

Chicago City Council
121 N LaSalle St
Chicago, IL 60622

October 13, 2021

Dear Chicago City Council Members:

The undersigned organizations could not be more pleased that the Mayor has proposed what would be the nation's largest publicly-funded guaranteed income pilot as part of the proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget. **The budget would establish a \$31.5 million dollar direct cash assistance program that would provide \$500 each month for one year to 5,000 Chicago families.** The funding for the program comes from the federal government's stimulus dollars, as distributed by the American Rescue Plan Act.

Guaranteed income is a policy solution being embraced in a moment of uncertainty for its ability to lift entire communities and strengthen generations into the future. As identified by the Chicago COVID-19 Recovery Task Force, the COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged many of our communities. A guaranteed income would be a lifeline to all Chicago's families — and a lifeline for low-income, Black and Brown families — who need cash to keep afloat in this state of emergency. Of course, a guaranteed income program was needed even before the pandemic. Over two years ago, the Chicago Resilient Families Task Force first made the recommendation to establish a guaranteed income pilot, as cited in its report findings.

The flurry of successful cash programs and guaranteed income programs adopted across the country, including in cities like Stockton, CA; St. Paul, MN; Milwaukee, WI; Newark, NJ; Los Angeles, CA (along with several in Illinois) prove the policy's effectiveness. In our own city, there have been many cash based programs (Chicago Resiliency Fund, Covid19 Recovery Fund, DOH Direct Cash Rental Assistance Program, DFSS FII Partnership Cash assistance program) that have shown similar results especially during the pandemic. We can no longer wait. We believe it is time for Chicago to pilot a guaranteed income for Chicago residents.

Along with our appreciation of the Mayor for including this proposal in her budget, we also want to recognize the leadership of Alderpersons Gilbert Villegas, Maria Hadden, and Sophia King, who proposed a resolution that would have established a \$50 million guaranteed income pilot to help families recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic earlier this year. We are also grateful to Alderpersons who voted in support of that resolution. Without that effort, this proposal would not have seen the light of day.

In conclusion, a guaranteed income pilot for Chicago could not be more important. We urge its adoption as part of the Fiscal Year 2022 budget, in an amount greater or equal to the budget proposal.

Respectfully submitted:

Economic Security for Illinois
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Equity and Transformation
LIFT, Inc
UpTogether
Chicago Votes
Women Employed
Young Invincibles
Chicago Jobs Council
Heartland Alliance
The Chicago Community Trust
Children's Home & Aid
United Way of Metro Chicago
New America Chicago
Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)
POWER-PAC IL
Start Early
Latino Policy Forum