

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

September 27, 2021

Hello, Chairwoman Dowell and the honorable members of the City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of Family and Support Services' budget for year 2022.

I want to start by thanking Mayor Lori Lightfoot for her continued leadership and commitment to our city's most vulnerable residents, demonstrated by the investments before you.

This past year has required us to move beyond the initial marshalling of resources in response to COVID-19 to deploying new ways of delivering services, and rapidly expanding and improving existing ones. Working with the Mayor's Office on Equity and Racial Justice, and through our continued technical assistance from the Harvard Government Performance Lab, we are laying the foundation for a more equitable approach to how we distribute funding, deliver services, and assess outcomes.

For example, we have launched, and are about to expand, the SCaN program, which seeks to bring stability to the lives of young people at high risk of being involved in violence. We are also expanding to include financial, legal, and housing assistance services for survivors of gender-based violence.

Housing stability has been at the forefront of our concerns. Over the past year, we have grown and refined our Rental Assistance Program and Expedited Housing Initiative – helping roughly 2,500 Chicagoans to preserve or gain stable housing thanks to these programs. Over the same time, I am proud to say that we have reduced our housing placement rate from 200 to 45 days.

For those residing in shelters, we have worked with community partners and the Department of Public Health to create safe environments and ensure access to vaccines and health care providers. This kind of work has been evident across other program areas, as we have partnered closely with our delegates to provide the resources necessary to safely continue services.

And, once again, the Mayor's dedication to youth development and job training led to an increase in wages to \$15 an hour for both program areas. Our workforce services have a new online presence to more effectively connect job seekers to training and employment.

With the Mayor's new investments, we can better ensure that Chicagoans with the highest needs are connected to the sustained, transformational supports that will help them recover and heal, and we are honored and eager to be entrusted with these resources and responsibilities.

Thank you all for your continued support and advocacy for human services.