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The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership Joins Governor Pritzker and DCEO Director to Announce Funding for Up to 700 COVID-19 Response Job Opportunities



Pictured from left to right: Karin M. Norington-Reaves (Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership – Chief Executive Officer), Sybil Madison (City of Chicago – Deputy Mayor for Education and Human Services), Erin Guthrie (Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity - Director), Freddie Ramos (COVID-19 Relief Team Manager in Belmont-Craign area), James Rudyk (Northwest Side Housing Center – Executive Director)

CHICAGO – The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) CEO Karin M. Norington-Reaves joined Governor JB Pritzker, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Director Erin Guthrie, and local officials at Cara Chicago today to highlight an approximately \$8 million investment to expand job



opportunities for residents in Chicago and Cook County who have become unemployed as a result of or during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through two new grants received from the U.S. Department of Labor and the State of Illinois, The Partnership is receiving funding to place, train, and hire nearly 700 residents for an array of jobs.

As the LWIA (Local Workforce Investment Area) for Chicago and Cook County, The Partnership is receiving \$4.275 million from a Disaster Recovery Grant Program and \$3.875 million from an Employment Recovery Grant Program, both of which are part of the National Dislocated Worker Program. The grants are intended to provide dislocated workers employment and training while assisting with local disaster relief programs and in-demand industries connected to the ongoing crisis.

"This funding the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is receiving will create new positions for people who may have lost their jobs during these challenging times," **said Karin M. Norington-Reaves, CEO of The Partnership.** "These dollars will fund temporary positions that will support those affected by the pandemic. In addition, people employed through this initiative will have access to our workforce development system to ensure they can connect to permanent employment while obtaining in-demand skills and support.

The 700 positions represent a mix of new and existing roles – with Disaster Recovery grants supporting food distribution and emergency pantry workers and COVID-19 custodians. Employment Recovery grant funds will be leveraged to seek out low-wage dislocated workers and provide vocational training and work-based learning that provides skills and competencies in expanding occupations and industries connected to the COVID-19 response.

Leveraging the \$4.2M Disaster Relief Employment grant, The Partnership has identified 11 community-based organizations (CBOs) to put funding into effect immediately. Six CBOs are in Chicago; four are located in suburban Cook County, and one serves both areas. Collectively, they will create nearly 200 new positions. The 11 CBOs are listed below:

BEDS Plus Care
Bethel Family Resource Center (BFRC)
Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation
Greater Chicago Food Depository
Housing Forward
Northwest Side Housing Center
Cara Chicago



Respond Now
The South Shore Works Planning and Preservation Coalition
Top Box Foods
The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois

One CBO is Cara, a mission-driven staffing firm, to provide humanitarian assistance employment as part of the COVID-19 Disaster Recovery initiative. Training will be conducted in partnership with the Northwest Side Housing Center in Chicago's Belmont-Cragin community. All training and hiring will focus on the inclusion of residents from neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

"As a social enterprise of Cara, the mission of Cara Connects is to unlock the power and purpose within our communities and ourselves," said Cara President & CEO Maria Kim. "Thanks to the leadership of organizations like Northwest Side Housing Center and the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, we are ensuring that mission is lived out, as we take this big step in the fight against the dual pandemics of poverty and COVID-19. Through this investment, not only will our residents feel the confidence that comes from the power of a job, our region will feel the renewal that comes from communities getting back to work. We couldn't be prouder to be a part of this critical solution."

Freddie Ramos is one participant benefiting from this funding. He has been selected as the COVID-19 Relief Team Manager in the Belmont-Cragin area and will be working from the Northwest Side Housing Center. A U.S. Army Veteran, Ramos has a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from Purdue University. He was laid off from the telecommunications industry after 20 years of work and sought support from Cara when seeing re-employment.

"I'm excited to serve the community I love and be associated with organizations like Northwest Side Housing Center and Cara Connects," said Ramos. "Cara prepared me, coached me, and gave me the resources I needed."

For more information, please visit our website at chicookworks.org.

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ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) is a non-profit umbrella organization operating the public workforce system for the City of Chicago and Cook



County. The Partnership combines federal and philanthropic resources to provide comprehensive workforce development services to employers and job seekers. As the largest workforce development system in the nation, The Partnership has helped place more than 70,000 individuals in employment; collaborated with more than 2,000 employers; and administered more than \$400 million in federal and philanthropic funds. The Partnership's network of 50+ community-based organizations, 10 American Job Centers, and four sector-driven workforce centers serves more than 140,000 people annually. Learn more at www.chicookworks.org.