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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES \$1 MILLION INVESTMENT TO SUPPORT PAID JOB TRAINING PROGRAMMING FOR RETURNING RESIDENTS

Funding through DOH to support paid construction job training and apprenticeship of 50 returning residents and wraparound services

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Department of Housing (DOH) today announced a new proposal to invest \$1 million to support paid job training and wraparound services for 50 returning residents transitioning back into society. As part of an ordinance introduced today at City Council, \$1 million in City funding would be authorized for the Inner-City Muslim Action Network to operate its Green ReEntry program, which provides paid construction training and apprenticeship programs to returning Chicago residents. Through the program, the hired returning residents would work to rebuild homes and apartment buildings across Chicago.

Funding will not only support stipends for participants, but also for staff operating as case managers, instructors, therapists and administrative costs.

“Creating a Chicago that is more safe, more fair and more prosperous happens with holistic programs like this that provide returning residents with the support and paid opportunities they deserve to truly create positive impacts in their lives and their surrounding community,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “These investments are just one part of much broader, ground-up investment strategy aimed at unlocking the full potential of our residents – regardless of their background.”

Designed to support returning residents facing barriers to employment and community reintegration, the program would provide returning residents with both 12-month and 14-week-long training in trades from HVAC and electrical to carpentry and production welding, all while being paid. As part of the program, participants would also receive life skills training, case management, and job placement assistance in addition to behavioral therapy supports through the IMAN Community Health Center in Chicago Lawn.



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“Through these investments, we can further help make a positive impact for returning residents who are willing to rebuild not only their own lives but their community as well,” said DOH Commissioner Marisa Novara. “With this program, participants are not only receiving paid job training in the trades but also the skills and supports they need to be successful in their everyday lives.”

Serving communities in Chicago Lawn, West Englewood and Englewood, the Inner-City Muslim Action Network has operated since 1997, providing a range of services, including job training for formerly incarcerated individuals, arts and culture projects, and health and counseling centers. The community organization is a certified National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) training site with instructors that offer the latest industry recognized curriculum and certifications for returning residents seeking community reintegration. Based on its success in Chicago, the organization’s Green ReEntry program has expanded across the nation to cities like Atlanta and Baltimore.

“There could be no more urgent time than now to do all we can to provide returning citizens and young people caught up in the cycle of violence with real opportunities to be dynamic assets in the community and that’s exactly what this investment with IMAN’s Green ReEntry seeks to do,” said Rami Nashashibi, Executive Director, Inner-City Muslim Action Network.

Today’s proposed ordinance builds on Mayor Lightfoot’s holistic public safety strategy to provide therapy, jobs and support services for individuals from communities that have been highly impacted by violence, especially returning residents at highest risk of gun violence involvement. Through these new investments, returning residents will not only receive paid job opportunities but also the life skills and construction training to help reshape and rebuild communities across the city.

“Providing paid job training opportunities to our most vulnerable residents is the first step on a pathway to a successful career,” said Alderman Stephanie D. Coleman (16th Ward). “Through programs like these and community organizations like the Inner-City Muslim Action Network, we are lowering unemployment and poverty in our communities by ensuring returning residents have the invaluable skills and trades they need to build successful lives.

The ordinance introduced today would provide \$1 million in funding from DOH’s Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund, which is used to support local programming that provides affordable housing opportunities across Chicago.

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