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THE CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP RECEIVES \$56 MILLION GRANT FROM CITY OF CHICAGO AND CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO CREATE 600 CONTACT TRACING JOBS

June 30, 2020 (Chicago) – Today the City of Chicago and the Chicago Department of Public Health announced a grant award of \$56 million to the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership). The two-year grant requires The Partnership to oversee the creation of a Community-Based Contact Tracing Corps focused on stemming the transmission of COVID-19 in the City’s hardest hit neighborhoods.

“This exciting contact tracing initiative will not only significantly bolster our efforts to stay ahead of this terrible disease, but it will also create new jobs and opportunities for individuals to join in the fight against COVID-19, as well as develop invaluable skills for their own careers in public health and patient care” said Mayor Lightfoot.

“This initiative represents an alignment of the public health and public workforce systems for a first of its kind effort.” said Karin M. Norington-Reaves, CEO of The Partnership. “Bringing critical career opportunities to communities in need during a time when unemployment is at historic levels, while also contributing to the public health fight against the pandemic represents the best of what our systems have to offer.”

The Partnership is the largest workforce development agency in the nation, helping to place more than 14,000 people in jobs every year. In collaboration with education and research partners University of Illinois at Chicago’s School of Public Health (UIC), NORC at the University of Chicago, Malcolm X College one of the City Colleges of Chicago, and Sinai Urban Health Institute, The Partnership will lead the creation of the City’s community-based COVID Contact Tracing Corps, and provide “Earn and Learn” opportunities which will allow corps members to develop skills and progress along career paths in the healthcare field.

The partner organizations will be responsible for training and supporting corps members, establishing a Resource Hub and overseeing data collection and reporting. Through Malcolm X College’s newly created Contact Tracing certification program Corps members will gain necessary skills. Both Malcolm X and UIC will offer continuing education and terminal certifications in various allied health occupations. Through this grant, NORC and Sinai Urban Health Institute will collectively leverage their expansive knowledge of community healthcare and contact tracing to expand Chicago’s public health labor force.

The COVID Contact Tracing Corps is a means to address the health equity disparities receiving global attention due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As Chicago enters Phase IV of its Reopening Plan, contact tracing is a key tool in preventing community transmission and allowing for



targeted quarantine of potentially infected individuals. Contact Tracing plays an important role in public health departments' response to infectious disease by gathering information through interviewing and identifying potential contacts of confirmed COVID-19 positive cases. Contact tracers will earn \$20 per hour with supervisors earning \$24 per hour.

In accordance with grant terms, 85% of the funds awarded will be sub-granted to at least 30 community-based organizations for corps member wages and agency administrative costs. These organizations will then recruit and hire individuals who have historically faced barriers to employment to train as contact tracers and beyond.

The Partnership will open applications for the RFP process in late July. Community-based organizations interested in applying can visit Chicago.gov/contacttracing for more information.

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 both 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 \$300 million in federal and philanthropic funds. The Partnership's network of 53 community-based organizations, 10 American Job Centers, and three sector-driven workforce centers serves more than 10,000 people annually. Learn more at www.chicookworks.org

University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health

"In order to combat the virus, we need contact tracers who are adequately trained to gain trust in Black and Brown communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19," said Wayne Giles, MD, MS, dean of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) School of Public Health. "The contact tracers need to come from the impacted communities, and we hope through this work we will create a pathway to the health professions and public health."

NORC at the University of Chicago

"Chicago is taking steps to make systemic change that will have a lasting positive impact on the city. We are honored to be working alongside such dedicated organizations in our hometown," said Caitlin Oppenheimer, Director of the Public Health research department at NORC.

Malcolm X College

"As a Center of Excellence in health sciences, Malcolm X College is proud to lead City Colleges of Chicago's contact tracing training partnership with the Department of Public Health," said Dean of Health Sciences Roy Walker. "City Colleges is committed to preparing Chicagoans, especially those from communities most deeply impacted by COVID-19, to keep our fellow



residents safe and healthy. We are ready to work with contact tracers to launch and advance their healthcare careers."

Sinai Urban Health Institute

"Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI) is an innovator and respected leader in the training, hiring and supervision of community health workers (CHWs). Through our Center for CHW Research, Outcomes and Workforce Development, or CROWD, we are excited to work with the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership to train CBOs and their project workforces on contact tracing, as well as develop earn-and-learn pathways to foster skills for long-term work to address health equity. We're looking forward to working together to build workforce to not just respond to pandemic at this moment, but also have the skills and training that will make them valuable and marketable in the environment that will evolve out of COVID-19." Helen Margellos, President, Sinai Urban Health Institute.
