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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM
TO CREATE AND GROW TECHNOLOGY TALENT IN CITY GOVERNMENT
AND IMPROVE CITY SERVICES**

The DiverseTech apprenticeship program is a collaborative public-private partnership that will launch new careers for residents in underserved communities and foster a new IT workforce for the City

CHICAGO — Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, the Department of Human Resources (DHR), and the Department of Assets, Information and Services (AIS) announced an apprenticeship program, in partnership with the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and SDI Presence (SDI), to develop and maintain a pipeline of technology talent for the City of Chicago. The DiverseTech apprenticeship program will train 25 apprentices in areas such as cybersecurity and digital services to fuel the growing need for IT roles across the city government and improve the City's technology infrastructure.

"This is a landmark program to build our local, diverse technology talent," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Opportunities in the technology sector can alter the economic trajectory for families and neighborhoods for generations. Chicago needs more tech talent, and this program will kick-start meaningful career opportunities and pathways for underserved communities."

"IT is a growing field with the opportunity to enrich the lives of workers and their families," said Christopher Owen, Commissioner of Human Resources. "Additionally, I'm excited the City is partnering with SDI and DPI on this evidence-backed program that will launch new careers for the apprentices and fill critical technology roles."

DiverseTech is a collaborative public-private partnership with two partner organizations that have proven results in building Chicago's diverse IT workforce. DPI, the University of Illinois System's technology career development initiative, and SDI, a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) IT Services firm headquartered in Chicago, will help build the city's technology talent pipeline by training Chicago residents for tech apprenticeships in a 15-plus month program that includes on-the-job training and mentorship.



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SDI will hire, manage, and mentor up to 25 apprentices for one year. The partnership will recruit people from historically underrepresented communities in Chicago, leveraging community colleges as a key source of talent.

The program begins with a 12-week pre-apprenticeship training designed by DPI. SDI will hire these apprentices as full-time SDI employees for the duration of the program, providing salary and benefits as well as professional development and mentorship to make them career ready.

The City will identify which technological needs and services are a high priority and work directly with the apprentices through an existing contract between SDI and the City for technology services. Upon completion of their employment with SDI, AIS and DHR will grant the apprentices the highest preference for technology-related employment allowed by law, city hiring policies, and collective bargaining agreements. Immediately, AIS and DHR will convene a working group that will issue a set of recommendations for changes to policies and bargaining agreements to create direct pathways to technology employment for apprentices.

During the apprenticeship, AIS and DHR will provide the apprentices with job readiness resources such as application and interview training, job consultations to match skills to open or upcoming positions, and job shadowing opportunities to help the apprentices find placement in city jobs opportunities in tech.

“DiverseTech will modernize the City’s technology, resulting in better services to City residents and businesses,” said City Chief Technology Officer Nick Lucius. “Private companies in Chicago will also have a proven model with a tactical program implementation playbook to add diverse technology talent into their supply chain.”

“The solution to modernizing the City’s technology workforce can be found within the city limits and in untapped communities,” said DPI’s Executive Director Bill Jackson. “Too often, these positions are offshored, but we know that investing in these kinds of opportunities will pay dividends both for the City and its citizens. We are proud to be part of this effort.”

“SDI strongly believes that a diverse firm is well-positioned to create technology workforce programming to grow opportunities for Chicago’s large, diverse population,” said SDI CEO Hardik Bhatt. “We have been partnering with the City Colleges of Chicago through the Tech LaunchPad program to grow diverse talent in the City. We are glad to partner with DPI to support the City’s vision of cultivating diverse talent and supporting the City of Chicago’s technology modernization efforts.”



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