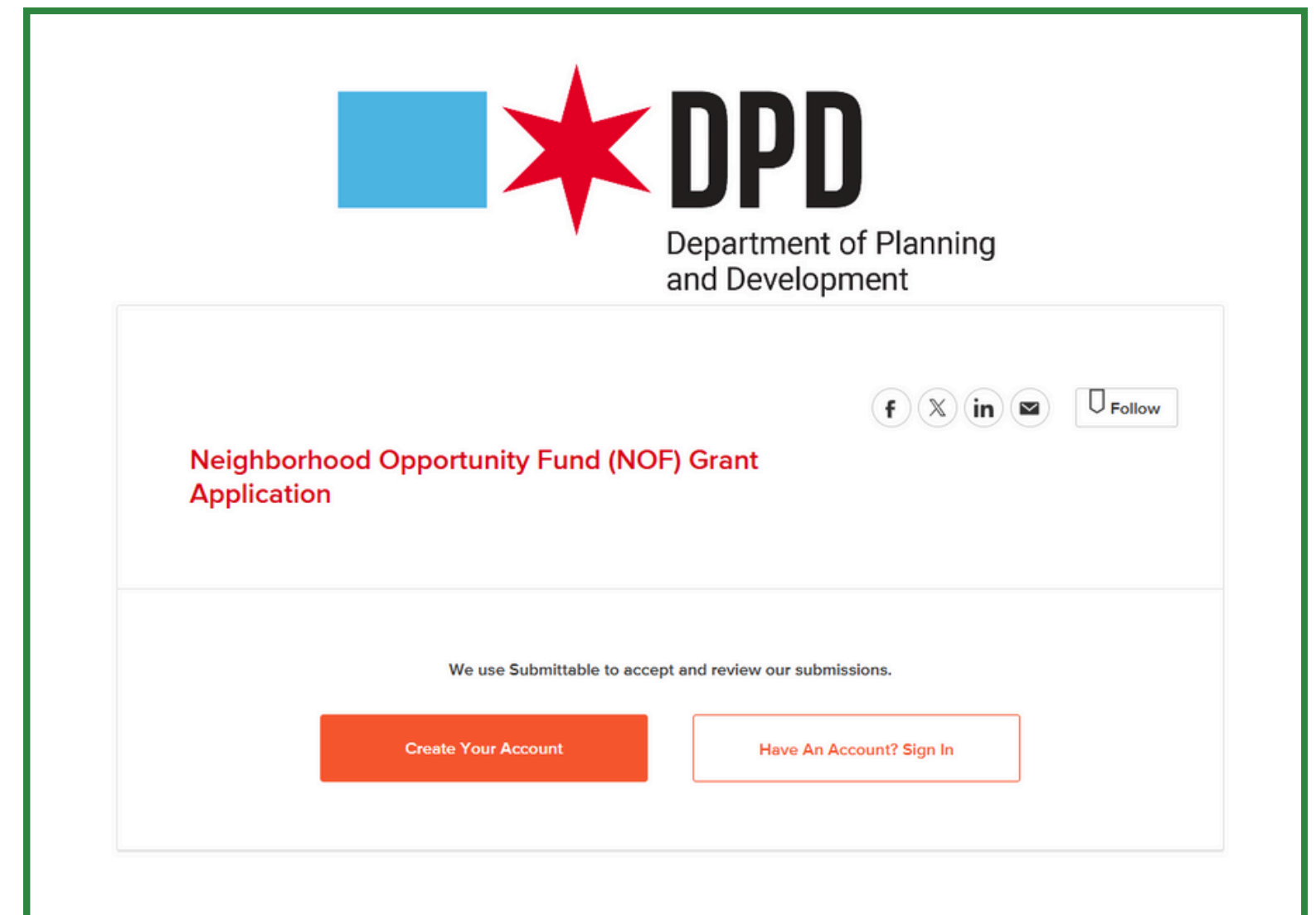
What you will need before beginning:

- **Proof of site control of the project property** in the form of a deed, lease [min. five years], or executed purchase and sale agreement

- **At lease one (1) construction bid** from a general contractor and/or subcontractor detailing your project's work

- **Documentation of whatever funding you have for the project** such as bank statements or loan agreements/term sheets

- **A sources and uses table** for your anticipated costs and expenses

If you are applying as an existing business, you will also need:

- **Last year's tax return for your business;** please DO NOT upload your personal tax return

If you are applying as a start-up, you will also need:

- **A business plan** describing the details of your business and its operative functions; business plans for start-ups should include financial projections and market analyses

You will have the option to submit many kinds of materials to strengthen your application as you see fit, but the documents above are required. Failure to include them will result in the automatic disqualification of your application.

The application begins with brief background information on the NOF program, disclaimers, and preliminary applicant information.

![DPD | NOF Neighborhood Opportunity Fund logo]

Application Awareness

You will need to confirm the following:

✓ **You understand the NOF grant money can only be accessed through either a reimbursement or escrow agreement**

Grant funds can only be accessed through reimbursement or an escrow agreement for work completed after receiving a NOF grant contract, called the Conditional Award Letter (CAL).

✓ **You have attended or watched a recording of at least one NOF Information Session**

If you have not attended or watched a NOF information session, or if you would like to review it, recordings of past sessions and the presentation slides are available at **chicago.gov/NOF**.

✓ **You not currently a City of Chicago Employee**

In adherence with conflict of interest policies, City of Chicago employees cannot receive the NOF grant.

✓ **You have not received grant funds exceeding $250,000 from the City of Chicago for the project property within the last three years**

If a grantee has already received $250,000 in Small Business Development Bureau (SBD) grants for a project property, they must wait three years after project completion (i.e. final payment disbursement) to receive additional SBD funding for that property.

This section covers:

- **The project site's address,** which must be located within the qualified investment area (QIA) to be eligible for the NOF grant

- **The project property's identification number(s) (PIN), if applicable,** which can be identified using the City of Chicago's Zoning and Land Use Map

- **The project site's vacant/occupied status as well as details on its condition and liabilities;** click on the following links to check property taxes, property records, and building code violations

- **Your site control type and where you will upload your proof of site control document(s)**

Section I: Project Property Information

This section covers:

✓ **The sector(s) to which your business or organization belongs**

✓ **A brief description (100 words maximum) of your business or organization**; if this section is not sufficient, you may provide attachments with additional information, such as a business plan or strategic plan, in the Document Upload section of the application

✓ **A description (250 words maximum) of how your project aligns with the NOF program mission** as it is outlined in the NOF program manual

✓ **Whether you are applying as an existing business/organization or as a start-up**

- *Existing businesses/organizations will be asked when it was founded and to provide its most recent tax return*
- *Start-ups are required to upload a detailed business plan*

✓ **Your intended uses for the NOF grant,** meaning, what kind of work the grant funds will be put toward

Section II: Business and Project Description

Section III: Project Budget and Finances

This section covers:

- **The dollar amount of your anticipated total project cost,** which should match what is quoted in your bid(s)

- **Your construction bid(s),** which will be uploaded here; if applicable, architect and project management bids can be uploaded in Section IV

- **Documentation that substantiates the sources of funds being used to finance the project,** meaning, any documents that show how much financing for your project you have ready, and what kind of financing it is
  - *More information on this can be found in the Sources of Funds Documentation Online Toolkit at somercor.com/NOF*

- **A description of how your business or organization would generate revenue following the completion of your NOF project**, specifically at the project site

- **Your anticipated sources and uses table**; be aware that there is a fillable template available for your convenience, but you may upload a customized sources and uses table in the Document Upload section
  - *Detailed instructions on how to use the fillable template and tips on how to create an alternative are available in the Anticipated Sources and Uses Table Online Toolkit at somercor.com/NOF*

Section IV: Program Information, and Section V: Demographic Information

Note: your responses in Sections IV and V will not affect your application

DPD | NOF
Neighborhood Opportunity Fund

Section IV: Program Information

This section covers:

- **Your past involvement with the NOF program**

- **Your involvement with any other grant programs;** *be aware that, while you may apply to multiple Small Business Development Bureau (SBD) grant programs at the same time, you may only accept one for a single project*

- **If you are planning to work with an architect;** if you answer yes, you will be asked to upload at least one architectural bid

- **If you are planning to work with a project manager;** if you answer yes, you will be asked to upload at least one project management bid

Section V: Demographic Information

This section requests the following self-identified demographic information:

- **Gender**

- **Race and ethnicity**

- **Preferred language**

- **Veteran identification**

- **Disability identification**

- **LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, or asexual) identification**

Section IV: Program & Section V: Demographic

Optional Documents Upload

If there are any additional materials you would like to include with your application, they can be uploaded at this point

Optional Documents Include:

- Architectural drawings/renderings

- Building or site photos

- **Business and strategic plans** *(note: mandatory for start-ups, optional for existing businesses)*

- Letters of support from the community and/or local officials

- Organizational and ownership chart

- Any auxiliary materials not listed here that you feel would strengthen your application!

The following slides show examples of the listed materials

Architectural Drawings/Renderings

- **Architectural drawings** are technical illustrations of a space upon which a project's construction is based. Drawings typically include precise details, such as measurements and placements of permanent fixtures.

- **Architectural renderings** show a concept of how the finished space will look. They are less technical than architectural drawings.

- **The main difference between them** is that architectural drawings are technical while renderings are visualizations.
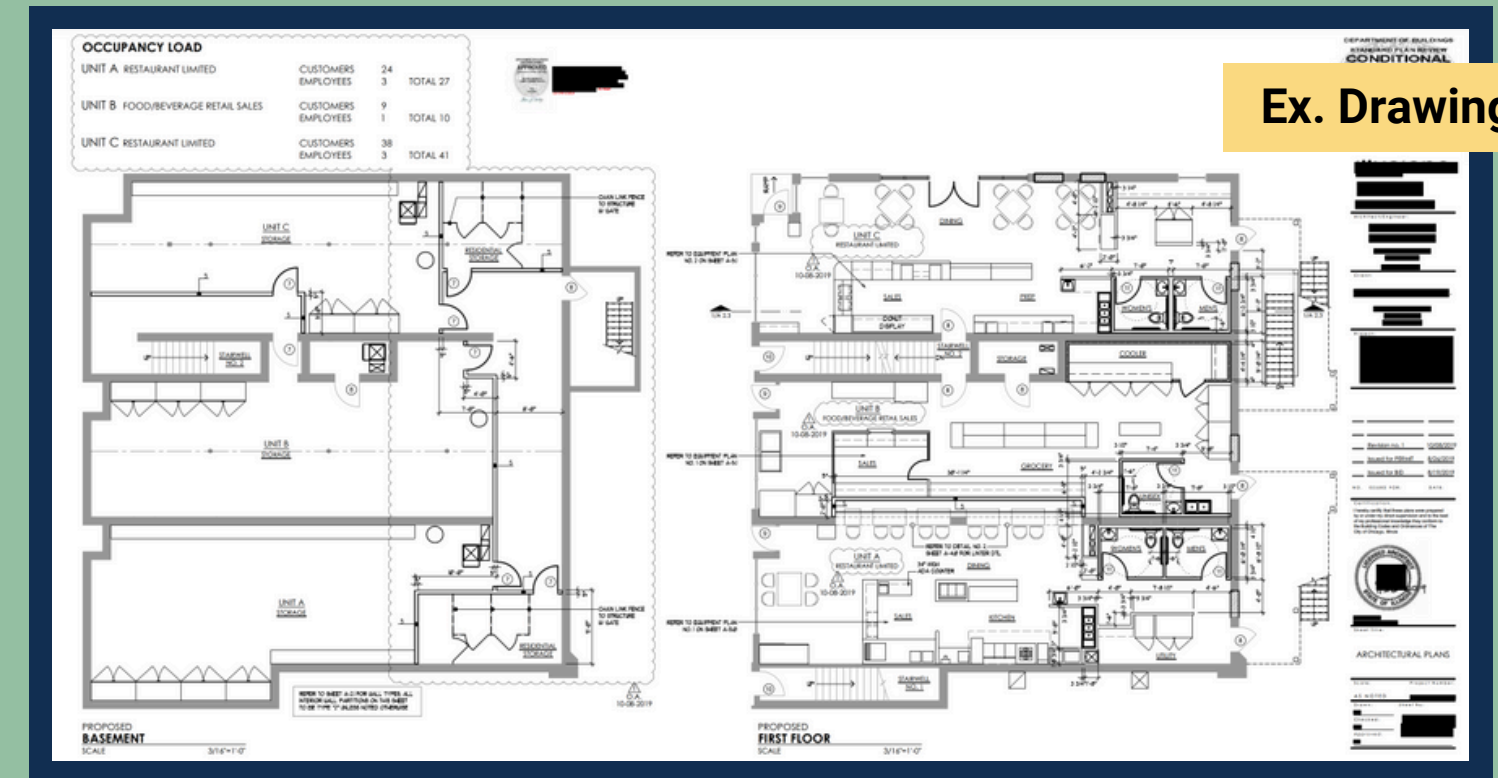
Ex. Drawing

Ex. Rendering

Optional Documents

Building and/or Site Photos

- **Construction site photos** are crucial in documenting work progress and completion. If you are selected into the NOF program, you or your project manager will be required to send regular update photos of your project.

- You may choose to include site photos with your NOF application to give an idea of your project's starting point and illustrate improvements that could be made with the NOF grant.

  - For example: if your site was damaged in a fire, you may want to send photos of the damage to illustrate what could be fixed with the NOF grant.

Optional Documents

Business and/or Strategic Plans

Existing businesses are encouraged to submit as many materials as possible; *start-up businesses are required to submit both a business plan and a strategic plan with their NOF application*.

- **A business plan** describes the details of your business or organization and its operative functions in general

- **A strategic plan** outlines the projection of your business or organization over the next five years and your plan to achieve those goals. It typically is longer and more detailed than a business plan.

Need assistance creating your business or strategic plan? Please reach out to our community partners!

DPD | NOF
Neighborhood Opportunity Fund

Ex. Strategic Plan Content

Ex. Business Plan Content

Optional Documents

Letters of Support from the Community and/or Local Officials

Including letters of support strengthens your application by showing you are connected with the wants and needs of area in which your project is located.

- **Letters from the community** provide firsthand accounts of how your project would impact the people living and/or working there.

- **Letters from local officials,** such as alderpeople or even officials who live in the area, indicate that your project is compatible with the broader goals of the City of Chicago.
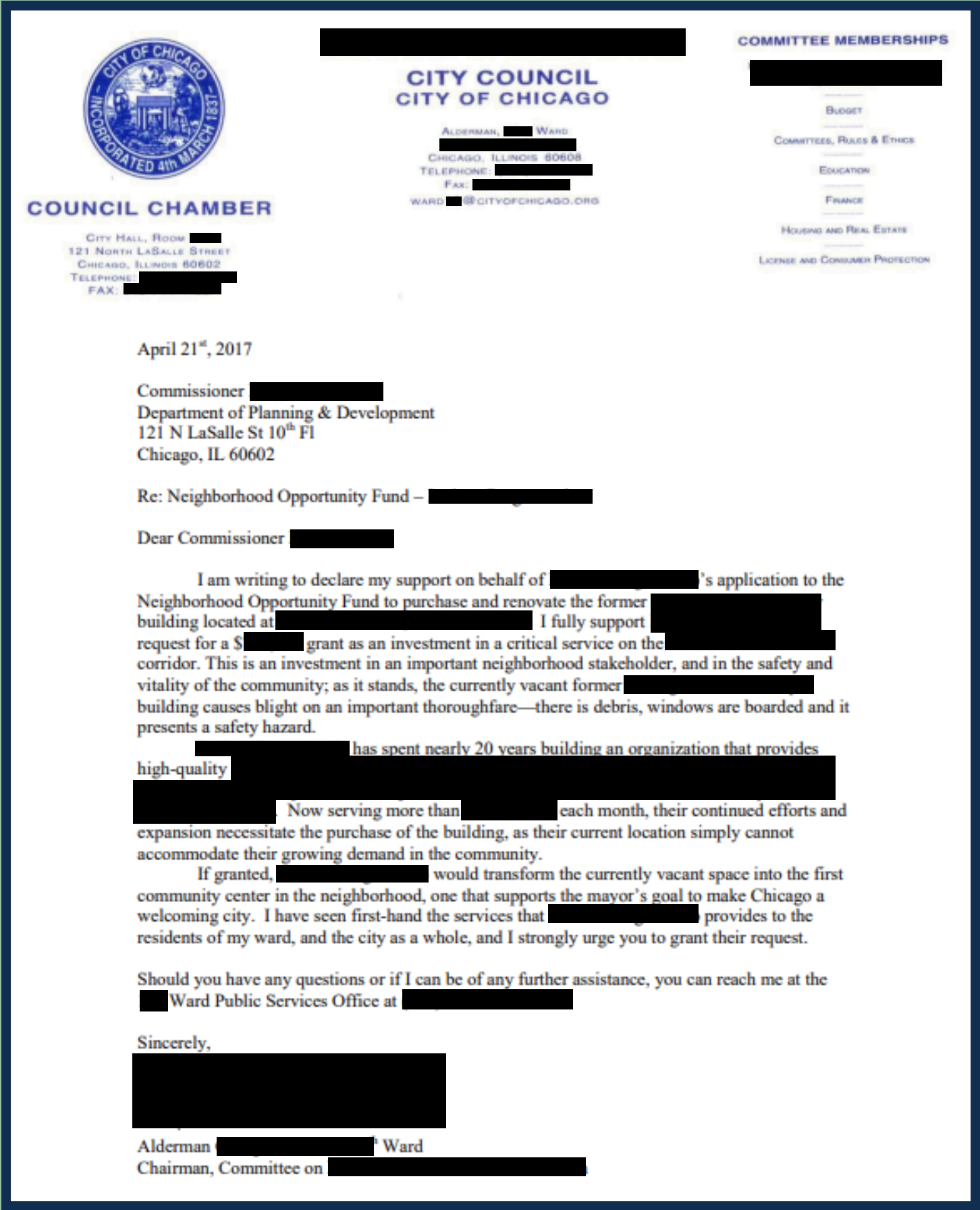

Ex. Local Official Letter

Optional Documents

DPD | NOF
Neighborhood Opportunity Fund

Organizational and Ownership Chart

- **An organizational and ownership chart** is a diagram of a business or organization's structure, illustrating the hierarchy of ownership and power dynamics within the business or organization.

- There is no set format for an organizational chart, and you can create it to best fit your organization's structure.

  - However, at very least it should include the name(s) of any owner(s), the percentage of shares they hold, and all applicable titles of roles or positions
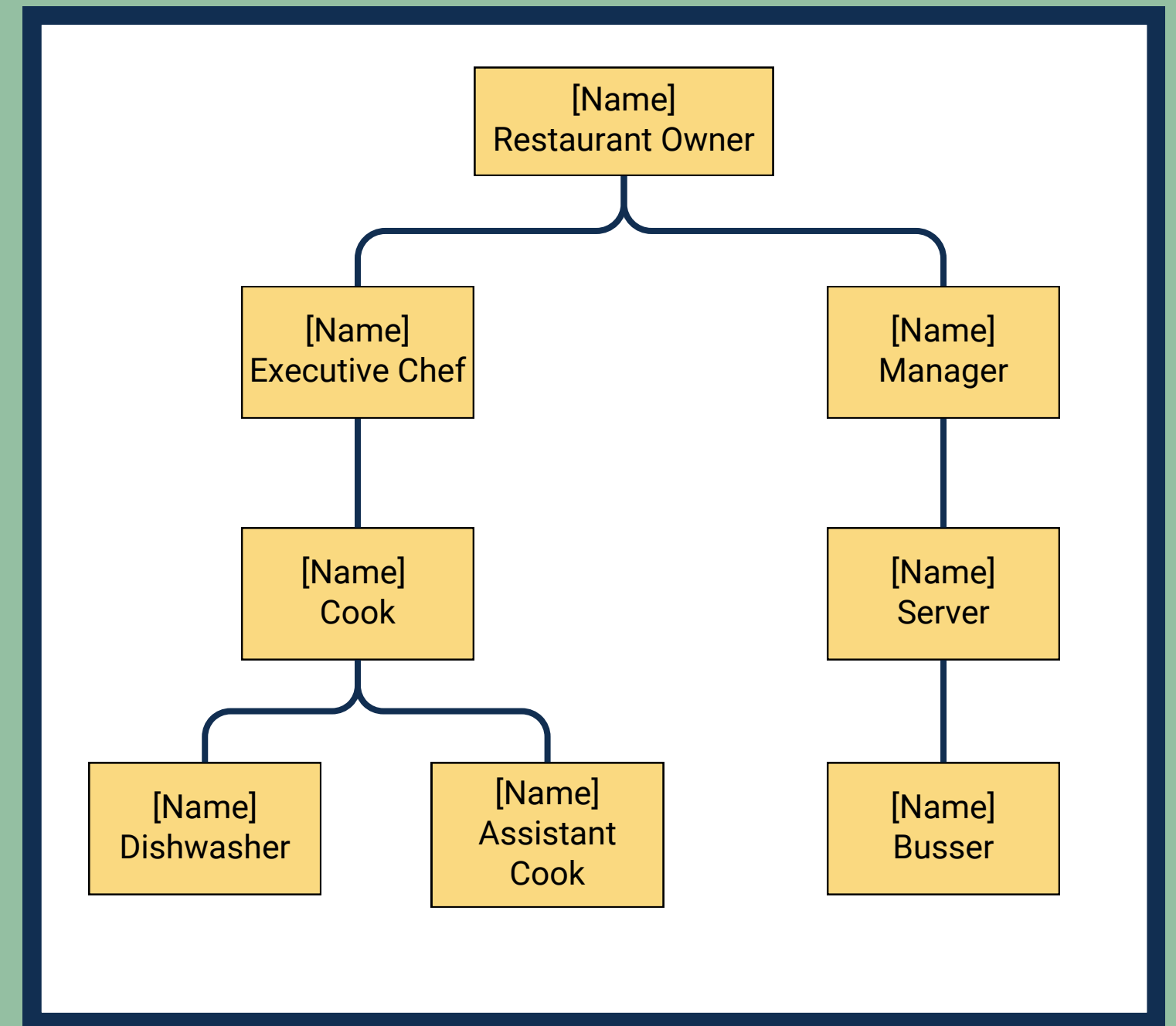
Community Partners

If you need any assistance with putting together your NOF application, please feel encouraged to reach out to any of our community partners.

Find the full list and contact information at chicago.gov/NOF under 'Resources.'

![DPD | NOF — Neighborhood Opportunity Fund]

Thank you!

If you still cannot find the answers you're looking for, don't hesitate to contact us at *NOF@cityofchicago.org*