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MAYORAL TASK FORCE ON EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES RELEASES FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Outlines Recommendations Across Entrepreneurship, Job Training and Placement, Partnerships with Higher Education and City of Chicago Policies

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) Commissioner Karen Tamley, and community leaders announced the release of the Mayoral Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for People Disabilities set of recommendations. In addition to the release, Mayor Emanuel and Commissioner Tamley also announced the City's commitment to creating 30 new internships for City Colleges of Chicago students with disabilities this year, as recommended in the report.

"I applaud the Task Force for their passion and dedication to ensuring all Chicagoans have access to the vital employment opportunities across our city," said Mayor Emanuel. "This new report offers a blueprint for ensuring residents with disabilities have an equal opportunity to start their education, their business, and embark on a great career."

"Employment is one of the most important issues facing Chicagoans with disabilities and is essential to our economic strength," said MOPD Commissioner Karen Tamley. "By working with community members, employers, and educators, we will be able to harness untapped talent, grow jobs, and move closer to our goal of making Chicago the most accessible in the nation."

The Mayoral Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for People with Disabilities was launched on July 26, 2017, the 28th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and comprised of 26 members representing workforce agencies, disability leaders, job seekers, employers and representatives from local and state government agencies.

The Task Force defined four areas of focus and specific recommendations aimed at improving employment outcomes of people with disabilities. Those priorities and recommendations include:

- **Encouraging economic development through entrepreneurship** by ensuring information and support regarding the Business Enterprise own by People with Disabilities (BEPD) is accessible to potential entrepreneurs; increasing the number of BEPD certified businesses through enhanced awareness, outreach and engagement; expand contracting

opportunities for certified BEPDs; building the confidence and expertise of certified BEPDs to secure contacts

- **Aligning, enhancing and promoting comprehensive job training and placement services** by creating an online clearinghouse to facilitate city-wide employment systems and services for employers, workforce agencies and job seekers; facilitating greater awareness regarding the employment needs of people with disabilities through education and training; create an awareness campaign to make the case for employing people with disabilities; tracking, analyzing and using data to create change
- **Facilitating greater participation of students in higher education for careers** by providing comprehensive training to City Colleges of Chicago Career Services staff on career preparation and employment counseling for students with disabilities; collaborating with City Colleges of Chicago and employers to identify internships specifically for students with disabilities; identify partners to conduct research on the employment outcomes for secondary and postsecondary graduates with disabilities in Chicago; and create a task force on transition services to improve outcomes for Chicago Public School students
- **Examining City of Chicago policies that promote and/or discourage employment** by ensuring people with all types of disabilities can equally access the City of Chicago's employment opportunities; ensuring all City of Chicago departments have a comprehensive understanding of the City's reasonable accommodation policy and procedures; ensuring that the City of Chicago job descriptions do not unintentionally screen out qualified candidates with disabilities; and adopting best practices utilized by other cities and government agencies for employing people with disabilities

About the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities: The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) promotes total access, full participation and equal opportunity for people with disabilities of all ages in all aspects of life. It seeks to accomplish this mission through a multi-faceted approach that includes systemic change, education and training, advocacy and direct services. MOPD works to meet the diverse needs of the more than 600,000 individuals with disabilities who live and work in Chicago, and make Chicago the most accessible city in the nation.

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