



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mayor Lightfoot and the Department of Family & Support Services Announce \$35 Million to Rapidly House Chicagoans Experiencing Homelessness

Calls on landlords to support expedited housing by joining new Chicago Rents program

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) today announced that more than \$35 million in CARES Act funding and a \$1.3 million investment from Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness (CFTEH) will be awarded to All Chicago Making Homelessness History (All Chicago) to spearhead the Expedited Housing Initiative (EHI). EHI is a homeless intervention program aimed at rapidly connecting residents experiencing homelessness to available rental subsidies and units by removing barriers such as income verification and other limitations that can impede rapid placement of the residents in rental units.

"For our city's residents experiencing homelessness, COVID-19 has drastically amplified the feeling of uncertainty and the reality of housing instability," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The Expedited Housing Initiative will create housing opportunities and connect Chicagoans with the resources they need to feel safe and supported. We are proud to partner with DFSS, CFTEH, and All Chicago to advance this program, which builds on our mission to become a more equitable Chicago for all residents."

DFSS, All Chicago and the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) piloted EHI this past April in response to COVID-19. Clients in congregate homeless shelter settings who were considered high risk of COVID-19 complications due to older age or health, were placed in separate hotel rooms as a safety precaution and then linked to permanent housing for continued stability, and to prevent them from returning back to homeless shelters or other congregate living environments.

"The Expedited Housing Initiative's housing-first model is an important and effective tool in our crisis response to homelessness and COVID-19," said DFSS Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. "By transitioning individuals and families who are housing insecure into permanent housing faster, we reduce the chance they will return to shelter again and we increase the odds they will have a more stable future. Meeting this goal requires a coordinated, citywide effort between homeless prevention advocates and landlords."

Last month, Mayor Lightfoot wrote a letter to landlords and property owners across the city urging them to participate in Chicago Rents, an EHI program to make their vacant rental units available to residents experiencing homelessness. Chicago Rents serves as a connector for landlords, people in need of homes, rental subsidies and housing support



case managers. To join this initiative, landlords should complete All Chicago's [Landlord Survey](#) to report their unit availability. Each household receives supportive services from trained staff, laying the foundation for a positive tenant-landlord relationship.

“All Chicago is excited to continue our strong partnership with the City of Chicago in launching the Expedited Housing Initiative to reduce homelessness,” said All Chicago President and CEO Carolyn Ross. “This initiative wouldn’t be possible without the City’s support. Together, we can ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors can access safe housing opportunities.”

CFTEH is a collaborative of more than 20 Chicago-area funders working to address issues of homelessness and housing instability. The group formally launched in spring 2020 and is being incubated at Michael Reese Health Trust. Several CFTEH funders collectively invested \$1.3 million in EHI including Crown Family Philanthropies, Polk Bros. Foundation, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

“The Expedited Housing Initiative represents a watershed moment for the homelessness system,” said CFTEH Co-chair Debbie Reznick. “EHI will provide housing and services for households experiencing homelessness on an unprecedented scale during the COVID-19 crisis while building critical capacity and resiliency for our system in the long-term. Polk is delighted to partner with the City of Chicago and with All Chicago on this important effort.”

EHI is part of a series of interventions DFSS is funding to help keep residents experiencing homelessness safe and linked to permanent housing. Collectively, DFSS has dedicated nearly \$60 million in CARES Act funding to rental assistance, rapid re-housing, and homeless shelters, outreach and drop-in services. In partnership with the Department of Housing, DFSS launched the Chicago Housing Assistance Portal at [Chi.gov/housinghelp](https://chi.gov/housinghelp). The portal matches residents to rental and housing assistance programs best fit to meet their needs.

From the very onset of this crisis, the City of Chicago has made the health and safety of residents experiencing homelessness a top priority. The City and its vast array of partners continue to ensure an equitable, compassionate response to COVID-19 for every vulnerable Chicagoan.

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