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CITY COUNCIL APPROVES ORDINANCE TO SIGNIFICANTLY EXPAND SHELTER BEDS AND RELATED SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A New Two Percent Homeshare Surcharge Would Help Increase the Availability of Domestic Violence Shelter Beds Citywide by Fifty Percent.

The Chicago City Council today approved Mayor Rahm Emanuel's proposal to expand the City's shelter bed capacity for survivors of domestic violence by fifty percent. A new two percent homeshare surcharge will allow Chicago to increase housing options for survivors of domestic violence while helping increase access to critical resources.

"Finding a place to sleep at night can become a real challenge for domestic violence survivors, and by increasing the City's bed capacity we are providing more supportive services to this vulnerable population," said Mayor Emanuel.

Currently, through the Department of Family and Support Services, the City operates 140 shelter beds for domestic violence survivors and funds approximately 30 programs that provide direct services to Chicago survivors of domestic violence.

The new surcharge will generate approximately \$1.3 million in annual revenue by collecting a two percent surcharge on the gross rental or leasing charge of any shared-housing unit or vacation rental through both existing and new providers. This new, dedicated revenue source will allow the City to increase the number of beds or temporary housing for survivors of domestic violence, while also supporting long-term services and outreach directed towards the needs of domestic violence survivors.

"Without somewhere to turn for help and for shelter, many victims of domestic violence suffer in silence," said Alderman Matt O'Shea. "These added resources will further strengthen the City ability to better service and protect the residents who need our help."

The Mayor first unveiled the plan in June at WINGS Metro, which in 2016 became the first domestic violence shelter built in the city in more than a decade. Since it opened, WINGS Metro has provided 30,000 nights of shelter for adults and children touched by domestic violence.

"This new ordinance will benefit survivors of domestic violence for years to come," said Lisa Morrison Butler, DFSS Commissioner. "By increasing our capacity to provide a supportive

environment for residents affected by domestic violence, we as a city will further our goal of preventing anyone from experiencing tragedy at the hands of an abusive individual.”

Chicago was among the first municipalities to leverage revenue for homeshare accommodations through the imposition of a four percent surcharge on homeshare units in July 2016. Revenue generated from the surcharge support services for homeless families and the chronic homeless along with funding homeshare regulatory efforts by the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection. During the first year of collection (July 2016 through June 2017), the City collected approximately \$3.0 million in homeshare surcharge revenue, and from July 2017 through April 2018, the City estimates it has collected \$2.7 million from surcharge.

Through the Families in Transition program, a joint initiative with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless to address homelessness impacting families in the most at-risk communities, the City has been able to connect 100 homeless families and over 500 individual family members in high crime communities with permanent housing. The revenue also provides wrap-around supportive services for more than 100 chronically homeless individuals.

Since taking office, Mayor Emanuel implemented a number of initiatives to support domestic violence survivors and convened several law enforcement agencies, local government offices, prosecutors, and community service groups to align forces to break the cycle of domestic violence.

In 2016, the Mayor worked with WINGS Metro to open the first domestic violence shelter built in the city in more than a decade. The Apna Ghar Domestic Violence Shelter quickly followed in 2017, and today specializes in outreach and advocacy on behalf of all immigrant communities.

Last year, the Mayor and Alderman Matthew O’Shea introduced an ordinance that reaffirmed the City’s commitment to protecting its employees who are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

To report domestic abuse, Chicagoans should call 9-1-1. For more information and support, anyone can call or text the domestic violence hotline 24/7 at 877.863.6338.

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