



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 26, 2017**

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) 2018 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 has worked with our partners and stakeholders to develop a new framework to ensure better collaboration within DFSS and with our partner agencies to better serve the residents of the City of Chicago.

Guiding the work we do is a singular, unified mission: DFSS connects Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive. Our refreshed mission has framed our work in 2017. Moving into 2018, we intend to solidify the Department's strategic framework by incorporating it into RFPs and contracts.

Every year, DFSS provides direct assistance and administers resources to more than 300,000 Chicagoans via our citywide network of more than 360 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 2018, 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 (CPS) 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 HEAD START, AND CHILD CARE

The 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.

This year, as part of the Mayor's long-term vision for early learning, Chicago has streamlined 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, also help our city achieve a system of early learning that is easier for parents to navigate. Because access to early learning programming is so indicative of a child's future growth and development, it is our mission to reduce any barriers to enrollment and support the Mayor's goal of universal access for four-year-olds from every neighborhood. This transfer included \$55.5 million in direct programmatic support and up to \$2.5 million for capacity to administer the program. This consolidation also created 38 new positions in the Children Services Division, which has reorganized and created Chicago Early Learning Standards, setting quality standards to administer programs for children ages birth to five, regardless of the funding stream.

In addition to the consolidation of community-based early learning programs into DFSS, DFSS has continued to manage the city's allocation of all federal grant programs—Head Start, Early Head Start and the state Child Care Assistance Program to ensure that programs in the highest area of need are appropriately funded. DFSS will continue to administer these programs, and remains committed to realizing Mayor Emanuel's vision of providing consistent quality in programming from birth to age eight 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 secure better, brighter futures. DFSS will continue to 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 31,000 youth this summer—a 117 percent increase in capacity—with plans to grow next year. This summer, youth collectively worked more than 3 million hours in neighborhoods throughout Chicago. Opportunities ranged from infrastructure jobs and camp counselors, to urban agriculture and outdoor forestry projects, to office work and private-sector experiences. Youth also gained training and employment in the private sector that is expanding beyond the summer. Potbelly's has already hired 24 youth for full time employment. In addition, the Hilton trained 18 youth on a 30-hour hospitality curriculum that included job shadowing, and at least five were hired.

Earlier this summer, a study conducted by the University of Chicago Urban Labs found that students who worked a summer job through the One Summer Chicago Plus (OSC+) program had, on average, 33 percent fewer violent-crime arrests in the subsequent year than their peers who did not participate in this program.

In 2016, DFSS launched the Strong Futures Pilot to address the opportunity crisis facing men of color on the South and West Sides of Chicago. Sixty-three severely disconnected youth and young adults between the ages of 16-28 participated in the program. To date, 31 of the young men, nearly 50 percent, have been employed full-time; eight have been employed part-time (13 percent); and 11 have secured temporary employment.

Last year, 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 – is being invested in reaching approximately 7,200 at-risk youth in the most challenged communities with mentoring services over three years. The mentoring initiative is being delivered through a network of 57 community-based organizations in both in-school and out-of-school settings. These 57 delegate agencies are part of a professional learning cohort that meets quarterly to review data and discuss best practices. The University of Chicago Urban Labs is our partner in conducting a three-year evaluation of the cohort.

## 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 for innovative new ways to best serve this

population, including evidence-based strategies from the Ending Veterans Homelessness Initiative (EVHI).

Since its launch in 2015, the City of Chicago has housed more than 3,700 homeless veterans through the national EVHI. The success of the effort is largely attributed to the strong coordination between the City, federal partners and homelessness advocates. Our department has also retained lessons learned by the initiative to apply as overall best practices, including the utilization of a coordinated entry system 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 is taking this successful component of EVHI and has transformed the crisis response system by designing and funding components of a Coordinated Entry System that incorporates a universal standard assessment for all homeless populations to be entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and assesses the vulnerability of the individual. The system utilizes a community-wide prioritization standard to match the most vulnerable homeless residents to effective and appropriate housing.

DFSS chairs the Mayor's Interagency Taskforce to Reduce Homelessness, comprised of 16 City agencies and departments, which is dedicated to addressing and reducing homelessness in Chicago, and looks forward to working with the newly established City Council Subcommittee on Reducing Homelessness.

Every year, DFSS conducts the Point-In-Time (PIT) count to assess the city's homeless population, estimating how many homeless residents reside in shelters and public spaces on any given night, and informing how we allocate resources. This year's PIT revealed a decrease in the total number of homeless individuals during 2016-2017. The survey accounted an overall four percent decrease from 2016, marking the lowest observed count of homeless individuals citywide in over a decade. The 2017 PIT demonstrates progress toward the city's broader goal of reducing homelessness: veteran homelessness decreased for the second consecutive year, and by 10 percent since last year; unaccompanied youth homelessness dropped by 10 percent; and families with children living in shelters decreased by 13 percent, while reaching the city's lowest number of families in shelters since 2007.

Last month, DFSS began implementing Families in Transition, or FIT, a new program that provides supportive services to CPS families at risk of homelessness with rental subsidies from the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund. FIT is an unprecedented program that will serve 100 homeless students and their families.

#### SAFEGUARDING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Due in large part to the Mayor's commitment to this issue, Apna Ghar opened a new domestic violence shelter this year that services at least 75 women and their children. Since it opened in January, it has served 35 women and their children. Apna Gar follows the opening of WINGS Metro Shelter and Safe House for families 2016, which became the first domestic violence shelter to open in Chicago in more than a decade. Since its opening nearly a year ago, WINGS Metro already has housed more than 285 domestic violence victims and their children, including some male and transgendered victims. The opening of WINGS Metro and the Apna Ghar expansion contributed to a 40% increase in the total number of Domestic Violence shelter beds in Chicago.

## SERVING AND RESPECTING OUR SENIORS

DFSS is a resource for more than 180,000 seniors annually, providing them with programs at 21 Senior Centers as well as in-home services that allow 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 faith-based organizations, local businesses, and community-based organizations to join together to enable seniors to continue living in their communities with the supports they need. The Village Interdependent Collaboratives (VICs) have been established in Austin, Pilsen, Englewood, Northeast, and Edgewater. The VICs are community-led and run by volunteers, but use the Senior Centers as a resource. This model has been expanded to Vertical Interdependent Villages (VIVs) in high-rise buildings in the Loop and South Shore. In 2017, DFSS and our Age-Friendly Chicago Allies expanded this program to 18 CHA buildings. In 2018, the VICs will expand to the remaining Regional Senior Centers, and will be in all 21 Senior Centers by the beginning of 2019.

## HUMAN SERVICES

As part of being a welcoming city, DFSS, in partnership with the Mayor’s Office of New Americans, created the Chicago Legal Protection Fund in 2017. This \$1.3 million investment provided critical support to more than 22,500 city residents, helping to keep our immigrant population safe, secure and supported by the City.

In late 2016, we started “A Day for Change” pilot. This initiative, which provides homeless panhandlers with an opportunity to connect to supportive services while earning a modest wage, was expanded in 2017. Since 2016, this program has served 1,145 residents.

DFSS continues to look for new and creative partnerships to provide job training for ex-offenders. This year, we partnered with the Department of Animal Care and Control on their Kennel Cleaning Program. This paid job training initiative is designed to introduce returning individuals to animal related employment opportunities within the animal welfare and pet industries.

## 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 2018.

I am now happy to answer any questions you may have.

LMB