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**MAYOR EMANUEL, ALDERMEN PAWAR & COLON INTRODUCE ORDINANCE TO
CREATE CITY'S FIRST LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY AND ESTABLISH A MUNICIPAL ID
WORKING GROUP**

*Ordinance to Ensure All Chicagoans Have Meaningful Access to City Services and Programs in
the Top Five Languages Spoken and to Establish a Municipal ID Working Group*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Alderman Ameya Pawar, Alderman Rey Colon and members of the Asian-American and Latino Caucuses today introduced the City's first Language Access Ordinance, ensuring that immigrants and limited-English-proficient (LEP) residents have meaningful access to City services, resources, and programs in the top five languages spoken in Chicago, including Spanish, Polish, Mandarin, Hindi, and Arabic. The ordinance also establishes a working group that will be tasked with developing an implementation plan for a Municipal ID program that can be used to connect Chicago residents with City services, programs, and benefits, regardless of immigration status, homeless status, or gender identify.

"Chicago has always been a beacon of opportunity to people from all around the world. This ordinance is an important next step to ensure that we remain a city where every resident has an opportunity to fully access all of the great things that Chicago has to offer," said Mayor Emanuel. "I fully support the recommendations made by the Language Access Advisory Committee as a means of removing barriers to opportunity and getting us closer to my goal of being the most immigrant-friendly city in America."

The ordinance establishes a policy for public-facing City departments, requiring that these departments develop a Language Access Plan for offering information, interpretation, and other critical services in the five most commonly spoken languages spoken in Chicago. Each department will designate a Language Access Coordinator to develop and implement a language access policy and submit a public compliance report annually. To implement this policy, the City will continue to meet with the Language Access Advisory Committee and has allocated \$100,000 from the 2015 Budget to translate the City website into the top languages spoken.

The ordinance also establishes a working group that will explore the creation of a Municipal ID program that can be used to benefit all Chicago residents by increasing access

to services and a variety of programs, regardless of immigration status, homeless status, or gender identity. Members of the working group will be named before the ordinance's passage so that they can hit the ground running. The working group will develop a set of recommendations and report to the Mayor and City Council within 120 days of the ordinance's effective date.

"As the Chairman of the City Council Latino Caucus, I am pleased with the work of the Language Access Committee in bringing together the City's first Language Access Ordinance, ensuring that immigrants have meaningful access to City services, resources, and programs in their native language," said Alderman Colon.

"When diverse immigrant communities gain language access to city services, it leads to positive social and fiscal change that ultimately benefits all Chicagoans. There has been a huge growth in the number of local South Asian Americans with limited English proficiency, and Hindi assistance is a crucial first step to their integration," said Ami Gandhi, Executive Director of South Asian American Policy & Research Institute (SAAPRI). "Meeting the needs of our city requires an inclusive and multilingual approach," said Sylvia Puente, executive director of the Latino Policy Forum. "The Forum is pleased that the development of this language access plan will bridge vital services to include all Chicago."

Chicago has more than 400,000 residents that are considered limited English proficient (LEP). This means that approximately 16.1 percent of the population in Chicago may face significant language barriers when accessing City services or programs. Chicago residents who have difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding English will now have better access to City government resources in their language.

Building on Mayor Emanuel's overall efforts to implement policies and programs outlined in the Chicago New Americans Plan, the Mayor appointed a diverse group of community, legal, and civic leaders in July of 2014 and tasked them with developing a language access policy to ensure that immigrants and Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) residents have meaningful access to City services, resources, and programs. The Committee was tasked with evaluating options for both short and long-term language access policies, and at the Mayor's direction, the group focused on three critical issues: increasing accessibility to City services for LEP residents, improving service delivery and efficiency of government services, and ensuring quality and compliance of a language access policy.

Following months of discussions and a comprehensive review of data and best practice research, the Language Access Advisory Committee developed a set of recommendations for the City to pursue. These recommendations are outlined in the Language Access Report. To read the entire report by the Language Access Advisory Committee Report, click here: http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Office%20of%20New%20Americans/Recommendations_from_LAP_Committee.pdf.

Since taking office, Mayor Emanuel has launched a series of initiatives that improve the immigrant community's access to services, expand new and existing immigrant businesses, and welcomes and celebrates Chicago's diverse immigrant communities. These initiatives

include working with Congressman Luis Gutierrez and the IL is Ready Campaign to assist as many people as possible in taking advantage of President Obama's Administrative Relief, launching the Cities for Citizenship Campaign with Mayors of New York City and Los Angeles and securing \$250,000 in funding from Citigroup to expand naturalization rates among U.S. permanent residents, and opening up nearly 23,000 internship, Volunteer, and Job Opportunities for DREAMers.

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