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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2025

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MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON APPOINTS FRANCISCO VELEZ AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHICAGO OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Velez brings almost 30 years of public safety experience on special operations and event coordination as a veteran of the Chicago Fire Department.

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson appointed Francisco “Frank” Velez to lead the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) today. Velez brings almost 30 years of experience in public safety and currently serves as the Acting Executive Director of OEMC. Velez previously served as Deputy District Chief for the Chicago Fire Department with a special focus on special operations and event coordination. Because of his role at CFD and his work with local, state and federal partners, Velez has a solid understanding of the incident command system and enhanced public safety coordination.

“Frank is an experienced leader and someone who understands exactly what it takes to keep Chicagoans safe,” said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “I’m confident that he will play a critical role in helping us make Chicago the safest big city in America. I want to thank Frank for accepting this opportunity to serve the great people of our city.”

“I’m honored to be appointed to lead the men and women of the Office of Emergency Management and Communications,” said **Frank Velez, Acting Executive Director**. “As a veteran of the Chicago Fire Department I know the critical role that OEMC performs to keep residents, visitors and first responders safe. Whether it’s answering the more than 20,000 calls each day to the City’s 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 centers



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or in the field responding to an emergency, OEMC's work is vital to our safety and security."

As a member of the Chicago Fire Department, Velez served in the office of the Fire Commissioner, holding the rank of Deputy District Chief with a special focus on special operations and event coordination. In that position, Velez supported the day-to-day operation of the Fire Department and advised the Fire Commissioner and the First Deputy on administrative and operational matters.

As Deputy District Chief and Coordinator of Special Events Liaison, Velez worked with OEMC, the Chicago Police Department, City of Chicago Departments and sister agencies in the planning, coordination, monitoring and operation of all major special events held in the city. Large special events include the 2024 Democratic National Convention, Sueños Fest, Lollapalooza, NASCAR Chicago Street Race, Taste of Chicago, Humboldt Park Puerto Rican Parade Fest, the Bud Billiken parade, and the Chicago Air and Water Show, among many more.

Early on, he realized his mission in life was public safety service and he became a paramedic with the Chicago Fire Department. Committed to excellence, Velez worked his way up through the ranks serving with distinction. He has served as an instructor at the Chicago Fire Academy where he 'made paramedics into Chicago Fire Department paramedics.' His commitment to youth is unparalleled, having worked with and mentored high school students in the Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy program for youth interested in careers in public safety

Throughout his life and particularly during his time with the Chicago Fire Department, Velez was committed to saving lives, having worked as a licensed practical nurse, an Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic, and Ambulance Commander, among other roles. His educational background includes Northwestern University, Truman College, Columbus Hospital, Illinois Institute of Technology and the Northwest Community Paramedic Program. He has completed a multitude of professional training and certification programs for first responders and emergency response.



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Frank was born and raised in Chicago, where he currently resides with his wife, Margaret. He is the proud father of three children and grandfather of five grandchildren.

This appointment requires City Council confirmation.

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