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MAYOR EMANUEL AND SKILLS FOR CHICAGOLAND'S FUTURE ANNOUNCE NEW INITIATIVE TO PLACE UNEMPLOYED YOUTH INTO JOBS WITH CAREER PATHWAYS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Skills Convenes Four Leading Chicago Employers to Hire Youth Through Pilot Initiative and Several Partners to Provide Education Opportunities and Mentoring

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Skills for Chicagoland's Future (Skills) to launch Beyond the Diploma, an innovative new demand-driven youth employment initiative that will connect unemployed and underemployed youth to jobs with career pathways and educational advancement. Beyond the Diploma will take a comprehensive and holistic approach that convenes Chicago's leading businesses, City Colleges of Chicago and community partners in a unified effort to address the city's youth unemployment rate.

"Skills for Chicagoland's Future has already put thousands of our residents to work and Beyond the Diploma represents the next step," Mayor Emanuel said. "By combining the power of our businesses with the talent and education in our City Colleges, our students have a new avenue for their careers and a new path to success."

Walgreens, CDW, Freedman Seating and Rush University Medical Center will provide jobs with career pathways to program participants. The City Colleges of Chicago will provide education opportunities and targeted skills training. These "earn and learn" opportunities, combined with mentoring and support from The Chicago Urban League, One Million Degrees and Cara will provide youth with the support necessary to succeed in employment and advance their careers. Through Beyond the Diploma, Skills aims to place 1,125 high school graduates into jobs.

Recruitment has commenced to fill Beyond the Diploma opportunities at Walgreens. Walgreens is the lead "beacon" employer partner for Beyond the Diploma, and will serve approximately 25 Chicago youth in its first cohort, with additional cohorts planned for the future. Participants are scheduled to commence work at Walgreens in spring 2018 and begin classes at City Colleges in the summer. Youth ages 18 to 24 can apply at scfjobs.com/pivot.

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Beyond the Diploma's program for high school graduates is part of a multi-phased approach to tackle youth unemployment from high school through post-college graduation. Skills based the program on a single guiding hypothesis: An employer-driven approach that results in a real, committed job – coupled with soft skills training, mentorship and support necessary to persist in employment – will create positive impact for both young adults and businesses.

The program unveiled today was designed after Skills conducted a six-month analysis in 2016 that incorporated input from youth, employers and community organizations. Skills will work alongside businesses to design pathway programs, manage youth recruitment, the partner relationships, and ensure the program's overall success.

"We believe in Chicago's youth and know that many just need a pathway to change the trajectory of their lives. These employers that are first at the table are committed to making a difference and were looking for a conduit like Skills to make it happen," said Marie Trzupke Lynch, Skills' president and founding CEO.

"Since our founding in Chicago in 1901, Walgreens has established a tradition of recruiting young talent with amazing potential, and offering opportunities to develop professional careers," said Kathleen Wilson-Thompson, Executive Vice President and Global Chief Human Resources Officer of Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. "We have been impressed with the enthusiasm candidates from Skills have brought to our stores, and we are excited to be part of the initiative that gives Chicago's youth an opportunity to succeed."

Participating youth will be hired for a full-time or part-time role as a customer service associate at a Walgreens store, with career pathways to store management or corporate positions. Walgreens will aid in tuition costs for all participating youth to pursue an associate's degree at Harold Washington College, where curriculum and class schedules will be designed to accommodate their job responsibilities.

Each employer's program is uniquely designed to meet their business needs. CDW will bring on mid-semester high school seniors, giving them an opportunity to work toward a sales or corporate opportunity, earn a certificate from CDW's Sales Academy, and earn an Associate's Degree from Harold Washington. Rush University Medical Center will provide candidates interested in medical careers with a defined pathway, including educational opportunity through Malcolm X College. Freedman Seating's program is designed to accelerate youth on a career pathway in manufacturing, which includes earning an advanced manufacturing degree through Daley College.

"This unique partnership will offer Chicagoans steady incomes, a quality education, and upwardly-mobile career paths with leading employers, and is central to our vision of creating more earn and

learn opportunities for our students moving forward," said City Colleges of Chicago Chancellor Juan Salgado.

So far, the Beyond the Diploma pilot initiative is being launched through support from a \$700,000 grant from the Pritzker Traubert Foundation, a \$500,000 grant from The Chicago Community Trust and additional funding from the Aspen Institute, The Osa Foundation, AT&T, the Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation and an anonymous funder.

"The Pritzker Traubert Foundation believes that having a job is a fundamental building block for individuals, families and communities," said Cindy Moelis, president of Pritzker Traubert Foundation. "We are proud to support the important work of Skills for Chicagoland's Future and are excited that they have designed a program to help more young people access employment, as well as academic learning opportunities. This effort will be incredibly beneficial to those young people, our businesses and all of Chicago's communities. The Pritzker Traubert Foundation is eager to see the outcomes of this pilot as an example for future collaborations."

Since its launch in 2012, Skills has placed more than 4,500 Chicagoland job seekers into employment with more than 60 employers in Cook County. An independent study funded by the Joyce Foundation and released in October 2017 compared outcomes for Skills job seekers against those of a comparison group of demographically similar individuals. Skills placements earned, on average, \$6,120 more per year than the comparison group and had a retention rate 11 percent higher than the comparison group after one year. Skills also had the greatest impact on those job seekers with the lowest prior earnings.

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About Skills for Chicagoland's Future

Skills for Chicagoland's Future (Skills) is a nonprofit, public-private partnership committed to returning unemployed and underemployed job seekers to work by creating demand-driven solutions for employers committed to hiring this population. Skills meets the hiring needs of employers by connecting them with qualified job seekers and providing innovative, customized hiring solutions. Skills is governed by a board of directors comprised of 23 chief executive, finance and human resources officers from the Chicago area. The organization is funded by the City of Chicago and The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, as well as a wide range of foundations and corporations. For more information, visit <http://www.skillsforchicagolandfuture.com>.