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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2020

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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT JOINS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND SUPPORT SERVICES AND AARP FOR A TELEPHONE TOWN HALL TO ADDRESS CHICAGO'S SENIOR POPULATION

City reinforces services and supports in place for older residents

CHICAGO --- Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot yesterday joined Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services Lisa Morrison Butler, AARP Illinois State Director Bob Gallo and AARP IL Volunteer State President Rosanna Marquez for a telephone town hall to address Chicago's senior population amid the COVID-19 public health crisis. The hosts were joined by thousands of participants for an hour-long call that covered a variety of supports and services throughout the city that have been put in place to help the most vulnerable population during this time. Mayor Lightfoot and the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) have led the City's response to provide essentials to seniors throughout Chicago so that no residents are deprived of what they need during this time.

"Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, we have been doing everything possible to keep our residents safe and healthy during this crisis, and that goes double for our seniors," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I have been overwhelmed over these past weeks by the work our city agencies and outside partners have done to ensure Chicago's eldest residents have the meals, services, and essentials they need to still enjoy their golden years during this unprecedented moment. As challenging as things have been, we will get through this together as a united city and come out of this crisis stronger than we've ever been."

Thus far, the City has already taken swift action to put many different pieces of assistance in place for the senior population. Mayor Lightfoot, in coordination with DFSS and public and private partners collectively worked to secure access for seniors to vital resources to keep them safe and healthy, as they are one of the most susceptible populations to COVID-19.

Thus far the City led projects have included:

- Securing home-delivered meals for seniors who are unable to prepare meals for themselves or have no other mechanism to procure a nutritious meal – made, packaged and delivered in accordance with public health guidelines to ensure they are sanitary and safe to consume.
- Working with local grocery stores to create and implement "senior only" so senior residents are able to quickly and safely do their shopping.
- Securing benefits screening that will help to determine a senior resident's eligibility for more than 2,500 city, state and federal benefits such as prescription drug coverage, weatherization, energy assistance, taxes, energy assistance, housing options and in-home support services.



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- Providing care services for seniors that are in-line with public health guidance to ensure seniors do not go without care during this time.
- Creating and providing resources for families taking caring of seniors which have included in-home respite services, workshops for guidance and legal assistance.
- Providing adult protective services including investigative responses to reports of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, confinement and financial exploitation.
- Providing long-term care ombudsmen advocacy, complaint resolution and rights protection of residents in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities.
- Providing professional staff on site when families that care for seniors are away.

“Many older Chicagoans are deciding to put their health first and we are partnering with them to ensure their safety and wellbeing needs are being met,” said DFSS Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. “Like other Chicago residents, older adults are counting on us to provide services and resources to inform them, to support them and to help them stay safe during this crisis. It is critical for us now more than ever before to make sure their needs are taken care of.”

The telephone town hall in collaboration with AARP Illinois helped the City reach thousands of senior residents and provided the opportunity to highlight the work being done, provide the resources that are available and separate myths from facts in answering questions from the audience. AARP has been conducting telephone town halls with mayors across the country to educate, inform and empower the senior population throughout the nation during this unprecedented time. Thus far the organization has reached hundreds of thousands of residents through 15 telephone town halls across the U.S. and has plans to conduct 34 more in the next three weeks.

“AARP Illinois is pleased to have had the opportunity to co-host this meaningful event with Chicago’s city leadership in order to reach a critically important audience during the COVID-19 public health crisis,” said Bob Gallo, State Director of AARP Illinois. “It is the mission of AARP to ensure that the needs of older adults and their families are met, and I appreciate the opportunity to work with Mayor Lightfoot and Commissioner Morrison Butler to educate and empower those 50+ throughout the city to access the essential goods and services they need.”

As many residents face mounting financial burdens from the COVID-19 crisis, coupled with the state mandated ‘Stay at Home’ Order the City’s has taken increased action to ensure people maintain access to critical home necessities. Thus far, Chicago’s heat and electricity suppliers have announced they have suspended shutoffs due to a resident’s inability to pay, indefinitely. Additionally, the Chicago Department of Water Management will continue its moratorium on water shutoffs from inability to pay, as was announced last year under Mayor Lightfoot. The Cook County Sherriff has also suspended evictions while the health crisis continues.



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In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the City recently launched the Stay Home, Save Lives campaign to inform residents about how they can stay healthy and do their part to bend the curve of the virus. For more information and updates on COVID-19, text COVID19 to 78015, email coronavirus@chicago.gov or visit [Chicago.gov/coronavirus](https://chicago.gov/coronavirus). For anyone that needs assistance or help accessing essential services you can call 311. More helpful resources for older adults in Illinois are available at aarp.org/Chicago and aarp.org/coronavirus.

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