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City of Chicago Announces Expressway Beautification Project in Partnership with Chicago Gateway Green and A Safe Haven

City invests \$250,000 to reduce litter and create 10 new jobs for returning citizens

CHICAGO – The Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) and the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) joined Chicago Gateway Green and A Safe Haven today to announce a new beautification project to improve the landscape of the City’s expressways. This partnership will create ten new jobs this summer for returning citizens while providing additional capacity to reduce litter and waste.

“Expressways are the gateway to our City,” said Commissioner John Tully, DSS. “We work year round to keep communities across Chicago clean and this partnership allows us to go the extra mile to ensure that we address issues that improve the quality of life of all residents.”

Under the leadership of Mayor Emanuel, DSS provides vital cleaning and beautification services like garbage collection, street sweeping, cleaning vacant lots and weed removal to keep the City clean and safe for all Chicagoans throughout the year. The City partners with A Safe Haven to provide approximately 100 jobs to returning citizens each year to assist with cleaning streets and vacant lots.

The City of Chicago has invested \$250,000 in this new project to expand citywide greening and beautification efforts in partnership with Chicago Gateway Green. This investment also builds on the City’s commitment to create employment opportunities for returning citizens and help them successfully transition back into in their communities. Through the project, 10 returning citizens will clean expressway ramps and embankments as well as maintain the landscape along Chicago expressways through November.

"Cleaning and greening goes far beyond the esthetic; it creates a total environment for Chicagoans to thrive in," said Tony Abruscato, Executive Director, Chicago Gateway Green. "Chicago Gateway Green is thrilled to intensify its efforts through this investment

by the City. We also have a long-standing relationship with A Safe Haven and are proud to be a non-profit supporting the mission of another Chicago non-profit organization.”

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services also supports the re-entry efforts of more than 10,000 returning citizens each year through job training and placement services and is on-track to provide support to 13,000 returning citizens this year.

“At the Department of Family and Support Services, we are committed to programs and initiatives that allow all residents access to resources that offer support while empowering them to thrive,” said Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. “Our Workforce program is a prime example of our City’s commitment to ensuring that residents from all walks of life have the tools they need to gain meaningful employment, as well as the success and stability that comes with it.”

“We are excited to be a part of an initiative that allows us to care for the green areas that lead to and surround our magnificent City, but also, in the process, provide individuals with the tools, skills and opportunities to see the beauty and potential in themselves,” said Neli Vazquez Rowland, President, A Safe Haven.

The City redoubles its cleaning efforts each spring through special programs like the annual citywide Clean and Green Day of Service and Mayor Emanuel’s One Summer Chicago program which employs youth and young adults to work to beautify Chicago neighborhoods through maintenance, cleanup, gardening and public art installations.

The City also began its annual neighborhood service blitz season in April to efficiently fulfill service requests from residents at one time and address issues like hand cleaning, rodent abatement and tree trimming on a larger scale.

For more information on the City’s efforts to keep communities clean visit www.cityofchicago.org/dss.

For more information on services available for returning citizens visit www.cityofchicago.org/fss.

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