



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND SUPPORT SERVICES
CITY OF CHICAGO

**STATEMENT FROM THE CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY & SUPPORT SERVICES TO THE CITY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

OCTOBER 27, 2016

Good morning Madam Chair, Vice Chairman Ervin and honorable members of the City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I also want to thank Mayor Emanuel for his leadership and support on key social services that impact the lives of Chicagoans of all needs and ages on a daily basis.

It is my pleasure to be here today to present to you the Department of Family and Support Services' (DFSS) 2017 budget. Under the Mayor's leadership I have been charged with further enhancing service delivery to our most vulnerable residents. To advance this mission, DFSS worked with our partners and stakeholders to develop a new framework to ensure better collaboration in DFSS and with our partner agencies all in an effort to better serve our clients and the residents of the City of Chicago.

Guiding the work we do is a singular, unified mission: the Chicago Department of Family & Support Services connects Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive. To that end, a new framework places a renewed emphasis on better outcomes for the clients and residents we serve. By implementing new practices and methodology we are able to measure, assess and deliver services to people based on where the needs are. Our refreshed mission has guided the work we have accomplished in 2016 and will frame the work ahead in 2017.

Every year, our department provides direct assistance and administers resources to more than 300,000 Chicagoans via our citywide network of more than 300 community-based delegate agencies.

Our scope includes services critical to our city's families, ranging from: early learning opportunities for Chicago's children; life changing summer employment opportunities and after-school engagement for our youth; transitional housing and supportive services for homeless families; support services and a safe place to live for victims of domestic violence; life-enrichment opportunities and additional care services for our seniors; guidance and aid for our veterans; and for ex-offenders, a second chance in life.

In 2017, DFSS remains committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable of our residents have the services they need.

The budget that I am presenting to you today on behalf of DFSS will allow us to effectively maintain our high level of service delivery while providing us with the flexibility needed to address critical situations that may arise throughout the year.

INVESTING IN OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH, THE FUTURE OF CHICAGO

A department's budget is an investment in the residents that they serve. Mayor Emanuel believes that the single best investment that we can make is one in the future of our young people. This is the principle that guides DFSS and allies like the Chicago Public Schools and the hundreds of youth agency partners we engage as we work together to strengthen the impact of our resources. While it is critical that we keep our young people safe and engaged, we are also looking to provide them with the kind of opportunities that will allow them to move forward and succeed in life.

HEAD START, EARLY HEADSTART AND CHILD CARE

DFSS Children Services Division operates programs to ensure that high-quality early childhood programs are available citywide to meet the unique needs of all communities.

In 2016, DFSS conceptualized and launched the city's first universal early childhood online application site, providing parents and families across the City with a comprehensive menu of preschool opportunities available from CPS and DFSS. This new system improves access for parents enrolling their 3- or 4-year old child in a high-quality pre-kindergarten program that meets their child's needs.

In 2017, as part of the Mayor's long term vision for early learning, Chicago will streamline early learning programming by consolidating oversight of community-based programs into DFSS. Transferring oversight of all community-based early learning and pre-kindergarten providers from CPS into one department will not only eliminate administrative redundancies, but more importantly, will help our city achieve a system of early learning that is easier for parents to navigate. Because early learning programming access is so indicative of a child's future growth and development, it is our mission to reduce any barriers and to make the enrollment process more accessible to support the Mayor's goal of universal access for 4-year olds from every neighborhood. This transfer will include \$55 million in direct programmatic support and up to \$10 million for capacity to administer the program. It will not only help to create a system that is easier for our community based organizations to navigate, but it will also make the enrollment process align with the needs of parents.

To that same end, DFSS will continue managing the city's allocation of all federal-- Head Start, Early Head Start and Child Care-- grant programs to ensure that programs in highest area of need are appropriately funded. DFSS also remains committed to realizing Mayor Emanuel's vision of providing consistent quality in birth through 5 programming to ensure that we are preparing our youngest learners for life-long success.

INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTH

One of Mayor Emanuel's highest priorities is supporting Chicago's youth in their education and in programming and activities during and outside of the school day that will help them to secure better and brighter futures. To that end, DFSS will support the Mayor's strategic vision to expand positive and evidence-based after-school programming to our youth year after year.

In 2011, there were just 14,500 available summer employment opportunities through the One Summer Chicago (OSC) program for our youth. Since that time, the city has more than doubled these critical, in-demand opportunities, serving more than 30,000 youth this summer—a 117 percent increase in capacity--and with plans to grow next year. Included in last year's program are more than 4,000 at-risk youth who benefitted from a dual employment/ mentoring opportunity known as One Summer Chicago PLUS. With the support of the Mayor and other public and private partners around the city, we will continue diversifying and expanding opportunities for our city's youth to earn, learn and develop their full potentials during summer months.

This year, DFSS launched the Auburn-Gresham Pilot to address the opportunity crisis facing men of color on the south and west sides of Chicago. Currently, forty-seven severely disconnected youth and young adults between the ages of 16-28 are participating and being connected to full-time employment, plus support and services to maintain that employment.

Last month, the Mayor announced the expansion of mentoring as part of his strategic public safety plan. As part of the plan, \$36 million – half from the City and half from the private and philanthropic sectors – will be invested in reaching approximately 7,200 at-risk youth in the most challenged communities with mentoring services over the next three years. The “anchor partner” in this effort is the Becoming a Man (BAM) mentoring program. BAM has expanded to serve 4,000 Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students this year, an increase of 1,300 students served over last year. The city has also committed to ramp up the proven Working on Womanhood (WOW) program, which serves at-risk young women, by one-third. While BAM is the anchor partner, more than half of the City funding will actually be used to incubate and expand community-based programs in these targeted neighborhoods. The expansion of research-based programs like the BAM program will support the Mayor's three-year plan to reach 7,000 young men residing in areas of the city most prone to violence through high-quality mentoring opportunities. These additional programs will be identified through a competitive process to fund new and existing mentoring initiatives later this year to compliment BAM's footprint and to reach more youth in the communities of greatest need.

HOMELESS SERVICES

DFSS administers and manages programs for homeless individuals and families, including more than 3,000 beds of overnight shelter and interim housing. Additionally, DFSS supports an array of services for homeless individuals and families including homelessness prevention, outreach and engagement, community-based case management, permanent supportive housing, and specialized services such as

employment training and placement, assistance with public benefits applications and substance use treatment.

As the lead agency in addressing homelessness, we work actively to engage those impacted by homelessness in services and care to help them get back into housing. As the composition and needs of our homeless population change, we continue looking to innovative new ways to best service this population, including evidence based strategies like the Ending Veterans Homelessness Initiative (EVHI).

Since its launch in 2015, the City of Chicago has housed more than 2,500 homeless veterans through the national EVHI initiative. The success of the effort is largely attributed to the strong coordination between the City, federal partners and homelessness advocates. Building on EVHI, DFSS secured \$100,000 in private funding, provided by the Elks, which will create an Emergency fund that will help support at least 50 additional veterans in securing stable housing. Our department has also retained lessons learned by the initiative to apply as overall best practices, including the utilization of our “One List” which provides a more accurate, real-time look at where homeless individuals are residing, what their names are, and other important information that we can use to better service them.

DFSS Chairs the Mayor’s new citywide task force, comprised of 16 City agencies and departments, dedicated to addressing and reducing homelessness in Chicago. It launched in March 2016 and has partnered with advocates, non-profits who serve the homeless, and representatives of the homeless community in a new pilot program designed to house 75 residents who have experienced recurring and extended homelessness. Working closely with partners like the Center for Housing and Health, and using EVHI best practices, we have currently housed more than 40 of those clients. We have 11 inactive participants who are no longer in need of housing or residing in the city, with all remaining clients in the process of being housed.

Every year, DFSS conducts the Point-In-Time (PIT) count to assess the city’s homeless population, estimating how many homeless residents reside in shelter and in public spaces on any given night and informing how we allocate resources. This year’s PIT revealed a 13 percent decrease in both sheltered and unsheltered populations compared to the 2015 count. The 2016 PIT Report more closely analyzes trends in homeless subpopulations in the city than has been done in previous years, with noted decreases among homeless Veterans, chronically homeless individuals, and homeless youth over last year.

A new housesharing surcharge has created the city’s first dedicated revenue source for addressing homelessness, with more than \$ 500,000 collected to date. The surcharge is expected to generate approximately \$2 million in revenue annually, with the vast majority of this revenue to be used by our department to enhance our efforts in the areas of supportive services and housing for homeless families and the chronically homeless. Also new this year, we recently announced the Day for Change Program which will use temporary job placement to encourage 100 homeless panhandling individuals to take services and to re-enter a system of earning, In addition to paying them for hours worked, the program will also introduce them to essential resources and services they need.

SAFEGUARDING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Due in large part to the Mayor's commitment to this cause, our city's first new domestic violence shelter in more than a decade opened in 2016. WINGS Metro increased Chicago's beds for domestic violence victims and their children from 115 to 155, an increase of more than 30%. WINGS Metro features innovated suite-based housing that eases inclusion of LGBT, male and trafficked victims, and as of June 30, 2016, it has housed 82 domestic violence survivors.

In recent months DFSS also worked with the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network to launch a text messaging option for the Domestic Violence Hotline. The text messaging component was designed to encourage teens to reach out for help or more information on domestic violence. We continue working with our partners at the Chicago Police Department and other stakeholders around the city to increase training and awareness for both our first responders and the general public to understand how to both address and prevent domestic violence.

SERVING AND RESPECTING OUR SENIORS

DFSS is a resource for more than 180,000 residents annually, including programs at 21 Senior Centers plus in-home services that allows them to live independently in their homes and communities.

Chicago has been designated an Age-Friendly City by the World Health Organization. As part of this designation, DFSS is using the "village model" to engage churches, area businesses and community organizations to join together to enable Seniors to continue to live in their communities with the supports they need. The Village Interdependent Collaboratives (VICs) have been established in Austin, Pilsen and Englewood and are led by volunteers. The model is being piloted as Vertical Interdependent Villages (VIVs) in high rise buildings. In 2017, DFSS and our Age Friendly Chicago Allies will continue to expand the Village Interdependent Collaborative model in an effort to eventually expand to all 21 Senior Centers.

HUMAN SERVICES

City Council recently passed Mayor Emanuel's ordinance designed to incentivize City construction contractors to sponsor ex-offenders into apprenticeship programs for their contracts, providing job training and employment opportunities to individuals looking to positively contribute to Chicago's economy. As part of the new program, the Department will work with delegate agencies to recruit, screen and refer potential qualified candidates to these opportunities. Through our re-entry programs we service nearly 1,000 ex-offenders working through our delegate agency partners.

DFSS launched a new resource website designed to meet the needs of Chicago's military Veterans, and has appointed a new Director of the Chicago Veteran Affairs Office to lead efforts and continue to grow programs and services to help the City's Veterans.

CONTINUED SERVICE IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

In closing, DFSS is working within our strategic framework to find improvements and identify efficiencies, while remaining committed to our mission to connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

We look forward to continuing our work with you and your staff to ensure that the residents of your wards are receiving the services that they need. We believe that by working together we make an even bigger impact to build, support, and empower Chicagoans.

Thank you again for inviting DFSS to present our budget for 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

LMB