MAYOR EMANUEL, COOK COUNTY BOARD PRESIDENT PRECKWINKLE LAUNCH SKILLS FOR CHICAGOLAND'S FUTURE

Demand-driven Initiative to Address Workforce Skills Gap in Chicago and Cook County; Modeled on National Skills for America's Future Initiative

City of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Cook County Board of Commissioners President Toni Preckwinkle today announced the creation of Skills for Chicagoland's Future (SCF)—a public-private partnership uniting Chicago and Cook County government, businesses, job seekers, workforce development partners and educational institutions in a coordinated effort to jumpstart business growth, put local residents back to work and stimulate our region's economy. The program's focus is to shrink the skills gap in the Chicago area and help employers find employees who are properly trained for available positions.

"A strategic, regional workforce development plan that is focused on the employment needs of local businesses is essential for the economic future of Chicago and the surrounding areas," said Mayor Emanuel. "Skills for Chicagoland's Future will put unemployed residents back to work by training them for the positions that are available in the modern economy, and will benefit the entire region for generations to come."

"At a time when approximately 240,000 residents throughout Cook County are unemployed, there are more than 200,000 local job postings," said Board President Preckwinkle. "Skills for Chicagoland's Future will help these residents gain the skills and education they need to obtain and succeed in available jobs in a way that maximizes the City and County's workforce development resources."

SCF will work as a business advocate—the organization will work directly with local businesses to identify the unmet needs of employers. Then, when needed, SCF will work directly with companies to coordinate funding and develop customized workforce training solutions. These efforts will decrease the number of unfilled jobs and the time it takes to fill those positions. The full range of SCF services include:

- real time matching of job seekers with employers
- development of customized training solutions by identifying and leveraging funds that can be used to build the programs, and by working with a wide variety of educational and other institutions to develop appropriate programs
- building partnerships throughout the region to develop long-term solutions to the workforce skills gap.

The work done by SCF will support and complement the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and City Colleges of Chicago's College to Careers efforts.

SCF services are currently provided at no cost to either employers or unemployed job seekers. Employers can contact SCF to assist with recruitment efforts related to their skills gap and hiring challenges.   Unemployed job seekers in Chicago and Cook County can apply to be included in the SCF database for placement consideration and immediate opportunities.

Skills for Chicagoland's Future is the first regional adaptation of the successful national organization Skills for America's Future (SAF) that works to foster partnerships between businesses and community colleges to ensure workers are trained with employer-needed skills. Chicago business executive Penny Pritzker will serve as the first chairman of Skills for Chicagoland's Future board of directors, providing continuity with the national Skills for America's Future, for which she serves as its advisory board chairman.

Pritzker, founder and CEO of PSP Capital and its affiliate, Pritzker Realty Group, stressed the business community focus of Skills for Chicagoland's Future. "Skills for Chicagoland's Future will help local employers, both large and small, to leverage federal workforce development funds to create partnerships between employers and educational institutions to provide customized training solutions in areas where skill-ready candidates don't already exist. SCF will help coordinate the training so that job seekers can acquire the

necessary skills to fill employers' current and future job openings."

Marie Trzupek Lynch, a seasoned workforce development professional who previously spearheaded the City's Chicago Career Tech training initiative, will serve as president and CEO of Skills for Chicagoland's Future.

"Skills for Chicagoland's Future is a new, targeted approach to workforce development that takes the guesswork out of the numbers," said Marie Lynch, president and CEO of Skills for Chicagoland's Future. "Rather than training people in a skill and hoping they find a job, SCF will focus on identifying the available jobs and skills that employers require to meet current staffing needs."

Skills for Chicagoland's Future is already working with businesses such as Allscripts, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois and SeatonCorp to provide such services to meet their immediate hiring needs. Accenture just completed a 12-week pro bono consulting engagement to help jumpstart the organization.

As a public-private partnership, Skills for Chicagoland's Future is funded by the City of Chicago, Cook County, the State of Illinois, foundation support and private sector donations, including a lead corporate gift from JP Morgan Chase Foundation and gifts from, The Joyce Foundation, the Pritzker Traubert Family Foundation and Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust.

"This partnership is a great example of private and public sectors successfully collaborating," said Glenn Tilton, Midwest Chairman, JPMorgan Chase. "Starting with employers' job opportunities and customizing training programs for those seeking work is most effective in meeting job needs and giving unemployed a fighting chance, and is a great fit for JPMorgan Chase in our mission to help create jobs and our local businesses grow."

For more information, please visit skillsforchicagolandsfuture.com.

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