



Statement from the Chicago Department of Family & Support Services to City Council Committee on Budget and Government Operations

October 13, 2022

Hello, Chairwoman Dowell and the honorable members of the City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to join you today to present the Department of Family and Support Services' budget for year 2023.

Our department's work is dedicated to serving the most vulnerable among our city, and I would like to start by thanking Mayor Lori Lightfoot for her leadership and support for our mission. Together, we continue toward an equitable recovery from COVID-19.

That equitable recovery requires bold new strategies and innovative programming that helps our communities build stability, grow, and thrive. We have built on best practices and incorporated community feedback to innovate across all seven program divisions. These include connecting better with our residents, services through our city-wide rental assistance program, preparing for the launch of a 211 health and human services helpline, partnering with City Colleges to support paid apprenticeships with pathways to good jobs, and increasing access to food in communities.

One of our most ambitious new programs is the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot, one of the largest cash assistance pilots of its kind in the country. The pilot provides \$500 in monthly cash payments to 5,000 Chicago households for a year. When it comes to economic stability and improved well-being, cash works, and these new resources provide hard-working families the chance to determine what success looks like for them.

We have also continued to address homelessness through a continuum of services from prevention to street outreach and placement into housing, supporting individuals to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring. Our strengths-based Expedited Housing Initiative just reached a new milestone, placing over 1,820 households into housing. Next year, we will house an additional 800 households and support the stability of 1,000 that have already found a home.

We are also excited to have expanded our support for youth with year-round employment opportunities through our Chicago Youth Service Corps, Youth Employment, and Kickback Series programs. These expansions provide paid experiences for young people to connect with their communities and discover potential career pathways, all while earning \$15.40 an hour.

As we continue to build strategic programming, the department remains responsive to emergent needs. DFSS is now working alongside City agencies and partner organizations to meet the needs of newly arrived asylum seekers, primarily from Venezuela, recently bused to Chicago from Texas.

Today, we are using our expertise in trauma-informed, culturally competent care to welcome individuals with shelter, supportive services, and the respect they deserve. We have welcomed over 3,00 individuals since August 31st, helping them start the next chapter of their lives.

With the Mayor's newest investments, we will continue to be the helping hand for our neighbors and communities who need our support, and deliver the services necessary to help them grow and thrive. Thank you for your continued support, together we are making a real impact on our city.