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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 26, 2020

**CONTACTS:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND SUPPORT SERVICES ANNOUNCE NEW INITIATIVES FOR SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMMING**

*One Summer Chicago to Include Chicago Youth Service Corps to Focus on Citywide COVID-19 Response*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Family and Support (DFSS) today announced that the City's youth summer employment program – [One Summer Chicago](#) (OSC) – will include paid, job and life-skills training via online cohorts and a special new Chicago Youth Service Corps (CYSC) of 2,000 youth dedicated to providing service to the city and its residents, including remote-support to the City's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. OSC programs will run for six weeks from July 6 to August 14 and will include 20,000 opportunities for youth this summer.

"One Summer Chicago is among our city's great youth programs, supporting tens of thousands of our young people every year through transformative and life-affirming jobs and internships," said Mayor Lightfoot. "We remain committed to youth development and employment and applaud our partners who have adapted and preserved these opportunities for our youth. We are excited to add a Youth Service Corps this year in response to our belief that youth have much to contribute to the city's response to COVID-19. CYSC will leverage and lift up youth talent and voices and respond to their desires to lead at this time."

CYSC is the product of a new citywide, cross-departmental partnership led by DFSS with representatives from the Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Library, Cook County Forest Preserves, Chicago Public Schools, After School Matters, City Colleges of Chicago and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

The program is specifically focused on providing youth the opportunity to build relationships, leadership and life-skills through activities that will make a positive impact in their communities. Each youth will be dedicated to the Corps' guiding principles of strengthening communities through civic leadership, working together to broaden impact, continuous learning, valuing youth-led advocacy and public service, and creating safe environments that celebrate diversity.

Corps members will work together, remotely, to develop projects such as:

- A youth-led COVID-19 public information campaign;
- Over-the-phone well-being checks for older residents;



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- A “Mask-Up” program for crafting cloth face coverings; and
- Social-distancing ambassador activities.

Also new this year, One Summer Chicago’s partner agencies will host online professional development cohorts intended to offer in-depth insight, resources and guidance for young people interested in pursuing careers in the host company’s field. Young people will be compensated for participating in these career exploration opportunities in fields such as coding and tech, healthcare, media and more.

“Every year, One Summer Chicago provides opportunities for young people to learn valuable life-skills to help carry them long after summer ends,” said DFSS Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. “And with COVID-19 impacting all of us this year, it was imperative that we remained committed to providing Chicago’s youth with resources, mentorships and economic support to help them rebuild and get back to normalcy in a way that ensured their continued safety.”

The Citi Foundation is continuing to support One Summer Chicago for its seventh year in a row, with funding that has totaled over \$6 million. The Summer Jobs Connect program, spearheaded by the Citi Foundation and the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund, supports young adults seeking summer employment and provides safe and appropriate banking products, services and education. Citi Foundation is also the largest private funder of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), a citywide program designed to employ out of school youth.

“A summer job is a valuable opportunity to help youth develop leadership skills, understand how to manage their first paychecks, and lay the groundwork for a strong financial future,” said Brandee McHale, Head of Citi Community Investing and Development, President of the Citi Foundation. “We are proud to continue partnering with the City of Chicago and Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund to connect young people to meaningful work experiences that also support the City’s COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.”

One Summer Chicago is an integral part of “[My CHI. My Future.](#)” (MCMF), Mayor Lightfoot’s signature multi-year, youth-focused initiative designed to connect youth across Chicago to meaningful out-of-school experiences and ensure Chicago youth have a meaningful plan for the summer. The MCMF family, inclusive of One Summer Chicago, the Chicago Youth Service Corps and more than 200 organizations, has been designing the initiative, with a focus on organizing and connecting the opportunity ecosystem in Chicago and galvanizing caring adults, all over the city, to ensure that every young person has a plan for summer engagement. More than 400 virtual and limited in-person summer opportunities are available at [MyCHIMyFuture.org](#).

One Summer Chicago brings together government institutions, community-based organizations and companies to offer employment and internship opportunities to teens and young adults ages 14 to 24. Since 2011, over 224,000 youth have gained valuable job training, career advising and real-world work experience. This sustained civic commitment



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is closing Chicago's youth opportunity gap and generating prosperity and equity for all Chicago communities.

In March, the City also launched another cohort of Choose to Change (C2C), which is part of Mayor Lightfoot's commitment to ending youth involvement in gun violence through positive and alternative programming. Proven to reduce violence and justice system involvement for participants, C2C provides participants with wraparound support services including mentoring and trauma-informed cognitive behavioral therapy. The C2C six-month program is actively serving over 270 youth and connects youth to summer jobs.

During the COVID pandemic, this type of comprehensive programming for youth is especially critical. C2C is jointly delivered by Youth Advocate Programs (YAP), Inc. and Children's Home & Aid, which have shifted their services and recruitment strategy due to COVID-related constraints for in-person connections. Full services have continued to operate virtually and through limited socially distancing/PPE-compliant in-person interactions and have included providing youth and families with essential needs such as groceries, addressing technology needs, and providing trauma-informed group therapy through telehealth.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, organizations faced an unprecedented need to create virtual employment opportunities for students to keep them safe. In addition to the C2C programming, this summer, all C2C participants have been offered an opportunity to work in a new program, the "You're Not Alone Project," named by the students themselves. The six-week program will connect each C2C student employee with a senior resident from the Chicago Housing Authority who has opted in to participate in an experience where the students will do virtual wellness check-ins every week, with an overlay of an oral history project that will be completed over the course of the summer. At the end of the summer, there will be a culminating event for all participants.

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