



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 14, 2020

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR LIGHTFOOT NOMINATES CHRIS M. BROWN FOR CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSIONER

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the nomination of Chris M. Brown to serve as the next commissioner of the Chicago Public Library (CPL).

“Chris Brown is the rare leader who carries the unique combination of tremendous skill, experience, vision and values to lead our beloved Chicago Public Library system in this exciting new chapter in its history,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “In an age when our libraries have become more than just places to check out books, Chris has amassed a remarkable record of leadership and accomplishment, and I look forward to working with him to boldly break new ground on what our libraries mean for our communities and our entire city.”

Brown, a former Chicagoan, has more than 13 years of experience working in multi-branch public library systems with more than five years of executive leadership experience managing multi-million-dollar budgets. He has most recently served as the Deputy County Librarian of Community Library Development for the Santa Clara County Library District in Campbell, CA where he built and implemented progressive service models with a focus on providing outstanding customer service, fostering inter-departmental collaboration, engaging committed coalitions, and encouraging teamwork to produce exemplary library service. This past year, Brown also led the COVID-19 reopening planning for the Santa Clara County Library District, including staffing within budget constraints and developing new models for service. Prior to Brown’s most recent role, he worked for several other library systems throughout California.

“I am honored and humbled to join the Chicago Public Library, an institution with a 147-year history of innovation and excellence,” said Chris Brown. “Guided by Mayor Lightfoot’s vision for equity, recent community-focused initiatives are particularly inspiring:

eliminating late fees, adding Sunday hours, and revitalizing branches. I look forward to working closely with the city, library, and Chicago Public Library Foundation to explore new ways to help Chicago's communities recover and heal from the challenges of 2020. Libraries broaden our world. They're about learning and exploring our potential, and I can't think of higher stakes than the collective potential of our neighborhoods."

The City of Chicago engaged in a nationwide search to identify a commissioner to be the leader and visionary for the next generation of Chicago Public Library and to impact the public library space globally. The new commissioner will play a critical leadership role in meeting the strategic goals required to drive further impact to the Chicago community and beyond through prioritization of Mayor Lightfoot's core values of transparency, diversity, inclusion, equity, accountability and transformation.

"Chicago's libraries proudly serve as the focal points of our communities and critical tools in our broader effort to expand equity and opportunity across our city," said CPL Board Chair Linda Johnson Rice. "Chris Brown will not only bring his own wealth of talent and experience in his role as commissioner, but also the understanding of how our libraries democratize information by ensuring income does not determine your ability to learn, grow, and imagine."

Brown's nomination as the new commissioner is pending a confirmation vote by the CPL Board of Directors.

###