



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT LAUNCHES "BOARDS OF CHANGE" CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE 2020 U.S. CENSUS PARTICIPATION

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today launched the "[Boards of Change](#)" project – a civic engagement initiative to encourage participation in not only the 2020 U.S. Census, but also in democracy as a whole through actions such as registering to vote, going to the polls, and engaging in public dialogue. The Census is a unique opportunity to participate in the democratic process as it only happens once every ten years and is vital in ensuring equitable funding and representation for Chicago and all its residents. Mayor Lightfoot today, joined by artists, arts organization leaders and local aldermen, unveiled a 50-foot-by-15-foot mural made up of multiple pieces of plywood art that had been used to secure local businesses during the recent civil unrest and protests, and that now will be used to urge all Chicagoans to participate in our shared democracy, which includes this year's Census.

"Democracy is about making our voices heard and ensuring everyone is counted," said Mayor Lightfoot. "It also demands we remain actively engaged in acts of democracy, from our public institutions, to our elected officials, legislative process, public dialogue, and—above all—engaged with ourselves. 'Boards of Change' is an inspiring project channeling Chicago's passionate civic energy into being counted in our Census, voting booths, and beyond, enabling us to bring about the equitable changes our communities need, and our families deserve."

Some of the most visible and poignant symbols of the protests have been the messages of hope, frustration, resistance and calls for change that emerged on the blank plywood boards outside of businesses. The City partnered with local artists, arts organizations including Sounding Boards and Paint the City, and businesses to curate these pieces of art from various neighborhoods throughout Chicago. Through this project, the art pieces will be preserved and repurposed to help promote civic engagement through strong visual reminders of the need for change. The contributing artists include: Don Gratzke, Nina Tiberi-Sawica, Chris Orta, Anthony Medrano, Damon Reed, Brianna Hines, Jasmina Cazacu, Jamiah Calvin, Terrance Byas, Joe Nelson, Joshua Valdovinos and Emilio Serrano.

"Sounding Boards is one of many organizations and individuals who have shared in a similar vision during this time in our country. We believe that as creative people, it is our responsibility and honor to illuminate truth through the power of art and visual storytelling. This form of civic engagement is one which invites individuals and communities to consider diverse perspectives in a way that is accessible to all. That is our vision, and it is our mission to continue this movement through public art, encouraging people to take notice and do



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their part by acting upon what they see and what they learn. Participating in the census and voting are essential components of taking action to dismantle systemic racism and inequality,” said Camille Hunter of Sounding Boards.

“Boards of Change” – created in partnership with the Chicago office of the global ad agency, FCB – kicks off the next phase of a public awareness campaign encouraging Chicagoans to complete the 2020 U.S. Census. The campaign will include television ads, social media, out-of-home advertising and local pop-up events. Also, following the inclusion of these individual pieces of plywood art in the larger mural installation, they will be separated and relocated to Chicago neighborhoods with the lowest response rates to support the promotion of community-wide participation in the Census.

“‘Boards of Change’ represents the anger, inequality, and the hope that many of us feel. And while you could easily see them as symbols of destruction and division, we believe they can be tools to create real change. On them, we hear our people loud and clear, for the Census they will help remind us of the importance to be counted and come November to pick the leaders that we believe will drive change in our country,” said Andres Ordonez, Chief Creative Officer, FCB Chicago.

So far, 55% of Chicagoans have responded to the 2020 Census, which is in-line with or above other cities with large, hard-to-count populations, but below the national average of 62%. To complete the Census or to learn more about the City’s 2020 Census efforts, please visit census2020.chicago.gov. Follow the City’s census efforts on Twitter and Instagram at @ChiCounts2020.

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About FCB

FCB (Foote, Cone & Belding) is a global, award-winning and fully integrated marketing communications company with a heritage of creativity and success dating from 1873. Named Cannes Lions 2019 North American Creative Agency of the Year and a 2019 & 2020 Ad Age A-List global top 10, FCB focuses on creating “Never Finished” campaign ideas that have the power to transform brands, businesses and communities. With more than 8,000 people in 109 operations in 80 countries, the company is part of the Interpublic Group of Companies (NYSE: IPG). Visit fcb.com or follow @FCBglobal on Instagram and Twitter and FCB Global on Facebook.

About Sounding Boards

Sounding Boards is a justice and unity-focused initiative founded in response to the recent Black Lives Matter demonstrations. We know that the voice of one is the voice of many. Our initiative acts as a sounding board for artists and visionaries to come together for the sake of creating something new. The initiative began as an idea to paint an inspiring mural or two on the boarded-up windows throughout Chicago and has quickly (aka, in a matter of 48 hours) become an organized initiative for community revitalization.

About Paint the City



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Paint the City is an initiative founded by artist/curators Missy Perkins and Barrett Keithley. Their mission is to heal the city through art at the wake of a devastating year due to COVID-19 and heightened racial tensions. Paint the City connects local artists to local businesses that have been affected by the recent rioting and looting. Their emphasis is on black and brown artist and businesses and their goal is to curate murals and art activations that increase foot traffic to those businesses and improve the socio-economic climate of the communities they're in.