



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CITY OF CHICAGO LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE REENTRY PROGRAM:  
A NEW ERA FOR COMMUNITY REENTRY, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT**

**CHICAGO** – Today, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) announced an exciting reentry initiative designed to support the critical housing needs for individuals exiting incarceration. The SPRING Forward (Selected Pre-Release for Intensive Navigation support Going Forward) program aims at providing comprehensive support for individuals reentering society after periods of incarceration, including extensive housing and employment navigation. This pioneering initiative underscores the city's commitment to rehabilitation, community reintegration, and reducing recidivism rates.

“As part of our comprehensive community safety plan, reducing recidivism rates is a significant move towards creating an alternative vision of community safety while disrupting the cycle of incarceration,” **said Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “Providing pathways to returning residents is a critical step in supporting that plan, and supporting those who have progressed through the system and are facing enormous hurdles as they return to their communities.”

SPRING Forward focuses on a two-part approach to reentry success: employment and housing. Through this collaborative approach, lead Program Administrators Cara Collective and Lawndale Christian Legal Center, alongside DFSS, will work to provide employment and housing navigation services to residents released from Cook County Department of Corrections and the Illinois Department of Corrections. Employment supports will include Reentry navigators who will provide well-structured work-based learning opportunities designed to help participants develop a work history and learn new skills that prepare them for jobs. Supports provided will include career coaching, financial coaching, digital literacy, and mental health supports.

“SPRING Forward represents DFSS's dedication to creating a more just and inclusive society, **said Brandie Knazze, Commissioner of the Department of Family & Support Services**. “By offering a comprehensive support system, we are giving individuals the tools they need to successfully reintegrate into their communities and



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lead meaningful, productive lives. This program reflects our belief in second chances and our commitment to breaking the cycle of incarceration.”

Individuals recently released within 18 months are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants must also be 18 years or older, reside in Chicago, or returning to Chicago, and face housing insecurity, such as the possibility of homelessness or uncertain housing options.

Applicants begin by contacting Cara Collective’s SPRING Forward hotline at (312) 798-3310. Cara Collective will start by helping secure employment and provide a base of support for participants of SPRING Forward.

“Cara Collective is honored to be a partner on SPRING Forward,” **said Kathleen St. Louis Caliento, President & CEO.** “More than 85% of the people we serve each year come to us with prior involvement in the justice system. Creating access to gainful employment is a critical step in their successful reentry. Through this program’s innovative focus on connectivity to workforce opportunities and housing, we will be able to create true transformations for individuals ready for their new beginning.”

Once enrolled in employment services with Cara Collective, Lawndale Christian Legal Center (LCLC) will lead the housing navigation by facilitating access to reasonably priced housing and housing-supportive services to stabilize residents and mitigate the risk of recidivism.

"We know that affordable housing is the foundation that people need to establish their careers, continue education, seek healthcare services and support their families. We welcome this opportunity to help drive the goals of SPRING Forward as we pursue our community-based mission that walks people through, and away from, the justice system," **said LCLC Executive Director Cliff Nellis.**

For more information, contact the **SPRING Forward hotline (312) 798-3310.** The City of Chicago is committed to making sure that residents who return home to Chicago from incarceration can do so with the support and dignity that they deserve. For more information about DFSS reentry initiatives, please visit <https://www.chicago.gov/reentry> or contact Deputy Commissioner Mark Sanders II, [Mark.SandersII@cityofchicago.org](mailto:Mark.SandersII@cityofchicago.org)

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