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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND THRIVE CHICAGO ANNOUNCE LATEST INVESTMENTS TO
ADVANCE 10 CITYWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS ON OPPORTUNITY YOUTH**

Choose to Change and Neighborhood Reconnection Hubs to provide a new approach to serving Chicago's most at-risk youth and builds off the Mayor's plan to provide universal mentoring for men in high crime areas

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) and Thrive Chicago to announce the City's latest investments to advance the 10 recommendations announced at last year's Thrive Opportunity Youth Summit to reconnect young people back to school and jobs. The City will provide funding for the Choose to Change program and Neighborhood Reconnection Hubs; two programs that offer a unique new approach to serving Chicago's most at-risk youth and builds off the Mayor's plan to provide universal mentoring for men in high crime areas.

"We cannot and will not accept any young person giving up on themselves and giving up on their futures," said Mayor Emanuel. "These programs specialize in targeting youth who have begun to disengage from society and provides them with the guidance and resources they need to get back on track. Youth need to be given a path to success and I believe that all begins with a strong mentor."

The City will invest \$300,000 in Choose to Change, a six-month community-based intervention program that combines trauma-informed therapy provided by Children's Home + Aid, with intensive mentorship and advocacy provided by Youth Advocate Programs to reduce criminal behavior and improve academic outcomes for at-risk youth ages 13-18.

"YAP never turns a kid or family away and we never kick anyone out of our programs, and yet, our programs have been highly successful." said C2C Program Director Chris Sutton. "This investment by the Mayor will allow us to serve even more youth and their families in Chicago. The tools and resources we provide help the Chicago C2C youth design blueprints for their success, reinforcing their foundations."

Youth are referred to the program through CPS option and neighborhood schools, SOAR centers, CPS Safety and Security, and Juvenile Probation. The University of Chicago Crime Lab has preliminary results that show a 47% reduction in arrests for violent crimes for youth up to two years following their participation in the program.

The Chicago Sports Alliance provided funding for the first 100 youth of 2018, and the City's investment will support a second group of approximately 100 this year, with additional funding anticipated for 2019. To date, the program has served 500 youth in Englewood.

The Choose to Change announcement was made at Thrive Chicago's Opportunity Youth Summit.

At the summit, the City also announced its \$500,000 commitment to expand Neighborhood Reconnection Hubs to the Roseland community. The one-stop shop Hubs help serve Opportunity Youth—youth 16-24 who are disconnected from school and work— to better navigate and access services from one central location where they can be supported by a network of partners.

"Thrive has brought together 40 non-for-profit agencies who will focus on helping to support Opportunity Youth and connecting them to the resources they need to work towards building a stable life," said DFSS Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. "We are thrilled to partner with Thrive and help support the fantastic work they do for our city's youth and communities in need." This group galvanized ten citywide strategies to reduce the number of Opportunity Youth in Chicago, including launching hubs and offering more programs that help keep youth on track.

In its first year, this Hub will serve 300 youth and then at full operational speed, it will serve 700 youth annually. The funding will also support hiring fairs in Roseland, Englewood and Little Village, each targeting 300 Opportunity Youth.

Chicago piloted the hub in Auburn Gresham in 2017 with St. Sabina and more than 20 community partners, including the Chicago Police Department (CPD), Kennedy-King College, and the Greater Auburn Gresham Community Development Corporation. Additional hubs are being planned for North Lawndale, Little Village/South Lawndale and Austin.

"There are so many great organizations, neighborhood leaders, city agencies, private sector partners all engaged in this work. There is no way to have the kind of impact we want to have unless we come together and work the way we've been working at this problem over the last year," said Sandra Abrevaya, President and Chief Impact Officer of Thrive Chicago. "By coordinating and collaborating, we're doing a better job at understanding the challenges and serving youth more holistically. None of us can do this alone."

These latest investments are an extension of the Mayor's philosophy that investing in youth and investing in prevention are key to improving public safety. Since taking office, Mayor Emanuel has made mentoring universal for young men in high crime areas, more than doubled the size of the city's youth summer jobs program and expanded after-school programming every year.

"We are deeply committed to helping young people thrive in Chicago," said Children's Home & Aid President and CEO Nancy Ronquillo. "Today's investment by the City of Chicago in our Choose to Change program will save lives. When we partner with high-risk youth to give them the support they need to succeed, we keep them safe and reduce violence for whole communities across the city. We know addressing violence and public safety are key priorities for the Mayor's office and we look forward to continuing to work together to end youth violence in Chicago."

The Mayor's Mentoring Initiative is a core component of the City's public safety strategy. It lays out a clear path to provide the most at-risk youth with the support they need to remain on-track to graduate high school and avoid involvement in the criminal justice system.

To date, the City has invested \$13 million in support of the Mayor's Mentoring Initiative with an additional \$12 million provided through private support.

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