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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES ALBERTO ORTEGA AS DIRECTOR OF
WORKFORCE STRATEGY & BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT**

New director will play a key role in connecting residents from across the city to training and opportunities for good-paying careers of the future

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the appointment of Alberto Ortega to serve as Director of Workforce Strategy and Business Engagement. Mr. Ortega will coordinate the implementation of a new workforce development strategy across City of Chicago departments and Sister Agencies, in collaboration with Cook County and other key stakeholders, including the business community. This strategy is focused on promoting the economic mobility of low-income residents by expanding access to educational and skill-training opportunities.

"Talent is found in every neighborhood throughout our great city, but too many residents are still left out and left behind, which holds Chicago's economy back," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Alberto Ortega's track record of business collaboration and nonprofit leadership will help us build a more equitable city, create new career opportunities for residents and develop an unmatched 21st-century workforce."

Mr. Ortega founded of the Workforce Employer Resource Collaborative (WERC), a network of more than 35 nonprofit organizations that aims to match employers with qualified workers, connect people to family-sustaining wage jobs, and customize strategies to enhance recruitment and retention. He has served as a Board Member for the Center for Economic Progress and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Excellence and Workplace Well-Being Committees.

"It is truly an honor to join Mayor Lightfoot and the entire City to build relationships for economic and social impact through meaningful internal as well as external engagement activities to continue to advance the City as an inclusive and diverse employer, and bring jobs and economic growth to all of Chicago," said Mr. Ortega.

Ortega will oversee the newly created Chicago Construction Careers Council (C4), a multi-department and multi-agency task force charged with creating new standards for hiring, training, and supplying labor needs for construction projects in Chicago.



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C4 will establish new outreach and data sharing procedures to reach more job seekers throughout Chicago's neighborhoods, and to track career progress over time.

To prepare more youth for high growth potential industries, Ortega will work alongside City departments and business leaders to expand work-based learning opportunities for Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) students under the Career Launch Chicago umbrella. Career Launch Chicago is the city's new youth apprenticeship effort that will connect CPS students with college coursework and paid work-based learning, leading to post-secondary credentials from City Colleges of Chicago toward careers in health care, information technology, or advanced manufacturing.

"Chicago's strength lies in our ability to attract and maintain educational and job opportunities for our residents for today and for the future," said Alderman Susan Sadlowski-Garza (10), Chair of the Committee on Workforce Development. "I look forward to working with Mr. Ortega in creating a robust workforce agenda that will attract businesses as well as individuals throughout the entire City."

The City's workforce development efforts will also align with the Mayor's new economic growth strategy, which is focused on renewing growth across the City's neighborhoods, including downtown, by focusing on high impact industries displaying growth potential for the future: transportation; technology; healthcare & life sciences; and tourism & hospitality.

"Chicago is a world-class city and the region's economic engine, and our administration is focused on ensuring that all of our residents can benefit from this growth, regardless of where they live," said Samir Mayekar, Deputy Mayor, Economic & Neighborhood Development. "Alberto will be instrumental in working with City stakeholders across the spectrum to propel new economic opportunity for our residents and create more financial resiliency for communities that have been overlooked for too long."

The Director of Workforce Strategy and Business Engagement is a grant-funded position through the Pritzker Traubert Foundation. This position aligns with the Foundation's mission, which focuses on investments to help address the opportunity gap faced by Chicago's working families and communities.

Mr. Ortega holds a master's degree from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Loyola University Chicago.

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