



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 29, 2013

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES CHICAGO'S FIRST EXPANSION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS IN MORE THAN A DECADE AND INCREASED SUPPORT FOR ADDITIONAL VICTIMS

Suite-Based Domestic Violence Shelter Will Serve 100 Families a Year, Increase Number of Available Beds in Chicago by 36 Percent

Building off of his longstanding support for victims of domestic violence, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced on Wednesday the details for the first expansion in the number of domestic violence shelters in Chicago in more than a decade and the fulfillment of his 2013 budget commitment to provide additional services to domestic violence victims. The new domestic violence shelter will be located in the Chicago Lawn neighborhood and will be among the few shelters in the nation to feature an innovative suite-based design that will provide victims with additional privacy and comfort.

"Domestic violence is an issue that few want to talk about, but we must address because victims should not have to suffer in silence. It is important that women and families have the support they need to turn the page and take the next step forward in their lives," said Mayor Emanuel. "We will significantly add to the range of resources available in Chicago through this new shelter and provide additional funding for court advocacy services so that women and their families can take the next step forward in their lives."

The new shelter will be built by a partnership that includes Women in Need Growing Stronger (WINGS), Metropolitan Family Services, and the Greater Southwest Development Corporation, and will serve as many as 100 families in its first full year of operation. The shelter, to be named "WINGS Metro", will increase the number of available beds in the City of Chicago by almost 36 percent, taking the overall number from 112 to 152.

The new shelter is scheduled to open in June 2014 and will be located on the city's Southwest Side in the Chicago Lawn neighborhood. At least 10 permanent housing units will be built on-site to provide necessary affordable housing when victims are ready to leave the shelter. The project will also include an income generating business such as a resale shop or coffee shop on the first floor which can also serve as an employment training site.

"As a champion of domestic violence victims' rights, Mayor Emanuel called on the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) to come up with a solution to increase the number of available beds in the City of Chicago," said DFSS Commissioner Evelyn Diaz. "Today's announcement is the direct result of the Mayor's ongoing commitment to assisting victims of domestic violence and their families. The new shelter design and programs will allow DFSS to serve the Chicago community."

"WINGS Metro is proud to partner with the City of Chicago on this unique collaboration to create a new safe, comfortable environment of Domestic Violence victims," said Rebecca Darr, WINGS Executive Director.

The shelter will also be Chicago's first suite-based domestic violence shelter, housing two families for every bathroom. This design increases client privacy and promotes a more harmonious existence between families. Chicago will be among a handful of cities in the country to have suite-based shelters.

"This shelter and housing program, using an innovative model and working with local experts, promises to be a welcome relief to survivors in Chicago," said Kim Gandy, President and CEO of the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

Mayor Emanuel also announced that the City will invest \$123,000 to provide court advocates to assist an additional 1,500 this year to victims of domestic violence as they go through the legal proceedings related to their cases. This investment delivers on a 2013 budget commitment and will nearly triple the number of victims that receive these advocacy services.

"We applaud the Mayor's support for additional court advocates to help domestic violence victims achieve safety through the legal system and hold more domestic abusers accountable," said Dawn Dalton, Executive Director of the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network. "More and more victims of domestic violence will now go to court and seek justice because they will know that the people with the knowledge to assist them will be there for them."

The construction of the shelter will cost \$4.2 million dollars. The City of Chicago will contribute \$1.8 million to this project that was generated by the settlement funds from the City's lawsuit against the VIP Gentleman's Club. The City will also donate \$500,000 worth of vacant city land

to the project to house the development. The partnership that will handle construction and implementation of the shelter is actively fundraising to provide close to \$3 million in the remaining funds.

It is essential that every Chicagoan actively seeks to end domestic abuse of all types in the city. To report domestic abuse, call 9-1-1. For more information and support, anyone can call the domestic violence help line at 877-863-6338.

#