Legislation Text

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CITY COUNCIL APRIL 19, 2017

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to ensure the most effective, accountable and responsive provision of workforce development programs and services to residents of all Chicago communities; and

WHEREAS, a critical factor in the economic health and social well-being of Chicago, its people and its neighborhoods is the broadest availability and variety of career exploration, job training and employment assistance opportunities which meet the needs of Chicago's private-sector and public-sector employers; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Family and Support Services ("DFSS") is at the hub of the City's workforce development activities, addressing the needs of Chicagoans with the biggest barriers to employment in targeted populations such as returning citizens, veterans and the homeless; and

WHEREAS, in its role at the hub of the City's workforce development activities the Department of Family and Support Services also successfully partners with sister City departments and agencies including the Departments of Aviation, Streets and Sanitation, Planning and Development, Transportation, Office of New Americans, the Chicago Housing Authority, the Chicago Transit Authority, and Chicago Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Emanuel and the City Council have made it a priority to increase summer funding and DFSS coordinates One Summer Chicago, the City's summer youth employment program, which has successfully helped expand to over 30,000 summer jobs, including over 2,000 One Summer Chicago PLUS opportunities for the most at-risk young people; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Family and Support Services is in a unique position to offer Chicagoans direct assistance not only with their workforce development needs, but also with its wide-ranging array of social service programs for Chicagoans of all ages, and its citywide network of regional and satellite facilities and service provider delegate agencies, to help Chicago residents with many of the related factors that contribute to difficulties in the labor market and to unemployment; and

WHEREAS, this is particularly the case for high-need targeted populations such as returning citizens, Opportunity Youth and Disconnected Youth, who may have multiple overlapping barriers to employment; and

WHEREAS, through its network of over 50 DFSS workforce development delegate agency partners whose programs target high-need populations, particularly returning citizens with prior felony background, the DFSS Workforce Development Division supplies an additional and critical component that can make a difference in the path a person follows in life; and

WHEREAS, DFSS's strategic goals include reducing violence in communities and working to ensure that returning citizens do not return to criminal activities, and the four DFSS Community Re-Entry Support Centers offer centralized access to job training, employment and other resources to foster the successful reentry of returning citizens and to help them move forward and succeed in life; and

WHEREAS, DFSS continues to add more supportive mentoring, case management and work readiness training and employment opportunities to its program experiences wherever possible, and is additionally stressing services for individuals ages 16-24 who are at high risk of, have been or currently are justice-involved, such as its Bridges to Pathways, Strong Futures, and RISE programs, and its participation in the recently-announced Thrive Chicago campaign; and

WHEREAS, many members of the City Council have expressed their concerns about the importance of helping returning citizens avoid the cycle of recidivism, about the key role that job training and employment assistance play in meeting that challenge, and about the necessity for the City to expand the opportunity to access those vital resources; and

WHEREAS, a critical factor in the economic health and social well-being of Chicago, its people and its neighborhoods is the broadest availability and variety of career exploration, job training and employment assistance opportunities which meet the diverse needs of Chicago's residents and private-sector and public-sector employers;

WHEREAS, the Department of Family and Support Services is prepared to provide additional services to returning citizens of Chicago;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in order to provide additional services to some of our most underserved citizens, the Department of Family and Support Services needs additional resources to accomplish this goal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council Workforce Development and Audit Committee hold a hearing to explore dispersing a portion of funds ordinarily available to the City of Chicago under the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which currently go to the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, to the Department of Family and Support Services for the purpose of providing additional services to Chicago's returning citizens, including: increasing

capacity at the City's Community Re-Entry Support Centers; expanding Second Chance apprenticeship programs with sister City Departments; investing in more Transitional Jobs and Employment Preparation and Placement programs; offering returning citizens and their families

employment-related supportive services; and developing pilot and demonstration projects like those described above for returning citizens and justice-involved young adults to provide new resources in Chicago communities.



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