



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF RE-ENTRY RESOURCE WEBSITE AND CITY RE-ENTRY GOALS IN HONOR OF SECOND CHANCE MONTH

The new website is an information hub for all City-provided re-entry resources and includes the 2023 Departmental Re-Entry Goals to strengthen whole-of-government support for returning residents

CHICAGO — Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, in partnership with Director of Re-Entry Willette Benford, announced the launch of the City of Chicago's Re-Entry Resource Website in honor of Second Chance Month, a month designated to raise awareness of the challenges faced by individuals with prior convictions and promote opportunities for a successful return home after incarceration. The new City website, chicago.gov/reentry, provides a central hub of all re-entry related information, to give returning residents a single location for information about workforce training opportunities, the Community Re-Entry Support Centers, civil rights, and more. Also published on the website are the [Interagency Re-Entry Council 2023 Departmental Re-Entry Goals](#).

"When I took office, I pledged to take action and ensure that the City of Chicago is doing everything it can to give people returning home from incarceration a fair chance to successfully rebuild their lives," **said Mayor Lightfoot**. "I'm proud of the work the Interagency Re-Entry Council has done to set goals that advance our whole-of-government approach to promoting positive life outcomes for Chicago's returning residents and their families."

Mayor Lightfoot and Director Benford first convened the Interagency Re-Entry Council, made up of Commissioners and leaders from City departments and Sister Agencies, in July 2022 to implement a whole-of-government approach to re-entry. Throughout the past six months, Director Benford collaborated with each department and agency to set goals to remove barriers to better support returning residents via departmental operations, policies and investments. Director Benford will continue to work with the Interagency Re-Entry Council for the remainder of 2023 to implement their goals.



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“When returning residents come home, they are faced with an overwhelming number of decisions, challenges, and systems to navigate. While there is a myriad of support services available, knowing where to go or who to call can be overwhelming. I hope that this Re-Entry Resources site can provide returning residents and their families with an easily accessible answer for where to turn,” added **Director of Re-Entry in the Mayor’s Office Willette Benford**. “Furthermore, I am immensely proud of the work we’ve done with the Interagency Re-Entry Council to set goals that will further our whole-of-government approach to re-entry. Garnering the power of the entire City government to improve re-entry will get us closer to ensuring that returning residents are set up for success when they come home to Chicago.”

Today’s announcements build upon recent accomplishments in Chicago’s Re-Entry agenda. On Wednesday, April 19th, City Council passed the Economic Opportunities for Returning Residents Ordinance, which was introduced by Alderman Walter Burnett with the support of more than 40 co-sponsors. The ordinance takes several actions, including removing barriers for returning residents to participate in City-run markets and receive business licenses, expanding workplace anti-discrimination protections for individuals with prior conviction histories, and promoting the use of equitable, person-first language among City programs serving returning residents. This ordinance followed Mayor Lightfoot’s February [announcement](#) of nation-leading revisions to the Department of Human Resources’ (DHR) background check policy and the launch of the Department of Family and Support Services’ (DFSS) SPRING Forward Pilot program, which will provide unprecedented levels of housing, workforce, and wrap-around support to returning residents. These actions advance the work started by Mayor Lightfoot in 2021, when she [convened the Returning Residents Working Group](#) (RRWG); this group of advocates, public sector partners, and individuals with lived experience with the criminal legal system created the “[A Roadmap for a Second Chance City](#)” report, a comprehensive agenda for the City to better support returning residents.

“The Illinois Alliance for Reentry and Justice applauds the accomplishments announced today. Our coalition members know firsthand how difficult it is to reunite with your family and community while facing a myriad of permanent punishments. The Interagency Re-Entry Council has taken good initial steps that will lead to the elimination of many permanent punishments in Chicago. And while there’s more work to accomplish, we must acknowledge and express our deep appreciation for Director Benford’s leadership in getting us this far”, said **Avalon Betts-Gaston, Project Manager, Illinois Alliance for Reentry and Justice**.

“Making re-entry support resources available gives returning residents a shot at opportunity that was not available many years ago,” said **Joshua Coakley, External**



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Executive Director at Target Area Development Corporation. “Having access to true opportunity by getting the support one needs can be life changing for any individual. I am proud that the City of Chicago is working across all departments to create opportunities for returning residents that empower them and their community to change the course of their own destiny.”

“I would like to thank Mayor Lightfoot for embracing the power of second chances and equal opportunities for formally incarcerated people. These policies and resources strengthen our communities by breaking the cycles of punishment and poverty that trap many formally incarcerated individuals and their families. Together, we will create a more productive and engaged society. Helping people build better futures for themselves and their families keeps society safe, and it allows us to create a community that truly values justice compassion and equality for all. We win when we invest in people!” said **Celia Colón, Founder of Giving Others Dreams G.O.D Inc.**

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