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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2018

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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES 100,000 GRAFFITI REMOVAL REQUESTS
COMPLETED SO FAR THIS YEAR**

*Graffiti Complaints Are Down 16 Percent in 2018 and More Than 66 Percent of Removals Are
Done Proactively*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) Commissioner John Tully to announce graffiti removal crews have completed more than 100,000 service requests in 2018. Complaints are down 16 percent this year and crews have an average response rate of four days or less.

“By working in a smarter, more effective manner, city crews are removing graffiti faster across all of Chicago’s neighborhoods,” Mayor Emanuel said. “From graffiti removal, to tree trimming, to snow plowing, to rodent abatement, and much more, Chicago continues to strengthen neighborhood services as the fundamental building blocks needed to maintain strong, healthy communities.”

DSS attributes the swift graffiti removal to a grid-graffiti based system, which allows crews to service requests in five wards every day and maintain an average response rate of 4 days or less, as compared to the prior 10-day response time. Under the more efficient grid model powered by additional resources and crews, DSS has created a more efficient graffiti removal system.

“No community in Chicago has to tolerate graffiti,” said DSS Commissioner John Tully. “Streets and Sanitation crews continue to proactively address graffiti removal jobs to prevent the spread of graffiti and we ask that residents report graffiti vandalism as soon as possible to help us keep neighborhoods in the City safe and beautiful.”

Last year, the City modernized its fleet by purchasing 8 new trucks that remove graffiti in an environmentally friendly manner using a citric acid based solution. Crews operate these units in addition to soda blasters and paint trucks on all surfaces throughout the City.

In December 2018, the new 311 Customer Relationship Management System will launch and replace a 20-year old system. The new 311 was built with Chicagoans, for Chicagoans to improve customer experience and the delivery of city services – providing greater transparency and more ways to submit and track service requests including graffiti removal.

With the new interactive system, Chicagoans will be able to text their service requests, along with photos of the graffiti or pothole, and then the City will be able to text those same residents back to let them know the request is complete.

The new 311 system will not only make submitting graffiti removal requests easier, but it will also better allow the City to determine if it is in fact graffiti or public art. In November 2018, City Council passed the mayor's ordinance to create a registry of murals in Chicago. The ordinance will identify thousands of existing murals across the City and help protect the growing number of murals while ensuring DSS continues to clean up graffiti.

Graffiti removal is a free service offered by the City of Chicago. The graffiti program works with aldermen, community groups, block clubs, chambers of commerce and residents to respond to reports of graffiti. Residents who would like to report graffiti can call 311, or visit www.cityofchicago.org/dss.

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