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NEW 'CORRIDOR AMBASSADOR' PROGRAM TO SUPPORT 13 NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING AREAS

Chicago Recovery Plan initiative will enhance the vitality and safety of local commercial corridors

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) today announced a corridor ambassador program that will provide on-the-street support for shoppers and businesses in targeted retail districts across the city.

The program will be operated by a dozen community-based organizations that will hire and train neighborhood residents to provide a friendly, welcoming presence on local streets. Starting in early June, ambassadors for each corridor will greet passers-by and provide information on wayfinding, parking, dining, and shopping. Ambassadors will also help connect people experiencing homelessness to city resources and coordinate with public safety agencies on potential safety hazards, medical emergencies, and possible criminal activity.

"The Corridor Ambassador program is an exciting new tool to create welcoming and safe neighborhood shopping destinations," said Mayor Lightfoot. "By partnering with established community organizations that employ local residents, we can help ensure that businesses and shoppers have on-the-spot contacts for any assistance they may need to have a positive experience."

"This program will complement the wide range of other investments we're making to support commercial corridors, including the \$1.4 billion invested in Invest South/West neighborhoods," said Samir Mayekar, Deputy Mayor for Economic and Neighborhood Development. "By helping to boost foot traffic, corridor ambassadors will support our strong economic recovery across the city."



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Ambassadors will wear brightly colored attire while providing a five- to 12-hour presence per day, five to seven days per week, depending on corridor needs. At least two ambassadors will work simultaneously in each corridor. More than 100 ambassadors are expected to be hired in support of the program, approximately six to 12 per corridor.

“This program will provide hyperlocal, concierge-like services directly to the people who visit, shop, and work along these corridors,” said DPD Commissioner Maurice Cox. “The ambassadors will be greeting shoppers, talking to business owners, responding to questions, and making people feel welcome.”

Participating organizations were selected through a DPD Request for Proposals (RFP) issued this March. Nineteen community-based organizations responded to the RFP, which was limited to low- and moderate-income service areas or shopping districts that saw a 15% or more drop in activity since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Selected agencies and targeted streets include:

- Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council/Ashland Avenue and 47th Street
- Bright Star Community Outreach/35th Street and King Drive
- Calumet Area Industrial Development Commission/Michigan Avenue and 111th Street
- Centers for New Horizons/63rd and Halsted streets
- Greater Chatham Initiative/East 79th Street
- Magnificent Mile Association/Magnificent Mile and River North, and Central Loop
- Northwest Side Housing Center/Belmont, Diversey, Fullerton, and Grand avenues
- Puerto Rican Cultural Center/North Avenue
- St. Sabina/West 79th Street
- Uptown United/Broadway, Sheridan Road, and Argyle Street
- Westside Health Authority/Madison Street and Pulaski Road, and Chicago Avenue

Grants will total up to \$5 million budgeted citywide for the program’s initial year.

To maximize their impact, ambassadors will coordinate with Chicago Public School’s Safe Passage program, which provides a trusted adult presence for students traveling to and from schools, and refer to local service providers as needed. They will also work with their local Chicago Police Department district, as well as Chambers of Commerce, Special Service Area managers, and other entities that are



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supporting Mayor Lightfoot's INVEST South/West community revitalization initiative and community safety initiatives.

The program is part of the Chicago Recovery Plan's ambitious \$1.2 billion strategy for equitable economic recovery and support for thriving and safe communities.

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