



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY AND CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY  
OPEN NORTHTOWN LIBRARY BRANCH**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Public Library (CPL) and Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) today joined local officials and community members to open the new Northtown library branch. This is the third innovative co-located housing and library development built as part of a CPL/CHA partnership and will serve as an anchor for the West Ridge community.

“Bringing together world-class libraries together with housing builds strong neighborhoods and provides a place for all community residents to gather, share and succeed,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “The new Northtown library will soon be the place in West Ridge where families gather, students come for help with homework and job-seekers connect with life-changing opportunities.”

The Northtown Apartments and Northtown Branch are located at 6800 N Western Ave in the 50<sup>th</sup> Ward. The library replaces the previous location, which was at 6435 N. California Ave. The single-story branch Library at the ground level will serve the neighborhood with a large community space, a dynamic children’s area with an Early Learning Play Space, a large YOUmedia area for teens, and an adult area with computers and reading space. There is an exterior courtyard accessible from the library. The new branch has an open floor plan layout that curves from space to space to signify the patrons’ journey through the ages of learning. It was designed by Perkins+Will and financed by the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) along with Evergreen Real Estate Group. Power and Sons Construction Company served as the General Contractor.

“The Northtown library branch will soon be a vital community anchor bringing our residents the 21<sup>st</sup> century opportunities and services they deserve,” said Alderman Debra Silverstein, 50<sup>th</sup> Ward. “Together with the CHA housing, this innovative project is breaking the mold and strengthening the fabric of our neighborhoods for generations to come.”

The co-located library and apartments will provide 44 one-bedroom senior housing units, including 30 CHA and 14 affordable apartments, giving the West Ridge community more

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

affordable housing opportunities in a truly unique building that brings cutting edge design by a global and award-winning architecture firm.

Each of the three new co-located library branches offers additional programs and services to meet the residents they serve. All three new library locations will offer an Early Learning Play Space, designed to support parents and caregivers in developing their child's early literacy skills through play; a YOUmedia space for teens to explore digital design, music and recording, technology, 3D and 2D making and more with the help of skilled mentors; and dedicated workforce development support and technology tutors called CyberNavigators for adults hoping to learn basic computer skills or apply for a job online. CPL will continue to partner with expert workforce organizations to deliver trainings on additional skills, such as resume writing, interview prep and industry-specific skills. The new branches will also have traditional library programs, such as book clubs for seniors and intergenerational educational and cultural programming.

"The Northtown library branch is very important to this community, used with frequency and beloved by all ages," said Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon. "We are thrilled to be able to provide a beautiful, state of the art building to serve as a community anchor for library patrons, housing residents and the broader West Ridge community."

The libraries at the two other co-located library and housing developments, Independence Branch Library and Apartments at 4024 N. Elston Ave. and Little Italy Branch Library and Taylor Street Apartments at 1342 W. Taylor St. opened earlier this year. All three developments were designed by top architecture and design firms in the city and were selected following a design competition sponsored by the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development. The competition was part of Mayor Emanuel's vision to bring world-class design to Chicago neighborhoods and break from the standard, cookie-cutter designs that are common to government buildings. All three architecture firms selected have strong Chicago roots and have won awards for design excellence and innovation. The new apartments will open later this spring.

"Strong, healthy neighborhoods require community anchors like libraries and CHA is proud to be a partner in this development which will provide library services not only for residents of the apartments above the new branch but across the West Ridge community," said CHA CEO Eugene E. Jones, Jr.

Under Mayor Emanuel's leadership, more than \$300 million in new investments have been made in Chicago Public Library under the "Branching Out: Building Libraries, Building Communities" initiative to develop and modernize community libraries throughout the city. Branching Out focuses on investing in key areas of neighborhood libraries including: modern facilities and infrastructure, and high quality programming with librarians and administrators. Since 2011, 6 new libraries have been built and significant updates have

been made at 14 branches. By 2019, an additional 5 new libraries will be built, and renovations at 4 libraries will be complete.

The library will hold a Family Day Celebration on Saturday, March 23 featuring live performances, crafts, games and more.