



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES BOLD, AMBITIOUS COMMUNITY-CENTERED POLICY AGENDA TO LIFT CHICAGOANS OUT OF POVERTY AND ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AT THE STEP (SOLUTIONS TOWARD ENDING POVERTY) SUMMIT

Policy Agenda to be Shaped by Chicago Residents, Releasing Fall of 2020

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the City of Chicago, at today's STEP (Solutions Toward Ending Poverty) Summit, launched a city-wide, multi-sector movement to lift all Chicagoans out of poverty and economic hardship.

"The roots of poverty and hardship run deep in our city, entrenching residents in seemingly inescapable cycles of joblessness and disinvestment and, ultimately, despair and a lack of dignity," said Mayor Lightfoot. "People living in poverty don't need us to tell them this. Nor do they need us to tell them how to manage their money or keep a job. They need us to own up to how we got here, face head-on and with a clear heart the forces that are undermining our families our schools, our communities – and act."

Beginning this spring and throughout the summer, the City will work with residents, employers, researchers, practitioners and organizers across the city to listen to how poverty and economic hardship manifest in residents' lives, identify promising approaches to address the symptoms of poverty, and then build a community-informed, roadmap that will give every resident a path towards upward economic mobility. From reducing the racial life expectancy gap, to providing more affordable housing, to growing quality jobs and income – the roadmap will be foundational to the Mayor's vision of a new, inclusive economic growth strategy for Chicago.

Hundreds of Chicago business, community, nonprofit, philanthropic and public sectors leaders convened at the Isadore and Sadie Dorin Forum for the STEP Summit, to reckon with how the city and its communities arrived at our current place of racialized, intergenerational poverty, displacement pressure, job loss, and widespread economic insecurity; identify promising approaches to addressing those challenges from across the country; begin to break down the silos in which the work is currently being done by exchanging ideas; and commit to concrete actions to implement systemic change.

Mayor Lightfoot has already taken a number of important, early steps to start addressing poverty in the city – so far, supporting low-wage workers by mandating that workers receive a fair, predictable schedule and raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2021; unwinding regressive fines and fees that can turn one parking or City sticker ticket into a bankruptcy; lowering utility costs for low-income homeowners who cannot afford their



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water bills; and introducing a series of ethics reforms that tackle corruption and are necessary in order to create fair economic opportunity for all residents. The STEP summit is a catalytic event to advance this work and much more like it that will improve the quality of life for residents across Chicago.

“Chicago’s destiny does not have to include economic struggle and hardship. What’s been missing is the political will, which is why we will chart a new course,” Mayor Lightfoot said. “My administration is going to invest in people, places and institutions that are lifting people out of poverty and addressing their economic insecurity. With business and community partners, we will co-develop a public roadmap and supporting metrics that will give every Chicagoan a path towards upward economic mobility.”

Mayor Lightfoot is committed to listening to the community and having their insights shape the City’s policies to lift Chicagoans out of poverty. To learn more, visit chicago.gov/step.

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