

Gov. Pritzker Celebrates Grand Opening Of Brown Sugar Bakery's Manufacturing Facility In Chicago

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CHICAGO — Governor JB Pritzker and Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton joined local and state leaders today to celebrate the grand opening and ribbon cutting of Brown Sugar Bakery's manufacturing facility. The 10,000 square-foot facility will enable large scale production on Chicago's South Side while creating jobs for the local community.

“One of the most important things I get to do as governor is help entrepreneurs start new businesses, and help small businesses become big ones. That’s the best way to create jobs and grow the economy,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “I couldn’t be prouder of the Brown Sugar Bakery team as they continue to uplift the community, making a difference in so many people’s lives while bringing smiles to the faces of people everywhere.”

Brown Sugar Bakery received \$500,000 in grant funding from the state’s Minority-Owned Business Capital and Infrastructure Program in 2020 to support the expansion, allowing the business to create jobs, increase revenues, and revitalize properties in underserved communities.

"Today marks an exciting milestone for Stephanie Hart and Black women everywhere, making her the only Black woman-owned chocolate manufacturer in the United States! This is Black HERStory in action," said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "I'm so excited for Brown Sugar Bakery’s success as they take this next step in their journey."

The State also awarded the bakery a grant from the Back to Business (B2B) Restaurants program designed to offset losses and support job retention in one of the industries hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, Brown Sugar Bakery was featured in the Illinois Office of Tourism’s [Illinois Made](#) campaign to promote the bakery’s “dangerously delicious” confections and encourage patronage from visitors near and far.

“The State of Illinois’ commitment to supporting businesses owned by people of color and other underrepresented groups goes beyond grant funding programs – DCEO provides a number of resources, opportunities and support to help small businesses thrive in a diverse business ecosystem,” said Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity Director Kristin Richards. “Bolstered by state funding and support, Brown Sugar Bakery and other locally-owned neighborhood favorites are expanding their roots in Illinois – the best place to live, work and do business.”

Brown Sugar Bakery’s decision to expand their operations builds upon Illinois’ global reputation as a leader in the food processing industry. From Eli’s Cheesecake’s first Chicago expansion in 30 years and UPSIDE Foods’ first commercial-scale cultivated meat production plant in Glenview, to Saline River Farms’ new state-of-the-art USDA meat processing facility, and Ferrero’s Bloomington expansion and first North American R&D lab, Illinois continues to expand its reach in the food production and confection industries.

Brown Sugar Bakery was established in 2002 as a Southern-inspired bakery with hand-crafted recipes passed down for generations. Serving cakes, cobblers, pies, cupcakes,

chocolates, and more, the bakery “weaves a tale of traditions and innovation.” The bakery’s roots are in Chicago’s Grand Crossing neighborhood, and it has consistently been an influential community presence across the South Side of the city. Brown Sugar Bakery’s nationwide shipping options will soon expand due to its new manufacturing space.