



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 2, 2013

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

Anne Sheahan

312.744.2186

Anne.Sheahan@cityofchicago.org

**CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF STREETS AND SANITATION ADDS FIVE PAINTERS TO
GRAFFITI REMOVAL PROGRAM; INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY BY NEARLY 20 PERCENT**

*Crews complete more than 7,400 more graffiti removal jobs in first four months of 2013;
reduce average weekly service request backlog by 21 percent*

As outlined in Mayor Rahm Emanuel's 2013 budget, the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) has added five painters to its Graffiti Removal Program to enhance the City's response to graffiti vandalism, resulting in the completion of more than 7,400 additional jobs in 2013, and a 21 percent reduction in the City's average weekly service request backlog.

"Graffiti vandalism impacts not only the property owner, but the entire community," said Mayor Emanuel. "By making smarter use of our resources, we have increased our response to graffiti and are working harder to keep neighborhoods clean and safe for our residents."

By reallocating existing Graffiti Removal Program resources, the City added additional painters while maintaining a program budget level with 2012. Approximately 60 percent of the City's graffiti removal requests require paint service.

In early 2012, the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) implemented grid based reforms within its graffiti program which enabled the City to utilize resources in the most efficient way possible. In one year, crews have increased their daily productivity by an average of 22 percent.

With the addition of the five painters, DSS currently has 12 blaster crews and 11 paint crews. As of April 30, graffiti crews have completed more than 45,700 graffiti removal jobs this year—more than twice the number of calls for service received from residents.

“Ensuring residents receive the most efficient and best quality services possible remains our top priority,” said Commissioner Charles L. Williams, Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation. “We will continue to assess our Graffiti Removal Program strategies to identify best practices, as well as areas for improvement, as we work to maintain the beauty and vitality of Chicago.

The Graffiti Removal Program employs "blast" trucks that use baking soda under high water pressure to remove painted graffiti from brick, stone and other mineral surfaces. The program also deploys paint trucks to cover graffiti on surfaces such as metal or wood.

To report graffiti vandalism or obtain information about the Graffiti Removal Program, call 3-1-1 or visit www.cityofchicago.org/dss.

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