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CITY OF CHICAGO

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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES 311 ENHANCEMENTS TO BOOST SERVICES FOR VETERANS**

*City will track City services provided to veterans*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced the City has enhanced its 311 intake assessment and training process to better identify military veterans and active duty service members, so they more seamlessly can be connected to existing services and resources.

"The brave men and women who have sacrificed so much and risked their lives in service to our country deserve our support here at home," said Mayor Emanuel. "Through this action we are improving the quality of service we provide our veterans and military members, standing up for them in their time of need."

Beginning today, residents who call 311 to request a range of services, including homeless prevention, employment services, senior well-being checks, emergency food, and crisis referral services, will be asked by a 311 operator if they are a veteran or active duty service member so they may be connected to existing resources and programs available to veterans and current military service members. The City's enhanced 311 process will be able to track and report on the level and type of needs of services requested, allowing the City to more effectively target and allocate resources to support veterans and active duty service members in Chicago.

"By determining if callers are veterans, we can better assist with linking them to available resources for their service needs," says Audrey Mathis, Director of the City's Office of Emergency Management and Communications-311 City Services.

"For generations Chicago has given its best and brightest whenever our nation has called," said Victor Lagroon, Acting Chair of the Mayor's Advisory Council on Veterans Affairs, who believes the enhancements will be beneficial to veterans and their families. "Many returning veterans have struggled to gain access to needed services in a timely manner. We applaud the City of Chicago and Mayor Emanuel for launching this much needed initiative. Important steps like this will ensure that fewer veterans and their families will find themselves without much needed resources and support."

The 311 initiative is part of Mayor Emanuel’s ongoing commitment to serving veterans and their families in Chicago. Under his leadership, the City has made more services and opportunities available to veterans than ever before – from planning to end veteran homelessness to funding permanent supportive housing projects for homeless veterans to launching initiatives that help veterans secure employment upon returning to civilian life.

In 2012, the Mayor launched the Returning Veterans Initiative to find employment for returning veterans and help them find resources that are designed to assist in their transition. In 2014, Mayor Emanuel introduced an Ordinance that established the City’s first-ever veterans preference bid incentive on City contracts. Additionally, with the Mayor’s leadership, the City partnered with companies committed to employing veterans, created a veterans hiring preference at the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), and partnered with veterans and Chicago Public Schools to employ veterans to provide Safe Passages for youth in Chicago.

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