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New WPB Ambassador program launches in Wicker Park and Bucktown, incentivizing local businesses to be good neighbors

WPB Special Service Area #33 offering rebates to businesses for sending employees on scheduled neighborhood walks

CHICAGO (March 21, 2018)—It pays to be a good Samaritan in Wicker Park and Bucktown. The new [WPB Ambassador](#) program launching next month, funded by **Wicker Park Bucktown Special Service Area #33** (WPB SSA #33), financially incentivizes the district's businesses to send staff on scheduled weekly walks of the neighborhoods – engaging with pedestrians, providing neighborhood hospitality services and calling in any observed issues to 311 or 911 as appropriate.

Unlike other ambassador programs in Chicago and across the nation, the participating WPB Ambassadors will not be full-time private employees. Instead, WPB SSA #33 property owners will authorize their own staff (or residents) to participate in the neighborhood walks, receiving a rebate directly for their participation (up to \$3,315 per property annually). The program financially incentivizes businesses within WPB SSA #33 to be good neighbors, modeling positive behaviors throughout Wicker Park and Bucktown that include:

- Actively engaging with pedestrians and WPB SSA #33 businesses in a welcoming manner
- Identifying and assessing beautification and cleanliness issues (such as overflowing trash cans or graffiti tags) and reporting to 311
- Providing directions, answering neighborhood-related questions and sharing knowledge of Wicker Park and Bucktown attractions and community resources
- Identifying potential threats to neighborhood safety and in cases of emergency, reporting immediately to 911 without directly intervening

Funds for the new WPB Ambassador program will come from an existing \$50,000 safety program allocation in the WPB SSA #33 budget, which was approved in collaboration with 1st Ward Alderman Joe Moreno, 2nd Ward Alderman Brian Hopkins and 32nd Ward Alderman Scott Waguespack last year.

“To our knowledge, we’re the first business improvement district in the country to pilot this sort of ‘good Samaritan’ program with our local businesses,” says WPB SSA #33 Commission Chair **Brent**

Norsman. “This idea came from several local business owners who were interested in becoming active stewards of the neighborhood experience, which is very exciting to us. The WPB Ambassador program will become an integral part of our existing community engagement, beautification and safety initiatives.”

The new WPB Ambassador rebate is for eligible properties within [WPB SSA #33](#), which is comprised of major Wicker Park and Bucktown business corridors along Ashland, Damen, North, Milwaukee and Western Avenues and Division Street.

"To me, the WPB Ambassador program is identical to the way residents take care of their own neighborhoods: they monitor their own streets and communicate with each other to create a safer environment, block by block. As business owners, we aim to accomplish the same goal in Wicker Park and Bucktown," says WPB SSA #33 business owner **Robert Gomez** (Subterranean).

The **Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce** serves as a cornerstone of the Wicker Park and Bucktown commercial districts, advancing the financial goals of neighborhood businesses through the creation of a dynamic economic climate, increasing the neighborhood's visibility and viability, and encouraging profitable relationships within the community. The Chamber administers WPB Special Service Area (SSA) #33, guided by a Commission of SSA taxpayers approved by 1st Ward Alderman Joe Moreno, 2nd Ward Alderman Brian Hopkins and 32nd Ward Alderman Scott Waguespack. For more information, visit www.wickerparkbucktown.org.

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