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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 9, 2012

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**MAYOR EMANUEL UNVEILS "SERVICE TO SUCCESS" INITIATIVE TO ENSURE RETURNING VETERANS RECEIVE THE EDUCATION AND SUPPORT NEEDED TO SUCCEED HERE AT HOME**

*New Initiative Through City Colleges of Chicago Recognizes Military Training and Experience of Returning Veterans, Creates Dedicated Veterans Resource Centers on Every City Colleges Campus, and Establishes An Exclusive Scholarship for Returning Veterans*

As part of his Returning Veterans Initiative, Mayor Emanuel today unveiled "Service to Success," a comprehensive new program at City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) that will help Chicago's returning veterans get the support and education they need to land jobs and succeed here at home. CCC will ensure that the experience and expertise developed in the military is recognized and built upon so that returning veterans can more quickly and easily transition into careers, will establish dedicated Veterans Resource Centers on every CCC campus, and has created a Service to Success Scholarship Fund, which will provide Chicago's returning veterans with scholarships of up to \$1,000 per academic year. Service to Success will be implemented starting with CCC's Spring 2013 semester.

"Our soldiers are some of the best, brightest and most dedicated individuals our country has to offer. As many return home to Chicago, we welcome them with open arms and are prepared to help them successfully transition into new careers and access the resources and support they need every step of the way," said Mayor Emanuel. "This new initiative recognizes the extensive experience and expertise that our men and women gain in the military and helps translate those skills into jobs and into careers."

When veterans return home, often their military experience, expertise, training and certifications do not translate directly into civilian certifications. In order to bridge this gap, CCC is committed to awarding up to half of the total credit hours required to complete a CCC certificate or associates' degree based on the returning veterans' military training transcripts.

- In recognition of basic training, all military personnel with an honorable discharge who enroll in an associate's degree program will receive 7 credit hours in electives.

- Additional credit based on military training transcripts can be applied where appropriate to CCC certificate and associates' degree programs.

“As veterans have served us, this is our time to serve them,” said Chancellor Cheryl Hyman. “This commitment ensures we develop the talents of our service men and women, provide them a clear path to further college and careers, and support them as they flourish as leaders in their communities.”

CCC has created a Service to Success Scholarship Fund, which will provide Chicago's returning veterans with scholarships of up to \$1,000 per academic year, essentially bridging potential funding gaps between veteran benefits and CCC tuition and reducing financial hurdles returning veterans may face in getting the education they need to land a job and start a career. The Fund will launch as part of the Service to Success initiative in Spring 2013 and CCC will work with corporate and institutional funders to fund scholarships into the future; those interested in learning more about the scholarship can call 773-COLLEGE.

“As a veteran myself, I know firsthand the difficulties returning veterans face when they come home. Often, these individuals, who are committed to success and adept at working on a team, don't know what careers they are qualified for or what their first step would be to find a position,” said Steve Calk, CEO of Federal Savings Bank, which has committed to partnering with CCC on developing cutting-edge curriculum through the nationally-acclaimed College to Careers initiative. “A comprehensive program like this one is an incredible opportunity to connect those who have served our country with pathways to continuing their success here at home.”

CCC will implement additional measures to ensure that veterans not only are getting the academic support they need to land jobs and start careers, but also receiving the support they need to successfully transition back into civilian life:

- Every CCC campus will have a Veterans' Resource Center, staffed by a full-time Veterans Advocate who is also a veteran, to assist with transition services, job opportunities, peer support, financial aid and benefit enrollment;
- CCC will ensure its programs supporting veterans are aligned across all CCC campuses through coordination by the CCC Provost's office.
- CCC will hire a dedicated recruiter to help returning veterans learn about and enroll in CCC programs;
- CCC will automatically identify returning veterans when they apply to CCC certificate or associates' degree programs so that Veterans Advocates can proactively connect with them.

“As we salute all those who have served our country in times of peace and war, I am proud to support these efforts to welcome the men of our armed forces as they return home to Chicago,” said Alderman James Balcer. “These programs will provide a critical link between the skills and

experience our returning veterans have and their ability to succeed once they return home, and benefit not only our veterans but our entire city.”

Currently, over 120,000 veterans live in Chicago and the national unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans is over 11 percent. The Service to Success program is part of the City’s first "Returning Veterans Initiative," launched by Mayor Emanuel in May 2012 to ensure every returning veteran has the tools they need to successfully transition back to civilian life and continue to serve this country from home. As part of this initiative, the Mayor has opened two new veterans resource offices, built 70 units of supportive housing for homeless veterans, launched an online resource guide, and sent a welcome home postcard to every returning veteran in the Chicago area.

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