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MAYOR EMANUEL LAUNCHES CITYWIDE TASK FORCE TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS CITYWIDE

Task Force to focus on coordination of homeless services across all agencies to improve delivery and reduce homelessness of youth and families

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced the launch of a citywide task force dedicated to addressing and reducing homelessness in Chicago. The Task Force to Reduce Homelessness will focus on improved coordination between city and sister departments, increased efficiencies in service delivery, and identifying additional resources to devote to these efforts. Lisa Morrison Butler, Commissioner of the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), will serve as chair of the task force.

"We as a City cannot thrive until each and every one of our residents can thrive, which is why we are committed to ending homelessness and ensuring that every Chicagoan has place to call home," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "We have created this task force to ensure that all areas of the city are doing their part to ensure that all residents have a home, and that those who are struggling can get the support they need to get back on track."

The Task Force will focus on four broad priorities. First, it will work on streamlining contracts and services provided by the City and its sister agencies and invest any savings in improved service delivery. Second, it will launch an effort this year to provide critical housing and services to the chronically homeless residents. Third, it will develop a plan to reduce homelessness among families with children. And lastly, it will advocate for additional resources for homelessness to make up for recent funding cuts from the state and federal governments.

The Task Force will consist of the following member departments and advocacy organizations:

- Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS)
- Department of Aviation
- Chicago Department of Transportation
- Chicago Department of Buildings
- Chicago Housing Authority
- Chicago Park District
- Chicago Police Department
- Chicago Public Schools
- Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities
- Chicago Public Libraries
- Chicago Transit Authority
- Department of Planning and Development
- Department of Law
- Department of Streets and Sanitation
- Department of Public Health



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“As the lead agency on homeless outreach and services, we are committed to working day in and day out to connect with our residents experiencing homelessness. While we are proud of the progress we have made in housing residents, our work is not yet done,” said Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler of DFSS and Chair to the Task Force. “The Mayor’s new Task Force brings all of the key stakeholders together so we can give homeless residents the support they need to eventually secure a permanent home.”

On any given night, DFSS houses more than 3,000 people through a citywide network of overnight shelters and interim housing. While the City cannot force individuals to take shelter or engage in services, DFSS’ Homeless Outreach teams work tirelessly with residents who are street homeless and chronically homeless to assist them in securing services, shelter and, ultimately permanent housing.

"I am pleased that Mayor Emanuel has directed necessary resources that include this task force to address the needs of individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness," said 46th Ward Alderman James Cappleman. "My number one goal for our homeless population is to provide them with greater access to permanent housing with wrap-around services, and I look toward this task force to create a plan of action that will make this happen."

Nationwide, cities have been confronting the issue of homelessness among veterans, which prompted President Obama in 2014 to announce a campaign to put an end to the issue. Since Chicago signed onto this effort by launching the EVHI, it has developed one central list of homeless veterans and brought together key stakeholders to coordinate efforts, amplify resources, and attract new investments.

“We are pleased that Mayor Emanuel has assembled this task force to leverage resources and support for our residents experiencing homelessness,” said Nonie Brennan, Chief Executive Officer of All Chicago. “Based on the success that Chicago has seen with our Ending Homelessness Initiative, we are more confident than ever that together, we can secure housing for those individuals who need it most.”

Since 2011, Mayor Emanuel has increased funding for homeless services by more than 10 percent and invested in new programs targeting veterans, youth, families, and victims of domestic violence. The Mayor’s Plan 2.0 to End Homelessness is a broad-ranging, seven-year action plan focusing on homeless prevention, the “housing first” approach, and wraparound services for youth and families in order to break the cycle of homelessness. Since the plan launched, the City has housed 400 households via Rapid Rehousing, expanded shelter space for youth by 33 percent and established three regional drop-in centers which serve nearly 1,400 homeless youth annually.

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