



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office  
312.744.3334  
[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL EXPANDS JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR EX-OFFENDERS**

*City Council approves ordinance to aid ex-offenders in job training and re-entry into society.*

City Council approved a measure put forward by Mayor Rahm Emanuel today to increase job opportunities for ex-offenders by expanding an ordinance to allow the City to contract with additional businesses that aid ex-offenders in their transition back to society by providing them with job training career opportunities.

"I strongly believe that by giving these individuals the necessary tools to be successful after incarceration we are not only giving them a second chance but we are giving their families a second chance while making the City a safer place at the same time," said Mayor Emanuel. "Numbers speak louder than words when talking about recidivism and they indicate that offenders are less likely to recommit offenses when they are provided with job training."

In 2006, as part of a City of Chicago Ex-Offender Reentry initiative, Council passed an ordinance allowing the City to refer a certain amount of outstanding debt to the Collectors Training Institute (CTI), a licensed, bonded, minority-owned, collection agency located on the city's west side. CTI hires formally incarcerated individuals who have been screened and trained by a not-for-profit agency founded to assist ex-offenders in the transition from incarceration to society by providing employment training, screening and opportunities. CTI has collected over \$10 million in outstanding debt on behalf of the City of Chicago.

The amended ordinance allows the Department of Finance the opportunity to expand this program to other licensed and qualified collection agencies providing employment opportunities to ex-offenders who have been properly trained and screened by a not-for-profit employment service. The City establishes data security requirements and what information is available to collectors. The goal of this program is to allow ex-offenders to gain marketable work experience and assist the City of Chicago in reducing outstanding debt and lower collection costs.

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