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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES NEW PROGRAM TO EMPLOY AND DELIVER SERVICES TO 100 HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

"Day for Change" Pilot to Help 100 Homeless Individuals who Panhandle Gain Employment Skills

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Family Supports and Services (DFSS) Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler announced today the innovative *Day for Change* initiative—a jobs program that will provide up to 100 homeless individuals an opportunity to connect to services while earning a modest wage. *A Day for Change* will connect homeless panhandlers with temporary employment opportunities and supportive services.

"We as a City cannot thrive until each and every one of our residents can thrive, which is why we are committed to addressing homelessness in a way that will help our most vulnerable residents get the care they need to become housed once again," said Mayor Emanuel. "This pilot will provide an opportunity for homeless residents to earn a day of pay for temporary employment, and the chance they need to gain steady housing and employment that will allow them get their lives back."

Starting this month, the *Day for Change* pilot program will engage homeless panhandlers, individuals who publicly and regularly request money or goods from strangers for personal use, and provide them an alternative avenue to earn a basic wage and wraparound supports that will help them transition into housing.

"We are working to create a system where cases of homelessness are rare, brief, and non-recurring," said Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. "This program is a creative way to engage this hard-to-reach population. Similar to the Chronic Homelessness Pilot, we will take the lessons learned in *A Day for Change* and apply them more broadly to help other residents experiencing homelessness due to a lack of income."

The new program is modeled after a similar, successful effort in Albuquerque NM. It is the latest in a series of investments to address homelessness, and underscores the administration's commitment to supporting the homeless with programs and services they need to transition into permanent housing.

Through a partnership with one of DFSS' delegate agencies, A Safe Haven, the city will dispatch work vans to targeted areas of the city with a large concentration of panhandlers, approaching them with an opportunity to earn a fair wage for a set amount of work. Participants will be paid in cash and have an opportunity to earn \$55 for labor on projects including cleanup and maintenance of vacant lots, abandoned properties, and trash collection near expressways. *A Day for Change* will serve more than 100 unique individual workers by the end of the three month pilot period.

"A Day for Change marks an incredible opportunity to rethink our approach and provide individuals in crisis access to comprehensively rebuild and transform their lives," said Neli Vazquez Rowland, president and co-founder of A Safe Haven Foundation. "*A Day for Change* promises to be a powerful first step that will allow all public and private stakeholders to engage in creating access to housing and employment opportunities for one of Chicago's most underserved populations."

Throughout the course of the pilot, each participant will be eligible to earn up to \$600 annually, and will receive meals, transportation, behavioral health services, job preparedness training, healthcare screenings, hygiene care, and interim housing. Because many of the eligible participants may not have proper identification required to use gift cards, they will be paid in cash.

Funding for the program will be provided by the proceeds of the 4 percent homelessness surcharge established by the Mayor's ordinance to regulate house sharing companies like Airbnb. Since the surcharge took effect in July, the City has collected more than \$500,000 to be reinvested in homeless prevention initiatives.

Utilizing the *There's a Better Way* model first implemented in Albuquerque, A Safe Haven, will employ two case managers to staff the program, with oversight by a program supervisor. In addition to ensuring that each participant is physically able to participate through an on-site assessment of fitness, these staff members will connect participants to other forms of long-term care through referrals to hospitals and social service agencies as needed.

The launch of *A Day for Change* follows the city's launch of the Chronic Homelessness Pilot, an unprecedented program designed to house individuals impacted by the most chronic bouts of homelessness. The pilot program is underway with a goal of serving the 75 initial clients, and with a stated plan to apply lessons learned by the pilot to inform the city's broader approach on homeless outreach. With less than half of the initial clients remaining to be housed, the Mayor has called upon landlords to support this mission with additional housing units to supplement a shortage of housing options in specific areas, and to help eligible candidates get back on their feet.

Under the leadership of Mayor Emanuel, the City of Chicago has made important progress in improving outreach and service to homeless residents, and decreased the overall number of residents impacted by temporary and chronic homelessness by 13%. These improvements and the overall decline in homelessness are due in large part to lessons learned by the city's participation in the Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative (EVHI), a national campaign to end homelessness among Veterans. Through participation in EVHI and application of the "One List" coordinated access system, the city has improved its ability to identify and match homeless individuals to housing resources—housing more than 2,500 veterans since 2015 and exceeding the city's initial goal for the project.

To ensure that the City has enough affordable housing to support families and residents around the city, Mayor Emanuel has overseen the following improvements since taking office: passed the Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO) to create approximately 1,200 units of housing and generate \$90 million in funding by 2020; worked with housing advocates to pass the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Preservation ordinance to retain 700 SRO units in gentrifying areas by the end of 2018; and leveraged new revenue through a \$2 million annual surcharge from the house sharing industry to serve 300 homeless individuals with housing and wraparound services each year.

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