



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CELEBRATING A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATIVE INITIATIVES FOR CHICAGO'S YOUTH

Day five of countdown to first-year anniversary focuses on Mayor Brandon Johnson's work over the past year around investing in youth

CHICAGO – This fifth in a series of releases counting down to the one-year anniversary of the Johnson Administration takes a look at how Mayor Brandon Johnson has placed an emphasis on investing in Chicago's young people throughout the first year of his first term.

"Every initiative we have launched this past year aims to empower our youth, ensuring they have the opportunities they need to thrive not just as future leaders, but as active contributors to our great city," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "From expanding job opportunities to creating welcoming spaces and more inclusive and engaging events, our commitment is to build a city where every young person can fulfill their hope, their purpose and their dreams."

This past year, under Mayor Johnson's Youth Employment Initiative, the One Summer Chicago program expanded to provide nearly 25,000 jobs for young people aged 14-24 — a 20 percent increase from the previous year. Looking ahead to 2024, the program is set to add an additional 4,000 jobs, further affirming the city's dedication to youth employment.

In a pioneering effort to integrate more young Chicagoans into the workforce, the Mayor's Office has also introduced a corporate youth employment program, encouraging local businesses to hire young individuals.

Mayor Johnson has made a commitment to provide opportunities for all of the young people of Chicago, no matter what obstacles they may face. As part of that commitment, the City put on the inaugural Inclusive Youth Jobs Expo, co-hosted with Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD). The Expo helped over 130 students with disabilities apply for positions in the One Summer Chicago program.

Further demonstrating his commitment to youth development, Mayor Johnson has doubled internship opportunities within city departments for college-aged students and expanded the Mayor's Youth Commission from 32 to 40 members to incorporate a greater number of diverse voices from Chicago's youth to influence city policies directly, reflecting a broader spectrum of needs and aspirations.

"Our focus has been on creating real, tangible pathways for success, whether that's through securing a summer job or engaging in our dynamic city-led programs," **Deputy Mayor of Education, Youth, and Human Services Jennifer Johnson** said. "These efforts aren't just about employment; they're about instilling a sense of purpose and community in our youth, which are fundamental to their growth and happiness."

In partnership with the My CHI. My Future. network, Mayor Johnson has expanded safe space events during key times of the year to keep young people engaged and active.

Mayor Johnson's administration also enhanced social and cultural engagement for youth with large-scale events such as the biggest ever Teen Bash at Navy Pier and the revival of Halloweek, featuring the unique Upside Down Parade in Washington Park. These events provided not only entertainment but also valuable resources and a platform for self-expression for over thousands of attendees.

A notable effort this year has been Mayor Johnson's personal engagement with school communities, visiting 54 different schools in Chicago for a total of 81 events at these schools. This includes visits to dozens of Chicago Public Schools, with a focus on Sustainable Community Schools, schools that typically receive less attention and several schools with Career and Technical Education programs. During these visits, Mayor Johnson receives feedback from students directly on the changes that they would like to see in the City of Chicago under his leadership.

This work over the past year is part of a broader vision to foster a nurturing environment that supports the City's youth from early childhood through young adulthood. Mayor Johnson and the Administration are dedicated to continuing these efforts, ensuring every young person in Chicago has the opportunity to thrive and shape a bright future for themselves and their city.

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