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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION IN DIGITAL LEARNING
PROGRAMS FOR TEENS**

*Expansion Compliments City's Efforts to Increase Public Access to the Internet and Provide Youth
With Critical Technology Skills*

Mayor Emanuel today joined Library Commissioner Brian Bannon at the Humboldt Park Library to announce over a two million dollar expansion of the Chicago Public Library's (CPL) nationally-recognized YOUmedia program, which provides teens across the City with digital learning experiences. Thanks to \$500,000 in additional funding in the Mayor's 2014 Budget and a \$2 million grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to the Chicago Public Library Foundation, CPL will open new YOUmedia spaces at six libraries and launch a 'pop-up' program that will bring YOUmedia programs to twelve neighborhoods. This expansion to support digital teen services will make this program the largest of its kind in any U.S. public library.

"YOUmedia builds on teens' interest in technology and motivates them to create, innovate and become active learners. By increasing access to digital media and safe, inviting spaces, we are empowering teens to engage technology in new ways and providing Chicago's teens hands on experience and training for the jobs of tomorrow," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

This focus on digital learning is part of the Library's overall goal to increase access to technology for Chicagoans of all ages. Recently named by a German university as the best library system in the U.S. and third best in the world, Chicago Public Library is the largest provider of free Internet access in Chicago.

The YOUmedia program will be expanded in two ways. Starting this summer, CPL will offer regular digital skill development programs at six library locations - Albany Park, Back of the Yards, Hall and Legler branches, as well as the Sulzer and Woodson Regional Libraries. CPL will also offer twelve 'pop-up' YOUmedia programs will take place in various Library branches starting, offering 1-2 day programs which will give teens the opportunity for hands-on experience with the latest in technology. In addition, over the past two years, CPL has added

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live online tutoring, online language tutorials as well as digital magazine access to its website. These activities will support Chicago's youth in developing 21st Century skills and help them gain exposure to education and career pathways in fields related to their interests.

Currently, more than 1,500 teens participate in the YOUmedia programs offered at five library locations throughout the city, with programming and services ranging from creative use of 3D printers and laser cutters to mentoring and workshops in digital media production from music, photography, animation and graphic design. Program participants were approximately 50% African American teenage boys living in at-risk neighborhoods who travel an average of 5 miles daily to access the program. YOUmedia programs provide access to technology as well as mentors who share their expertise in various areas of digital media production.

Meanwhile, to build upon and further the success of programs such as the YOUmedia program, the Library has formally established a Teen Services Department, the first ever at CPL, to focus on the needs and interests of high school age teens. With the addition of 26 librarians specializing in teen services and programming, this department will enable CPL to provide all Chicago teens with engaging learning opportunities and a supportive community to help foster their personal and academic growth.

"The Library has been increasing our focus on teens for several years, through YOUmedia and our Teen Volume program as well as recent partnerships with Steppenwolf Theatre and Now is the Time Chicago, and this department will allow us to continue that deeper engagement with students as they develop the skills needed for their adult lives," said Library Commissioner Bannon.

YOUmedia was launched at CPL in 2009 based on research supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as part of its initiative exploring how digital media are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize and participate in civic life.

"MacArthur helped to create and support the innovative YOUmedia space, where teens can access to library resources, technology, and in-person and online mentors that help connect their learning experiences to their interests," said Robert Gallucci, President of the MacArthur Foundation. "We are pleased to help the Library expand YOUmedia to even more city neighborhoods, and proud that it serve as a model for libraries across the country."

Chicago Public Library is the largest provider of free access to technology in Chicago, aiding residents who lack Internet access at home or work. With close to 3,000 computers and laptops available for public use, as well as assistance in learning how to navigate the Internet, the Library is leading the charge to close the digital divide and accelerate broadband adoption in our city. In addition to this crucial role, the Library also provides the public with free access to cutting edge technology, offering patrons the information they seek in the formats they require,

offering eBooks, digital magazines, downloadable audio books, music and video, as well as access to a myriad of online databases, such as Hoover's Company Records and Morningstar.

The City strives to make every community a "smart community" in which everyone is able to fully participate in the digital economy. Through Mayor Emanuel's commitment to ensuring that Chicago citizens have equal access to the technology of the day, he launched Chicago's first [Technology Plan](#) in 2013. Central to this plan is the role CPL in supporting tech initiative Citywide. Increasing the number of digitally-connected and technologically-savvy residents and youth yields increases job placements, educational training and business growth opportunities. From eBooks to downloadable magazines, from 3D printers to learning how to safely navigate the Internet, the City and the Chicago Public Library will continue to help make technology relevant and highly-accessible to Chicago's youth and community residents.

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