



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2024

CONTACT

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON APPOINTS CRISTINA PACIONE-ZAYAS AS CHIEF OF STAFF

Pacione-Zayas will serve as Chicago's first Latina Chief of Staff to the Mayor

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson appointed Dr. Cristina Pacione-Zayas as Chief of Staff to the Mayor. Pacione-Zayas, a distinguished leader born and raised in Chicago, with an extensive background in public service, policy development, and advocacy, steps into her new role today after serving as the First Deputy Chief of Staff. She will serve as the City's first Latina chief of staff.

“Cristina's unparalleled dedication to our city, her depth of knowledge on critical issues affecting our neighborhoods like housing, community safety and education, and her proven track record of leadership make her the ideal person to serve as my next chief of staff,” said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “I am confident that together, we will continue to make strides toward a better, stronger, safer Chicago.”

Dr. Pacione-Zayas brings to the position a wealth of experience gained from her service in the Illinois State Senate, where she served on several key committees including Early Childhood, Education, Education Appropriations, Health, Higher Education, Human Rights, and Revenue. Her contributions as secretary to the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Early Learning Council, the Legislative Audit Commission, the BUILD Initiative, the Illinois Crime Reduction Task Force, State Designated Cultural Districts Advisory Committee, and the Title V Needs Assessment Advisory Committee have been instrumental in shaping policies to support a spectrum of public programs and services across the state.

“I am deeply honored to serve as Chief of Staff for Mayor Brandon Johnson and the City of Chicago,” said **Dr. Cristina Pacione-Zayas**. “This role presents a unique opportunity to advance our collective vision for a city determined to deliver equity and opportunity for all, and I am committed to leveraging every resource and partnership to make this vision a reality.”



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



Prior to her legislative work, Dr. Pacione-Zayas was the Associate Vice President of Policy at Erikson Institute, where she led efforts to support young children, families, and communities through policy development, leading to greater racial equity and access to critical services and intervention in the early years. She is credited with establishing the Early Childhood Leadership Academy and the Community Data Lab, initiatives that have had a statewide impact on child development policies.

Her commitment to education policy, restorative justice, and community engagement was further demonstrated through her impactful work with Chicago Public Schools, Enlace Chicago, Latino Policy Forum, and Palenque LSNA, where she leveraged community partnerships to build systems, craft policy, and design programs that supported young people, parents, and educators.

Mayor Johnson and the City of Chicago look forward to the positive impact Dr. Pacione-Zayas will undoubtedly bring to her new role as chief of staff. Her unwavering dedication to public service represents a shared vision with the city's goals of fostering a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable Chicago.

###