



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 2, 2019

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, NEIGHBORHOOD AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS  
LAUNCH KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE INITIATIVE IN WEST GARFIELD  
PARK**

*New initiative to provide City services, substantial preventative and treatment supports, job training and employment resources along Pulaski Corridor*

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the launch of the Keeping Our Communities Safe Initiative, a new multi-agency, phased approach to mitigate the frequency of overdoses and violence on the Pulaski Corridor. As part of the mayor's strategy to reducing violence in Chicago's neighborhoods, the initiative will partner with City departments and agencies and over 30 neighborhood-based organizations, block clubs and faith groups to provide significant City services, substantial preventative and treatment supports and job training and employment resources to the West Garfield Park community.

"Empowering our communities means ensuring they have the services and supports needed to thrive," said Mayor Lightfoot. "This weekend and all year long, we're dedicating Chicago's resources to our highest priority neighborhoods in an 'all hands-on deck' effort to curb violence, tackle addiction and lay a foundation for real and lasting positive change in our communities."

Starting today and through Sunday, August 4, a series of community events and a resource fair will be hosted by partnering organizations at Legler Library and on W. Wilcox St. east of S. Pulaski Rd. to provide supports and services to local community members, including:

- Job training and employment referrals for residents
- Providing naloxone, clean needles and educational materials
- Conducting substance use disorder assessments and providing substance use treatment resources
- Performing health screens (HIV, food insecurity, etc.)
- Providing food and other basic resources
- Booths with information on the City and community-based services



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The resource fair will run from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Sunday, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

Saturday evening from 5:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. there will be a community BBQ, events for children, and a Park District screening of “Black Panther” outside of Melody Elementary School at 3937 W. Wilcox St. During the day, the Greater Chicago Food Depository will be at Legler Library to hand out canned goods and produce.

“I want to thank our block clubs, faith groups, businesses and school communities who have come together to unite against violence in our neighborhoods,” said Alderman Jason C. Ervin.

Thresholds, one of the oldest and largest providers of recovery services for persons with mental illnesses and substance use disorders in Illinois, has staffed an on-site clinician since July 29 to conduct substance use disorder screenings and make referrals to in- and out-patient services.

“Thresholds is proud to be providing screenings, assessments, substance use treatments referrals, and overdose prevention as part of the Keeping Our Communities Safe Initiative,” said Tim Devitt, Thresholds Vice President of Clinical Operations. “Along with the health care providers, our location at 3015 W Harrison St is committed to doing all we can to address opioid use in our community by providing comprehensive substance use treatment, recovery support, and overdose prevention. This includes fast access to medication-assisted treatment, opioid overdose reversal medication, outpatient and intensive outpatient care, outreach and recovery support, and access to quality health care, affordable housing, employment and whatever a person needs to initiate recovery.”

Prior to this weekend’s resource fair, the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS), the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Chicago Department of Water Management (DWM) and other City departments and agencies kicked-off Operation Clean-Up to fulfill service requests on a large scale as part of the initiative. The operation delivered comprehensive resources to the neighborhood in need of City services, including removing biohazardous needles on the street, fixing broken streetlights, potholes and damaged buildings, removing unwanted graffiti, cleaning empty lots and upgrading ADA curb ramps. In addition, Chicago Public Library (CPL), the Chicago Park District, the Department of Fleet and Facility Management coordinated services with the community to host this weekend’s resource fair and various community events.

“Streets and Sanitation is committed to keeping all Chicago communities clean and safe,” DSS Commissioner John Tully said. “Operation Clean-Up allows all city



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agencies and departments to work with residents to efficiently deploy the resources they need to keep their community thriving.”

To ensure the safety of West Garfield Park's residents, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and federal law enforcement partners increased police patrols along the Pulaski Corridor to conduct anti-violence missions, disrupt the flow and supply of illegal drugs in open-air markets and follow-up on any outstanding warrants in the area. CPD's community policing initiative, known as CAPS — Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy — has been knocking on doors and canvassing residents all week to work with the community on long-term solutions in solving neighborhood crime problems, including tackling conditions that breed crime, such as abandoned buildings and vehicles, vacant lots, drug houses and graffiti.

Throughout the next several months, the City will continue to partner with local community and faith-based organizations to measure the impact of this weekend's launch and continuously monitor the needs of services and supports in the area as part of the initiative's long-term strategy. City departments and agencies will continue to work directly with community members to coordinate services needed as part of a long-term effort to improve the quality of life for residents.

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