



## **IMEC Partners with 37 Oaks to Prepare Small Businesses for Manufacturing Readiness and Wholesale Growth.**

The Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) is pleased to announce a new partnership with 37 Oaks to introduce a unique program to Chicagoland small business owners.

The focus of this 10-week program is to educate and prepare Chicagoland small business owners for manufacturing readiness and wholesale growth through a strategically curated combination of 37 Oaks University courses, workshops, 1:1 coaching, hands-on exercises, and co-packer facility tours. Businesses that successfully complete all program requirements will be awarded a business stipend at the end of the program.

"We are thrilled to launch this one-of-a-kind opportunity for Chicagoland businesses," said David Boulay, PhD, President at IMEC. "This partnership is a step towards our collective mission to empower the next generation of manufacturers. Through the innovative approach to learning provided by this opportunity, small businesses will be exposed to industry experts and see, firsthand, how area manufacturing facilities are structured and how they function."

**"Many small businesses we work with are facing significant opportunities for growth in wholesale, but they lack the knowledge, support, and readiness for this process. This can hinder the growth of small businesses that create jobs, occupy storefronts, and revitalize communities,"** said Terrand Smith, Founder and CEO of 37 Oaks. **"Understanding manufacturing capabilities is a crucial part of grasping the wholesale landscape. We are excited about this partnership with IMEC as allows us to offer a curriculum that combines the awareness, education, and resources from both fields."**

Interested businesses can apply at <https://www.37oaks.com/imec>. Women and minority-owned businesses are encouraged to apply. Applications must be submitted by September 10, 2024.

IMEC is a team of industry improvement specialists dedicated to providing Illinois Manufacturers with the solutions, tools, and resources to create sustainable, competitive futures. In 2023, they assisted over 2,500 companies and helped create or retain over 5,200 jobs, resulting in over \$650M aggregate impact to the Illinois economy. IMEC serves as the state's U.S. Department of Commerce NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership center. For more information, visit <https://www.imec.org>.

37 Oaks is a commerce development and learning laboratory that educates and prepares product-based businesses for growth through **wholesale, e-commerce, storefronts, and popup markets**. They offer courses, curriculums, coaching, content, community and services that focus on building commerce, retail and distribution knowledge. For more information, visit <https://www.37oaks.com>.