



A rendering of the proposed interior of the new GROW/PROGRESANDO training center at 7056 N. Clark Street.

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Rogers Park Business Alliance expands entrepreneurial training program to include Spanish-language business education

GROW/PROGRESANDO education center to open next month at 7056 N. Clark Street

Rebeca Fernández appointed new Bilingual Program Manager

CHICAGO (January 28, 2020)—The nonprofit **Rogers Park Business Alliance** (RPBA) is expanding its GROW entrepreneurial training program this year to include Spanish-language business education, and will open a new [GROW/PROGRESANDO](#) storefront location at 7056 N. Clark Street next month to conduct the trainings moving forward.

Rebeca Fernández has been named Bilingual Program Manager for the new Spanish-language programming, which kicks off with a one-day intensive tomorrow, Wednesday, Jan. 29, held at the RPBA offices (1448 W. Morse Avenue). Additional GROW/PROGRESANDO courses in English and Spanish follow later this year at the new Clark Street location and are open to small businesses and independent entrepreneurs from Rogers Park and across Chicagoland. In addition to one-day intensives and a four-session Hit the Ground Running program in the fall, the full GROW/PROGRESANDO program of ten weekly sessions kicks off in April 2020.

GROW/PROGRESANDO is the only comprehensive small business training program of its kind on the north side of Chicago. For more information, visit www.grow-progresando.org.

RPBA received a \$114,000 grant from the Coleman Foundation to expand its GROW training to include Spanish-language education and renovate the 7056 N. Clark Street storefront, better serving the diverse Rogers Park neighborhood—where nearly a quarter of residents identify as Latinx. RPBA is currently renovating the new 1,970-square-foot education center, which will be completed by the end of February. A grand opening for the community is planned for Thursday, Feb. 27 from 10-11 a.m., including refreshments from past GROW participants, information on GROW/PROGRESANDO programs and remarks from RPBA Executive Director Sandi Price.

“With our new storefront education center on Clark Street and GROW/PROGRESANDO courses in English and Spanish, we look forward to serving a diverse range of small business owners and entrepreneurs,” said RPBA Executive Director **Sandi Price**. “In the Rogers Park community, more than seventy percent of businesses are small start-ups. Our entrepreneurial training programs fill a great need in the neighborhood and we also know there are current and future small business owners across Chicago that will benefit from this expansion.”

The location of the new GROW/PROGRESANDO education center on North Clark Street aligns with RPBA’s **Vision Clark Street Master Plan**, a multi-year strategic plan for the Clark Street business corridor spanning from Devon Avenue to Howard Street. The plan includes placemaking efforts such as storefront improvements, new landscaping and the addition of vibrant public art.

“The GROW/PROGRESANDO program empowers Latinx entrepreneurs by overcoming language and other access barriers,” said RPBA Bilingual Program Manager **Rebeca Fernández**. “I am excited to create an environment where members of this community can achieve their entrepreneurial dreams and to provide a welcoming space for trainings in our new education center on Clark Street.”

Rebeca Fernández joined Rogers Park Business Alliance in 2019 as the bilingual program manager of the GROW/PROGRESANDO entrepreneurial training program. She previously worked as an Entrepreneurial Program Advocate with Mujeres Latinas en Acción in Pilsen and is committed to supporting the empowerment of the Latinx community in Chicago. Fernández is also a trained architect from Mexico City and worked for more than nine years on her own practice in her native city. She earned her master’s degree in Historic Preservation at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and conducted a full survey of exterior murals in Pilsen and Little Village for the Landmarks Designation and Survey program with the City of Chicago. She is the owner of Rework Heritage, LLC and is currently working on her book *For the Memory of Pilsen: Historic Mexican Murals in Pilsen-La Villita*.

About the GROW/PROGRESANDO entrepreneurial training program

Rogers Park Business Alliance launched its GROW entrepreneurial training program in 2013 and expanded to GROW/PROGRESANDO in 2020, offering both English- and Spanish-language courses. Its curriculum is highly interactive and includes basic business knowledge, specialty subject education, and technical and specialty assistance consultations. GROW/PROGRESANDO is led by RPBA’s staff who, along with leading business, education, marketing and legal experts, deliver a comprehensive program with the goal of each participant developing a personalized, comprehensive and implementable business plan. For more information, visit www.grow-progresando.org.

About Rogers Park Business Alliance

Rogers Park Business Alliance (RPBA) is a nonprofit organization that has served Chicago’s diverse Rogers Park neighborhood for more than 25 years. RPBA works to cultivate and sustain a thriving economic environment in Rogers Park, serving businesses and residents with a variety of public events and business initiatives. RPBA programs include the GROW/PROGRESANDO entrepreneurial training program, annual Best of Rogers Park awards, Taste of Clark Street festival and the Glenwood Sunday Market farmers market. For more information, visit RPBA.org.