



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE PASSAGE OF MAYOR LIGHTFOOT'S  
2021 BUDGET**

"Chicago's public service workers have stepped up and protected this city during a deadly public health crisis not seen before in our lifetime and for that, we will always be in their debt. That's why since the start of this budget process, we have worked day and night with this administration to ensure not a single Chicago public worker loses their job or health insurance. This year's budget does just that by not only averting layoffs but further protecting the critical services that our residents rely on every single day. I applaud Mayor Lightfoot and the aldermen that voted yes today to pass a budget that protects the men and women who continue to sacrifice so much to keep Chicago moving during this pandemic."

**- Bob Reiter, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor**

"The epidemic of gun violence and the COVID-19 pandemic are two national public health crises that have taken the lives of too many across our city and our entire country. Since the start of this pandemic, street outreach teams and community-based organizations have been working around the clock to ensure Chicago's residents not only have the public health guidance they need to stay protected but continue to receive services they need to stay safe from gun violence. With a record-high investment towards violence prevention as part of next year's budget, I applaud Mayor Lightfoot and her administration for continuing to double-down on holistic, all-hands-on-deck strategies that will keep our residents safe."

**- Teny Gross, Executive Director of the Institute for Nonviolence Chicago**

"When Mayor Lightfoot presented her budget proposal months ago, she was clear that it would include an investment for community-based violence prevention and street outreach. In recent weeks, she's moved forward on that commitment by reallocating an additional \$10 million towards community-based violence intervention, victim services, trauma supports, and mental health resources. The 2021 budget isn't perfect; however, it certainly has committed more funds than we've ever seen in a City budget towards a safer, more equitable Chicago."

**- Yolanda Fields, Chief Program Officer for Breakthrough Urban Ministries**



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“We are grateful that the Mayor and Chicago’s aldermen have demonstrated a commitment in the 2021 budget to innovative and healing-centered crisis intervention. The investment in a new responder model pilot recognizes Chicago’s police officers should not and cannot be the first and only responders on every call for help from our residents. We look forward to building out this holistic and integrated infrastructure for an alternative means of emergency response across the entire city.”

– **Alexa James, CEO of the National Alliance for Mental Illness Chicago (NAMI Chicago)**

“We thank Mayor Lightfoot and all aldermen who voted to continue the City’s support for the Legal Protection Fund, which will ensure immigrant Chicagoans continue to have access to immigration legal services that are critical to upholding their rights.”

– **Mary Meg McCarthy, Executive Director of Heartland Alliance’s National Immigrant Justice Center**

“Today’s budget includes continued funding for immigrant and assures that thousands of immigrant families in Chicago can continue to receive the free legal services they need to stay safe. As one of only a handful of cities that provides these funds, Chicago continues to say to immigrants that we matter, we are essential, and we are Chicago.”

– **Eréndira Rendón, Vice-President, Immigrant Advocacy and Defense, The Resurrection Project**

“As Mayor Lightfoot has said herself, Chicago’s budget is a moral document that should reflect the priorities of all residents, communities and wards, not just a select few. Over the past two months, we have seen robust and engaged debates between all 50 aldermen and this administration as we worked collaboratively to craft sustainable solutions that place our city on firm fiscal footing in a time of historic crisis. The budget passed today not only reflects a clearer path to lasting financial strength in Chicago but with its investments in public health and public safety, it represents a stronger, fairer, and more prosperous future for all residents in this city. To supplement these efforts, we also worked diligently to pass a five-year capital spending plan to repair the decades-old backlog of Chicago’s aging infrastructure. From decaying bridges to bumpy roads and an eroding Lake Michigan shoreline, this capital plan invests a total of \$3.7 billion in all of Chicago’s 77 communities.”

– **Gilbert Villegas, 36th Ward Alderman, Chairman of the Committee on Economic, Capital, and Technology Development and City Council Floor Leader**



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"Voters elected each and every one of us to make the hard but necessary choices for the greater good of our communities and the city as a whole. While this year's budget includes a modest property tax increase, it also closes a billion-dollar-plus budget gap not seen before in our lifetime without laying off a single City worker. Rather than kick the can down the road any further and create a more burdensome financial crisis for our communities, I voted yes on a budget that addresses the problems we are facing today. And even during the largest budget deficit in Chicago's history and a global pandemic that continues to cripple our economy, we are making expanding investments for community-based violence prevention, mental health, domestic violence and funding for high-risk youth in our most vulnerable communities."

**– Pat Dowell, 3rd Ward Alderman, Chairman of the Committee on the Budget and Government Operations**

"I applaud this administration for its open, transparent, and inclusive budget-making process over the last several weeks. As a result of this once-in-a-century global pandemic that continues to plague the public health and financial security of our communities, this year's budget does not shy away from the hard, difficult choices that are necessary for our longer-term recovery. Nonetheless, it's the vote we made today that will help us face the challenges of tomorrow. From targeted investments in historically disinvested communities to increased funding for mental health and violence prevention initiatives, this year's budget lifts up our families, communities and small businesses by building on the same values that have guided us through the COVID-19 crisis."

**– Scott Waguespack, 32nd Ward Alderman and Chairman of the Committee on Finance**

"Earlier this month, I stood with my fellow aldermen and community leaders to demand more investments towards community-based violence prevention as part of the 2021 budget. Mayor Lightfoot answered that call by reallocating an additional \$10 million towards violence prevention, bringing the City up to a total of \$36 million in funding for violence prevention for 2021 — a record high for Chicago. With these new investments, our police officers, street outreach workers, faith leaders and community-based organizations can continue to work together in an all-hands-on-deck strategy to keep our communities safe.

**– Chris Taliaferro, 29th Ward Alderman, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee**

"While it may not be perfect, at the end of the day, budgets are moral documents that rely on compromise, collaboration and trust. Since day one, we have worked with this administration to be true to our values and deliver a balanced budget that closes a historic billion-dollar budget gap without damaging cuts to services, an



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overwhelming tax increase, or risking the City's reputation by laying off hundreds of workers. Due to decades of underfunding in past budgets, we will need to increase revenues in 2021 to get through the financial crisis we face today from the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, with historic investments in public safety, public health and other services, this budget truly represents our values as Chicagoans, which is why I'm proud to have voted yes today."

**- Susan Sadlowski Garza, 10th Ward Alderwoman**

"From job losses to store closings, this year's COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the livelihoods of all Chicagoans and its devastation can be felt throughout all wards and all communities. The last time our city faced such historic financial hardships, City Hall found itself selling parking meters and cutting corners with disastrous measures that only worsened our finances over time. With this year's budget, this administration is taking these issues head-on in a transparent manner that doesn't shy away from making hard decisions. To maintain appropriate levels of public services and public safety, this budget balanced personnel cuts, borrowing, and revenue increases, including a modest property tax increase on all properties. Our City has a lot of rebuilding and healing ahead. This budget will help get us there. That's why I voted yes on today's budget."

**- Michele Smith, 43rd Ward Alderman, Chairman of the Committee on Ethics and Government Oversight**

"From the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic to civil unrest not seen in decades, this year has truly been historic, and its events have undoubtedly left our City's finances in a crisis. That is why it was even more critical for me to push the City to invest more in mental health, violence prevention and funding for high-risk youth as part of next year's budget. While no budget is perfect, we need to ensure our communities have the resources they need to survive, which is why I voted yes on a budget that puts the priorities of our residents first."

**- Jason Ervin, 28th Ward Alderman**

"While it was a long and sometimes strenuous effort to get to today's vote, I am proud to have voted yes on a budget that made vital investments in our communities."

**- Felix Cardona Jr., 31st Ward Alderman**

"Even in the darkest days of the pandemic and the social unrest this spring and summer, we could always count on the men and women of the Chicago Police Department and Chicago Fire Department to be there, out on the streets, for our residents. While other aldermen sought to repay the sacrifices made by our first responders by defunding them of their resources, I'm proud to have voted yes on a budget that does exactly the opposite. Today's budget passage represents an effort



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to ensure our men and women in blue and red have the supports they need to stay safe while as they continue to serve and protect us every day."

– **Nicholas Sposato, 38th Ward Alderman**

"This budget represents hundreds of hours of collaboration with aldermen and community leaders from across Chicago to ensure we could not only avoid hundreds of layoffs but also make the necessary investments in community-based violence prevention and mental health that will make our city safer for all residents."

– **James Cappleman, 46th Ward Alderman**