



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL MOVES KEY
JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION AGENDA ITEMS**

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson recognized the work of Chicago City Council members, organizers, and community members for pushing forward key pieces of the administration's agenda today.

"We know Chicagoans can't wait for the urgent changes our communities need, so our administration isn't waiting either," **said Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "These actions taken today are a tremendous step forward in implementing our vision of supporting workers and working families, and individuals in need of mental health care and resources, which is essential to the success of our city. While this kind of transformational change won't happen overnight, we are determined to chart the best path forward and create a better future for all Chicagoans."

An ordinance that would abolish the sub-minimum wage in the City of Chicago was introduced today. Currently, tipped workers make \$9 per hour. The ordinance would raise tipped workers' wages to the minimum wage of \$15.80 per hour over a two-year phase-in period.

The City Council also approved a resolution to hold a subject matter hearing on the Treatment Not Trauma Ordinance. This legislation would re-open the city's shuttered mental health clinics and empower the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) to send out crisis response teams to deal with mental health crises. The crisis response teams would be staffed by paramedics and social workers, freeing police officers to focus their efforts on combatting violent crime.

The Johnson administration remains committed to working with all stakeholders and having conversations to support these pieces of legislation.

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CITY COUNCIL CREATES WORKING GROUP FOR PILOT MUNICIPAL SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL PROGRAM

CHICAGO – Today, the Chicago City Council approved a resolution that would create a working group for a pilot municipal snow and ice removal program. The pilot municipal snow and ice removal program would serve as a test for a citywide program to clear the sidewalks during the winter season.

“As we celebrate Disability Pride Month, it is important for us to take concrete action like this pilot program to improve accessibility and ensure that all residents can safely move throughout the city during the winter months,” **said Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “We know that our seniors, our disabled community and those with limited mobility, and our young children are all at risk of injury when our sidewalks are covered with ice and snow. Plowing the sidewalks aligns with our vision of building a better, stronger, and safer Chicago for everyone.”

People with mobility difficulty or vision impairment (including blindness), senior citizens, and households with small children account for almost 700,000 Chicagoans. Approximately 10.1% of Chicagoland residents report having a disability.

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CITY COUNCIL APPROVES NEW STABILIZATION HOUSING CENTER AIMED AT ADDRESSING CHICAGOANS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

CHICAGO — Today, City Council approved an ordinance to move forward with the purchase of the former Diplomat Motel in Lincoln Square, to launch a Stabilization Housing Pilot Program, which will provide behavioral health and housing support for people experiencing homelessness.

“Today’s introduction is a significant step forward to provide behavioral health and housing support to our unhoused neighbors and to address our city’s housing crisis,” **said Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “I know personally how important it is for families to have this type of support for friends and loved ones. By creating the city’s first Stabilization Housing Pilot Program and housing center, we can deliver critical support and stability to our neighbors in need and deliver on the promise for all residents of our city to have safe, stable housing.”

“This will be the first long-term City of Chicago program solely focused on stabilizing people experiencing homelessness who also have major untreated health needs,



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especially related to mental health and substance use,” **said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady**. “It’s about breaking the cycle of homelessness by first providing transitional housing while focusing on addressing these acute health needs, with a longer-term goal of eventually moving individuals into both permanent housing and ongoing health care.”

The Stabilization Housing program aims to address the needs of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and complex behavioral health conditions in Chicago. These individuals, who often cycle between jail, emergency departments, and homeless services, face significant challenges due to unmet mental health and substance use disorder needs. The initiative builds upon the successful Hotel 166 program and aims to provide transitional housing and behavioral health support to stabilize individuals.

“We learned a lot during COVID about the benefits of private space and services for people experiencing homelessness with behavioral health needs,” **said Department of Housing Commissioner Marisa Novara**. “Simply put, people got better faster. Now Chicago Department of Housing is working with CDPH to acquire a space (currently a hotel) for City ownership and CDPH’s own ongoing ability to triage people with the highest needs.”

In 2020, Chicago implemented a hotel-based protective housing intervention to provide health care to people experiencing homelessness. This program, called Hotel 166, provided on-site healthcare workers to monitor SARS-CoV-2 symptoms and provide medical care for chronic health and behavioral health conditions. A study of the program found that participants reported that their mental health improved or stabilized during their stay and 51% successfully transitioned into some type of housing after leaving Hotel 166. This approach has also been implemented successfully in other cities, with positive impacts on housing stability and health outcomes.

“This Stabilization Housing Pilot, the first of its kind, when successful, will transform the way our city addresses the challenge of homelessness,” **said Alderperson Andre Vasquez**. “It centers those experiencing it and lets them know that we are on the journey with them, providing the support and dignity that they deserve, while building community and safety for all, together.”

The Diplomat Motel was selected based on program needs, location accessibility, and aldermanic support from Andre Vasquez. The motel provides a non-congregate setting that supports higher participant engagement, limits the spread of infectious disease, and decreases the utilization of crisis services due to individual rooms for



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each participant. Additionally, the Diplomat Motel is easily reached through public transportation.

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CITY COUNCIL APPROVES MARY RICHARDSON-LOWRY AS CORPORATION COUNSEL

CHICAGO — Today, City Council approved Mary Richardson-Lowry as the City of Chicago’s Corporation Counsel. As the lead attorney for the City of Chicago, Richardson-Lowry will provide legal counsel and representation for the City’s Departments and Boards, as well as the Chicago City Council.

“I’m proud to announce Mary Richardson-Lowry as the City of Chicago’s Corporation Counsel and am grateful for the expertise she brings to this role from her accomplished legal career,” **said Mayor Johnson**. “I look forward to working closely with Mary to advance our administration’s commitments to ethics, accountability, and transparency, as well as fostering a city government that efficiently delivers for residents and taxpayers.”

“I’m honored to serve as the City of Chicago’s Corporation Counsel and look forward to working with the Johnson administration, as well as the City’s many departments, boards, and City Council, to pursue an ethical, equitable city government that is responsible in its use of taxpayer dollars and transparent to the public,” **said Richardson-Lowry**. “Having begun my career at the City of Chicago’s Law Department, I’m humbled for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.”

Richardson-Lowry brings to the role an extensive legal background, including serving as a former partner at Mayer Brown LLC; former General Counsel at privately held Ililewa; former Chair of the Chicago Community Trust; former Buildings Commissioner; and various other legal, leadership, and management roles within the city of Chicago.

This role also marks a return to the City of Chicago for Richardson-Lowry, who spent her formative career years as an attorney in the Law Department for the City of Chicago.

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TIF SUPPORT APPROVED FOR CONGRESS THEATER RENOVATION



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The restoration of the historic Congress Theater mixed-use complex in Logan Square as a state-of-the-art live performance venue with ancillary residential and retail spaces will be supported by \$27M in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) approved by City Council today.

The \$87.8M project at 2135 N. Milwaukee Ave. by BR Congress and Congress Theater NFP will restore the building's auditorium, which was closed in 2013 due to building code violations, as a 4,900-seat music venue. The project will also revitalize approximately 13,000 square feet of ground-floor storefronts and 23,000 square feet of commercial space, which will be made available to non-profits and community groups at below-market rates. Additionally, the work will rehabilitate 16 second and third-floor residential units, 14 of which will be rented at affordable levels.

“By renovating historic spaces like the Congress Theater, we are continuing to build vibrant communities and investing in our city’s arts and culture,” **said Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “I look forward to this space’s transformation and the positive impact it will have on the neighborhood, and Chicago as a whole.”

“I’m proud of the work we have done to secure the funding to revitalize Chicago’s iconic Congress Theater and create a new life for this important community space,” **said Ald. Daniel La Spata (1st)**. “We are saving a Chicago landmark while providing good jobs, affordable housing, and small business opportunities for our community.”

Theater operations will be administered by Anshutz Entertainment Group (AEG). AEG, the current owner of the property, will transfer the theater to the developer as an in-kind contribution.

The project is expected to create 125 permanent full-time jobs and 200 construction jobs. Financing will also include more than \$9M in federal historic tax credits, \$16M in Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) proceeds, developer equity, bank debt, and other sources.

BR Congress and Congress Theater NFP are entities created by Baum Revision, a Chicago-based real estate developer.

The Congress Theater complex was constructed in 1926 by Fridstein and Co. in the Classical Revival and Italian Renaissance styles. It was designated an official Chicago landmark in 2002.

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