



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 31, 2018

**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR EMANUEL, ALDERMAN SCOTT AND CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNOUNCE  
RENOVATION AND MODERNIZATION OF DOUGLASS BRANCH LIBRARY**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, 24<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Michael Scott and Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon today announced the renovation and modernization of the approximately 18,000 square-foot Douglass Branch Library, located at 3353 West 13<sup>th</sup> Street. A \$2.15 million investment will be made to renovate the library, and provide the North Lawndale community with 21<sup>st</sup> century library spaces to support CPL's world-class programs.

"The modernization of Douglass Branch Library will further support North Lawndale residents, whether it's a student looking for homework help, or a job seeker looking to connect with a life-changing opportunity," said Mayor Emanuel. "An investment at Douglass is an investment in the future of a community fixture and in the future of Chicago."

Branch improvements will include a new built out early learning play space for children, a new dedicated YOUmedia teen space, a new circulation desk, and improved security and accessibility to the lower level auditorium and meeting room spaces. The Douglass Branch will also receive additional power and data, which will benefit the digital skills training available to patrons of any age through the Library's CyberNavigator program. Douglass is one of the most utilized branches for job seekers in the city.

"The renovations and modernization of the Douglass branch will revitalize a vital community anchor in North Lawndale," said Alderman Michael Scott, 24<sup>th</sup> Ward. "This investment in the library's facilities and infrastructure will provide our neighbors with the safe learning and gathering spaces that the children and families of Chicago deserve."

The Douglass Branch renovation project is part of the "Branching Out: Building Libraries, Building Communities" strategy to develop and modernize community libraries throughout the city. This plan follows the successful 21st century transformation of Chicago's library system, which has seen over \$250 million in new investments in capital, people and programs since 2011. Branching Out focuses on investing in key areas of neighborhood libraries including: modern facilities and

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

infrastructure, and high quality programming with trained librarians, teachers, and administrators. Since 2011, 6 new libraries have been built, and significant updates have been made at 14 branches. By 2019, an additional 5 new libraries will be built, and renovations at 4 libraries will be complete.

“We’re thrilled to be here today to announce this investment, which will provide the North Lawndale community with a 21<sup>st</sup> century library,” said Commissioner Brian Bannon. “The new and improved library will allow CPL staff to better serve the patrons and provide modern spaces where patrons can expand on technology skills and participate in other innovative programming.”

Douglass Branch renovations, which will be managed by the Department of Fleet and Facilities Management, will provide the neighborhood with a modern library space that continues to serve as an essential community anchor, providing critical services and resources to meet a variety of local needs. Construction is scheduled to begin in Fall, 2018.

The anticipated scope of this renovation will include a new energy efficient roof, a new skylight over the lobby, masonry repairs on the entire building, new exterior doors, complete interior renovations of the first floor and lower level floors, new energy efficient lighting, and a new circulation desk.

The 18,000 square foot Douglass Branch was originally designed in the art deco style. The library was built in 1929 to serve the North Lawndale community and redesigned in 1980. It is named in honor of former slave and abolitionist Frederick A. Douglass.

In addition to supporting traditional library services in all neighborhood branches, CPL has shifted focus to developing 21<sup>st</sup> century programs and services that support the evolving information needs of the patrons they serve. CPL has been able to support the rapid, sustained expansion of these highly-effective programs and facilities, including Homework Help, YOUmedia, the Summer Learning Challenge, and CyberNavigators. Due to these investments, 22 branches now house dedicated YOUmedia spaces for teens and 31 libraries will offer dedicated early learning play spaces.

###