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**MAYOR EMANUEL EXPANDS WORKING ON WOMANHOOD (WOW) MENTORING SERVICES
FOR 1,500 YOUNG WOMEN THIS FALL**

City to expand WOW mentoring program by 50 percent to support more young women in at-risk communities; expansion outlined by Mayor's Mentoring Initiative comes a year ahead of schedule

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced a new investment to further his three-year plan to increase mentoring to connect youth in high-risk neighborhoods with intensive support to keep them in school and on track. This latest investment expands the Mayor's Mentoring Initiative to another 500 young women in grades 8-10, and will serve a total of 1,500 female youths beginning fall of 2017. The investment to expand Working on Womanhood (WOW) is a year early and exceeds the scope of the initial commitment made in September 2016 to broaden the program.

The expansion of WOW complements a series of recent investments to significantly expand mentoring services to young men, and underscores the city's broader commitment to investing in opportunities so that more at-risk youth can get back on track.

"Mentors provide proven support and guidance that is invaluable in the lives of young men and women," said Mayor Emanuel. "Providing mentors to support Chicago's students will make a difference not just for their futures, but for the future of the City of Chicago."

The inclusion of the WOW program in the Mayor's Mentoring Initiative complements recent expansion of evidence-based male mentoring, and highlights the importance of using tailored approaches to counter the impact of violence and trauma on young women from high-risk communities, which mirror the same 22 community areas targeted for expansion of male mentoring programs.

"Supporting our city's youth in attaining academic and personal success is our top priority, and this means supporting both young men and young women with tailored programs to meet their unique needs," said DFSS Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. "Partnering with Youth Guidance to expand WOW to serve more young women moves us closer toward the goals of the Mayor's Mentoring Initiative so that ultimately youth in every community can thrive."

A core component of the public safety vision laid out last fall, the Mayor's three-year mentoring plan lays out a clear path to provide the city's most at-risk youth with the support they need to remain on-track to graduate high school and to avoid involvement in the criminal justice system. The plan is focused to immediately reach the city's most at-risk youth: 8th-10th graders living or

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ding school in the city's highest poverty and highest violence neighborhoods.

"When it comes to trauma and hardship, we know that more often our girls are silent victims. Fortunately, WOW provides young women a dynamic way of addressing social and emotional challenges before they become barriers to school and life success," said Michelle Adler Morrison, CEO of Youth Guidance. "Thanks to the Mayor's commitment to mentoring and to this program, we can be sure that more of our young women are positioned for success as we work to support all youth in building a brighter future."

Currently operating in 20 CPS schools citywide, WOW motivates young girls to overcome personal obstacles and successfully transition into womanhood with a sense of self-determination, personal mastery and hope. Like its male counterpart BAM, WOW mentoring is delivered through weekly group counseling sessions. This approach mitigates the isolation that girls experience during adolescence and enables them to hear from other students going through similar experiences.

All participants have access to a licensed clinician that works closely with them and their co-participants to help them stay on track toward graduation, develop the skills they need to make positive choices, and build the resilience assets such as self-efficacy, management of emotions, and positive values that enable them to become self-sufficient adults.

In-school mentoring like this program holds promise as an effective strategy for increasing academic achievement and improving life outcomes for vulnerable youths. According to research on the BAM program—also operated by Youth Guidance and mirroring many of the same central concepts as WOW—the University of Chicago Crime Lab found the program proven to decrease arrests for participants, and increasing on-time high school graduation rates by nearly 20 percent.

Recent research on WOW reveals that while around 94 percent of participants have encountered trauma and around 70 percent report symptoms of depression, nearly 60 percent report a substantial decrease in feelings of depression after one year of participation.

Addressing social emotional also leads to increased engagement in school, with nearly all WOW participants successfully completing their core requirements, and 96 percent of participants being promoted to the next grade. The University of Chicago Urban Labs and Youth Guidance are currently planning for a rigorous evaluation of WOW in the future.

To achieve the goals of the Mayor's Mentoring Initiative by 2018, the Mayor has called upon the private sector to support half of the \$36 million initiative. Today's expansion is supported by the fully-funded first year of that plan, exceeding the initial commitment to serve 300 additional young women next year, instead expanding to serve another 500 this fall.

Under the Mayor's leadership, the city has steadily increased its investment year over year in mentoring and other youth programs to address some of the most urgent needs facing the city: keeping youth safe, improving school outcomes and reducing crime. Through investments in proven mentoring services like BAM, the city has supported their expansion to more than 40 schools, serving an additional 3,500 students, since 2011. Launched by Youth Guidance in 2011, WOW has tripled in size with Mayor Emanuel's support to serve approximately 1,000 young women today.

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