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## **e-Local Marketplace Launches Small Business Support with Northwestern University**

e-Local Marketplace (“ELM”) Offers a Direct Means to Increase Local Spend with Chicagoland Small, Women, Veteran and Minority Businesses on Award-winning e-Platform

**Chicago, December 20, 2022** – e-Local Marketplace (“ELM”), originally dubbed Evanston Local Marketplace, ELM platform is officially open for business. The on-line B2B platform was designed to rouse support of local, women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses in Evanston and Chicagoland areas. ELM eliminates small business barriers to participation by providing a platform for local businesses to sell online to large organizations. The e-commerce platform is powered by eLink Gateway™, a proprietary software of Value Innovation Technologies (“VIT”). In partnership with VIT, e-Local Marketplace provides unprecedented technical assistance for small businesses thereby creating a successful online presence. ELM Vendors also benefit from real-time engagement with corporate and institutional procurement decision-makers and receive ongoing promotions via multi-channel marketing.

e-Local Marketplace presents B2B opportunities to area hospitals, institutions, universities and corporations to increase spend with local and diverse companies in Evanston and the greater Chicagoland area. Small business owners are presented on the e-commerce platform, allowing subscribing ELM Buyers to shop online from multiple ELM Vendors using customizable filters.

Jim Konrad, Assistant Vice President, Procurement, Payment and Logistics at Northwestern University further affirmed support of ELM stating “Many local small businesses currently sell to Northwestern University.... Becoming an ELM Vendor will create greater buying opportunities for existing and other small business owners.” Presently e-Local Marketplace has over 100,000 products sold by local small businesses, with new vendors and inventory being added regularly. “We have been working with ELM on this implementation for a year in order to make sure Northwestern staff can access the catalog through our financial system, we are very excited that it is now live. It is a great start. Now we are looking forward to ELM continuing to build on it by adding more local and diverse businesses.” stated Konrad.

ELM was co-founded by local Evanston residents and small business owners, Bryant Wallace and Clarence Weaver. “Thanks to [ELM CRO] Bryant’s introduction to Jim, Northwestern University was the initial institution to fully grasp the need for a direct local spend solution with Evanston small business owners. NU supported the platform by becoming a subscribing member with a two-year commitment out of the gate.” shared ELM President Clarence.

The duo, coupled with the guidance and collaboration of veteran business owner Mark Newsome and vested commitment of VIT CEO, Cy Kennedy, ELM has successfully created a foundation for Chicagoland small business owners. “Our goal is to directly contribute to transitioning spend from large national companies outside of the community to small local businesses; and as much as practicable, to be a source of positive economic activity for the community.” remarked Cy. The ELM core group expanded in Q1 with the hiring of Anita Summers as Executive Director who shared, “A primary goal of e-Local Marketplace is to recirculate profits locally. Utilizing other marketplaces platforms is akin to pouring water through a sieve-profits go in and straight out. Recirculating finances within the community is extremely necessary towards small business profitability and building generational wealth”.

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Email [info@e-localmarketplace.org](mailto:info@e-localmarketplace.org) to learn more about e-Local Marketplace Buyer and Vendor opportunities. Interested Buyers call Anita at (224) 357-1107. Small business owners prepared to sell, register here: <https://evanstonlocalmarketplace.elinkgateway.com/administration/vendorRegform/vendorregpage.xhtml>.

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