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WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT MAYOR LIGHTFOOT'S 2023 BUDGET PROPOSAL

"Anyone who works in community knows our goals are bigger than gun violence - it's about building neighborhoods where young people can grow up safe, supported, and hopeful for a bright future," said **Adam Alonso, CEO of BUILD**. "That is what this budget is about: youth, housing, infrastructure, jobs - everything healthy communities need. It's an exciting time to be working on the South and West sides - we all know Chicago can't wait!"

"At Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago (NHS), we continue our unwavering commitment to increasing access to affordable homeownership and working with residents to create thriving communities of choice," **Anthony Simpkins, President and Chief Executive Officer of Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago**. "Mayor Lightfoot's FY2023 budget recommendations continue the City of Chicago's unprecedented commitment to providing robust resources for the responsible development of neighborhoods on Chicago's South and West sides and expanding affordable housing in areas of our city that need it most. In the aftermath of the pandemic, with interest rates and housing costs rising, and talk of a looming recession, working families and communities of color will continue to need those critical resources to help stabilize families and revitalize neighborhoods. NHS is a proud partner in the City's INVEST South/West and other initiatives that expand neighborhood investment and access to affordable homeownership. This budget recommendation will keep that momentum moving forward."

"The continued commitment of our Mayor to keeping our youth and young adults safe and employed in our communities is vital," said **April M. Curtis-Rivera, Chief Strategy Officer at Miguel Del Valle Youth Development Center, ASPIRA of Illinois**. "Through the DFSS workforce and out-of-school programs, our young people are earning an income, contributing to their families, and our reinvesting in our communities. We are honored to be an integral partner in employing young people ages 14-24 in Chicago's Northwest Community. Through our continued partnerships with our schools, local worksites, and our leadership program, young people can get work experience and life skills to guide their



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career paths better. Furthermore, we recognize that access to financial resources and wrap-around services empowers our youth, community, families, and local businesses.”

“We are delighted to see the administration’s commitment to affordability and community-driven development reflected once again in this new budget,” said **Bill Eager, Executive Director of Preservation of Affordable Housing**. “The support, both financial and technical, for affordable housing, coupled with an economic development approach centered on attracting investment to Chicago’s many neighborhoods, is refreshing and encouraging and will build a stronger, more equitable city.”

“As one of Chicago’s largest real estate developers and owners, we are thrilled to see the priorities in the Mayor’s budget, including neighborhood economic development, freezing property taxes, and investing in youth programming,” said Curt Bailey, **President of Related Midwest**. “Dedication to equitable economic development -- including a focus on affordable housing on the South and West Sides -- is vital for the health and well-being of Chicago, and we share the Mayor’s commitment to continued investment in this great city.”

“I am encouraged to see that Mayor Lightfoot is proposing to continue strong funding for the Trauma Informed Centers of Care Program which has been catalytic in allowing Esperanza to expand and deepen our behavioral health services,” said **Dan Fulwiler, President and CEO of Esperanza Health Centers**. “CDPH’s multi-year grant not only made it possible for us to bring on three additional mental health counselors – at a critical moment when the COVID-19 pandemic was traumatizing our communities – but it gave us breathing room to plan longer term. We have since capitalized on our TICC funding to secure other support for our behavioral health program, allowing us to add additional counselors and additional sites to provide Southwest side residents even more access to bilingual mental health care.”

“Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) is pleased to see Mayor Lightfoot’s 2023 budget recommendation representing a strong commitment to investment in equitable growth and job creation – ensuring that residents also have access to local amenities, transit, accessible employment, and safe and vibrant neighborhoods,” said **Darlene Hightower, President and CEO of Metropolitan Planning Council**. “With home prices, interest rates, and inflation on the rise, it’s an important time to ensure Chicagoans of all incomes can live and work near public transportation. MPC encourages equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD) to create thriving,



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connected, and mixed income communities, especially on Chicago's South and West Sides."

"The BASE Chicago has been very fortunate to connect youth and young adults to employment and life enhancement opportunities through the City of Chicago's Kick Back Series and My Chi My Future programs," said **Eric Davis, Executive Director of the BASE Chicago**. "We are thrilled that the 2023 budgets continues investing in initiatives like My Chi My Future and the Kick Back Series that are designed to give Chicago youth hope and aspirations. We are honored as an organization to be partnered with the Mayor and the City of Chicago in helping improve the lives of young people on the west side of Chicago."

"Given the challenges facing the commercial office industry, it is encouraging that this proposed budget avoids an increase in the property tax levy for 2023," said **Farzin Parang, Executive Director of the Building Owners and Management Association of Chicago**. "Our buildings' office tenants, a majority of which are small businesses, pay over \$1 billion in property taxes each year. Property taxes are the most expensive component of office rent, and reducing that burden is important to bringing more people downtown and driving our city's economic recovery."

"The funding for community centered initiatives designed and driven by youth is critical to reconnecting young people," said **Fausto Lopez, Co-Founder of the Praxis Institute**. "This is an opportunity to not simply sustain youth initiatives but amplify and expand these efforts to reach more youth across the city. This includes investment in enrichment programs that provide safe and inclusive spaces for youth to explore their creativity through arts, healing, and community building."

"The Mayor's continued investment in equitable economic recovery from COVID-19 helps our businesses and communities thrive and grow," said **Jaime Di Paulo, President and CEO of the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**. "We were honored to partner with the City of Chicago and Mayor Lightfoot to make Chicago a hub of innovation and a fertile ground for economic development. The 2023 budget builds on the success of last year's transformative budget and keeps us on the right path towards a more vibrant and equitable Chicago."

"The Mayor's proposed budget outlines increased leadership and resourcing for environmental and climate projects within the Mayor's Office," said **Jennifer Walling, Executive Director of the Illinois Environmental Council**. "This funding is vitally needed to support community-led environmental initiatives, ensure that Chicago is a global big-city leader on environmental policies, and improve health outcomes and green job opportunities for all Chicagoans. On the heels of last year's strong climate investments, Mayor Lightfoot's newest budget is taking another step



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toward righting years of under-funding for key projects and programs that support healthy, livable communities in our city."

"Mesirow appreciates and supports Mayor Lightfoot's commitment to families, communities and economic vitality in the 2023 budget," said **Richard Price, Executive Chairman of Mesirow**. "Meaningful investment across each is vital to meeting needs and broadening opportunities, and we applaud the focus on financial transparency, accountability, and equity. We look forward to continued partnership with the City as we all work to advance Chicago as a thriving, world-class center that invests in its vibrant neighborhoods, welcomes visitors, and develops the next generation of diverse leaders."

"We greatly appreciate that Mayor Lightfoot's budget reflects the City's sustained investment in our communities, including the preservation of naturally occurring affordable rental housing," said **Stacie Young, President and CEO of Community Investment Corporation (CIC)**. "CIC and our borrowers, the small, responsible local businesses who buy and rehab multifamily buildings on the south and west sides, appreciate both the ongoing commitment to rental preservation, and the City's new investments in evolving neighborhood needs, such as Single Room Occupancy (SRO) preservation, and sustainable retrofits. We are energized by the Mayor's vision and stand ready to collaborate with the City and others partners so that our neighborhoods continue to stabilize, recover, and thrive."

"We are pleased to see dedicated resources to support children and youth in out-of-school time experiences," said **Natasha Smith-Walker, Executive Director of Project Exploration**. "The value of having diverse afterschool opportunities in our communities ensures that we support our families and meet the needs of our community and children. Project Exploration has had the opportunity to lead Kickbacks and work with teens to host various events has been a great experience. We are pleased to be a partner and thought leader with the City in ensuring all children and youth have safe places and spaces for learning, growing, and having fun!"

"City workers provide essential services in every neighborhood of this City and we owe it to them to secure their retirement," said **Bob Reiter, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor**. "We commend Mayor Lightfoot for taking this important step to safeguard the pensions of public service workers, which will pay dividends in savings down the road."