



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR JOHNSON APPOINTS ERA PATTERSON AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

Patterson brings over 15 years of experience leading strategic initiatives and managing large-scale government operations, most recently as Chief of Staff at the Cook County Public Defender's Office.

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson announced the appointment of Era Patterson to lead the Chicago Office of Public Safety Administration (OPSA). Patterson is an action-oriented executive with over 15 years of experience leading strategic legal initiatives and managing large-scale government operations. She has held key leadership roles across state and county government, most recently serving as Chief of Staff for the Cook County Public Defender's Office—one of the nation's largest public defense agencies.

"With her vast experience working throughout the justice system, Era is perfectly suited to step into this critical role where she will help ensure every Chicagoan is safe and secure," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "I'm thrilled to work with Era as we continue to build the safest, most affordable big city in America. I want to thank Era for accepting this opportunity to serve our city."

"I'm honored by this appointment and grateful for the opportunity to lead the Office of Public Safety Administration," said **Era Patterson**. "Throughout my career in public service, I've seen how essential strong operational support is to the success of government agencies. I'm excited to build on OPSA's foundation by streamlining systems and strengthening partnerships, ensuring that our police, fire, and emergency services can stay focused on their core mission of keeping Chicagoans safe."

While at the Cook County Public Defender's Office Patterson oversaw a \$100 million budget and more than 750 employees while spearheading transformative organizational changes



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and advancing policy reforms to reduce pretrial incarceration and racial disparities in the criminal court system.

She previously served as Deputy Director at the Illinois Justice Project, Chief of Staff for the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, Assistant Attorney General, and Associate General Counsel of Public Safety to Illinois Governor Pat Quinn. Patterson has played a central role in shaping criminal and juvenile justice policy in Illinois—contributing to the landmark SAFE-T Act and leading strategic legislative initiatives.

Era was elected President of the Black Women Lawyers' Association (BWLA) after serving in multiple leadership roles on its Board. She is an alum of the University of Chicago's Civic Leadership Academy, BWLA T.E.A. Director's Institute, Chicago United for Equity Fellowship, and the Edgar Fellows Program.

In 2024, she received the James Seaberry Award for Excellence from the University of Illinois College of Law Black Law Students Association—an honor recognizing her commitment to community service and advancing diversity in the legal profession.

A licensed attorney admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, the Northern District of Illinois, and Illinois state courts, Patterson holds a J.D. from the University of Illinois College of Law and a B.A. in Political Science from Miami University. She has also served as an adjunct professor at DePaul University College of Law, sharing her expertise with future practitioners

This appointment requires City Council confirmation.

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