

# THE CHICAGO NEW AMERICANS PLAN

BUILDING A THRIVING AND WELCOMING CITY





**\* CHICAGO WELCOMES THE WORLD**



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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
City of Chicago

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## Dear Friends,

Throughout its history, Chicago has benefited from the immeasurable economic contributions of its immigrant populations and from the distinct and vibrant neighborhoods they helped to create. Today, Chicago's immigrants remain crucial drivers of our economic growth and cultural vitality. This is why I am committed to making Chicago the most immigrant-friendly city in the world. The Chicago New Americans Plan is a roadmap for building a thriving, diverse, and welcoming Chicago.

Immigrants in Chicago face unique challenges and barriers to meaningful and successful integration. To fully leverage the contributions of immigrants, I assembled an advisory committee comprised of 50 business, academic, civic, philanthropic, community and immigrant advocacy leaders in Chicago. This committee was tasked with developing strategies to ensure that we support the creation and expansion of immigrant-owned businesses, that we develop, attract, and retain talent and expertise from other countries, and that we bolster Chicago's status as a vibrant and welcoming international city.

The Chicago New Americans Plan outlines a set of initiatives the City will undertake in the next three years. The plan represents a fundamental commitment to immigrants. While other cities move to make themselves less welcoming toward immigrants, we choose to value their contributions, recognizing the importance of immigrants to our city's future.

This comprehensive plan is the first of its kind for any major city in the country. The plan will help Chicago establish its place as a leader in the 21st century global economy.

You can learn more and share your thoughts with us at [www.cityofchicago.org/newamericans](http://www.cityofchicago.org/newamericans)

Rahm Emanuel  
MAYOR OF CHICAGO



Look around the streets of Chicago: from our world-famous St. Patrick's Day parade to our Mexican community in Little Village, from the world's second largest Polish population to the nation's award-winning Confucius Institute, immigrants have helped to shape our city in countless ways. With residents from over 140 countries<sup>1</sup> and more than 100 languages spoken in our city,<sup>2</sup> Chicago is a city of immigrants. They are vital to our local economy, contributing billions of dollars annually.<sup>3</sup>

In July 2011, Mayor Rahm Emanuel created the Office of New Americans and set the aspiration for Chicago to become the world's most immigrant-friendly city. Just months later, the Mayor convened an advisory committee comprised of 50 leaders representing Chicago's business, academic, civic and philanthropic communities. The goal of the advisory committee was to identify challenges unique to immigrants, recommend initiatives to be implemented over the next three years, and develop detailed implementation plans for the Office of New Americans and its partners.

The Chicago New Americans Plan outlines a set of initiatives to welcome immigrants and maximize the contribution they make to our city. Improving the ability of Chicago's 560,000 foreign-born residents<sup>4</sup> to augment our economy will lead to economic, social and cultural benefits for all Chicagoans.

## POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT FROM THE CHICAGO NEW AMERICANS PLAN INITIATIVES

### WHEN CHICAGO...

### ... THE CITY WILL BENEFIT GREATLY

Helps immigrant-owned businesses flourish

Immigrant-owned businesses could create 10,000 to 20,000 more jobs if Chicago increased its job growth rate from small and medium-sized businesses to match the highest-performing U.S. city.<sup>5</sup>

Doubles the exports from immigrant-owned businesses

Doubling immigrant-owned business exports could produce an additional 24,000 to 30,000 jobs.<sup>6</sup>

Becomes a more attractive city for high-skilled, foreign-born workers

For every 100 additional high-skilled foreign-born workers who work in science, technology, engineering or math fields, 260 jobs could be created for U.S.-born workers.<sup>7</sup>

Increases graduation rates for high school immigrant students and helps more immigrants earn their GED certificate

For every additional high school diploma earned by Chicago students, gross state product could increase by \$15,000.<sup>8</sup>

Increases immigrant participation in early childhood programs

For every dollar invested in early childhood education, Chicago could save seven dollars in government spending.<sup>9</sup>

A coordinated implementation effort will be critical to unlocking the immense potential of Chicago's immigrants. The Office of New Americans will work with City departments and sister agencies, chambers of commerce, faith-based organizations, various ethnic and immigrant organizations, and other stakeholders to implement this plan, ensuring our place as one of the world's most immigrant-friendly cities.

The Chicago New Americans Plan recommends a broad array of new programs and initiatives, which are designed to improve the day-to-day lives of immigrants while promoting Chicago's economic growth and cultural vitality. The plan's 27 initiatives are grouped into three categories: Our Growth, Our Youth, and Our Communities. A full list of initiatives follows on page six.



### ■ Our Growth

Over the last decade, Chicago has experienced below average growth in gross regional product, annual average wage, and population size.<sup>10</sup> We can reverse this trend by lowering barriers to entry and growth for immigrant-owned businesses. By proactively spurring immigrant entrepreneurship, Chicago will ensure that it is fully capitalizing on the potential of immigrant entrepreneurs. The City can also improve its economic outlook by more effectively leveraging immigrant talent to fill workforce gaps. There were more than 100,000 unfilled positions in our city in 2011, a number that is expected to grow over the next decade.<sup>11</sup> We will accelerate economic growth by training and attracting immigrants to fill these positions.

### ■ Our Youth

To attract top employers and create jobs for all residents, our city must have a skilled, educated workforce. Immigrant children will make up the next generation of Chicago's workforce – 37% of all children in Chicago come from families with an immigrant parent.<sup>12</sup> But immigrant children face various challenges: they often need language assistance; they are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood education programs; and their parents at times struggle to engage with schools. We will support immigrant children by investing in their education, which will in turn benefit all Chicagoans by preparing our next generation workforce.

### ■ Our Communities

Chicago's immigrants are important members of our communities. They contribute to our city culturally, economically, and socially. Because immigrants are important to our communities, we must ensure that they feel protected, welcomed, and integrated. Currently, immigrants face challenges in building relationships with public safety officials, accessing City services, and becoming naturalized citizens. By supporting immigrants in overcoming these challenges, we can build stronger ties between immigrants and non-immigrants, while increasing the safety of our neighborhoods.

## OUR GROWTH

### A. Immigrant-owned businesses

1. **Increase exports from immigrant-owned businesses:** The City will work with World Business Chicago to increase exports from immigrant-owned businesses. They will develop forums and networking opportunities for immigrant business-owners, and provide access to a catalog of resources for export assistance.
2. **Create a small business incubator:** The City will create a specialized small business incubator that provides technical assistance, mentorship, and access to an affordable shared commercial kitchen space.
3. **Create a "Chamber University":** The City will create a "Chamber University" to train leaders in chambers of commerce so they are better able to support immigrants in starting and growing their businesses.
4. **Create pop-up City services:** A team of City departments will provide City services to immigrant business-owners through periodic visits to immigrant neighborhoods. These workshops will provide resources and services in the communities' languages, including licensing, permitting, and inspections.
5. **Promote tourism in immigrant neighborhoods:** Choose Chicago will actively promote immigrant neighborhoods to tourists through rotating neighborhood spotlights. Choose Chicago will also work with chambers of commerce and other organizations to help business-owners advertise their businesses to visitors.

### B. Human capital

6. **Ease transition back into professional careers:** The City will partner with the City Colleges of Chicago to develop options for high-skilled immigrants to transition to professional careers by providing credit for prior learning.
7. **Expand access to ESL and GED programs:** The City Colleges of Chicago, with support from the City and community-based organizations, will increase the number of English as a Second Language (ESL) and General Educational Development (GED) programs in areas of high need. In addition, the City will support City Colleges in restructuring adult education to improve outcomes.
8. **Enhance skills through employee programs:** The City Colleges of Chicago and the City will partner with employers to increase access to English as a Second Language and General Educational Development programs.



### C. Children of immigrants

- 9 **Improve early education:** The City will work with Chicago Public Schools to ensure that early childhood sites are well-placed and well-equipped to serve immigrant children across the city.
- 10 **Encourage participation in summer enrichment programs:** The City will inform immigrant students and families about summer enrichment programs that immigrants can access and will identify ways to increase immigrant students' access to One Summer Chicago programs.
- 11 **Support undocumented childhood arrivals:** A broad coalition of stakeholders, including the City, Chicago Public Schools, and community-based organizations, will launch targeted efforts to support undocumented youth, equipping them to benefit from the Executive Order for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

### D. Parents and schools

- 12 **Increase access to college savings programs:** The City will work with Chicago Public Schools and Bank On Chicago to host workshops for immigrant parents on financial literacy and college savings programs.
- 13 **Expand parent mentor programs:** Chicago Public Schools will expand its parent mentor program to additional schools. This program brings parents into classrooms to assist teachers, engages parents in parent-to-parent mentoring, and provides leadership development opportunities for parents.
- 14 **Create more parent engagement centers:** Chicago Public Schools will expand the number of drop-in parent engagement centers in immigrant neighborhoods. At these centers, parents can access information on topics like parenting skills, learn about services available to them, and develop technology skills.
- 15 **Provide specialized training for school personnel:** The City and Chicago Public Schools will partner with community-based organizations to train teachers, counselors, and other school administrators about the challenges immigrants face and the resources available to students.

## OUR COMMUNITIES

### E. Public safety

- 16 **Pass a Welcoming City ordinance:** The City will pass an ordinance affirming and expanding basic protections for undocumented Chicagoans. In addition, the City will develop a process to receive and act on violation complaints.
- 17 **Establish Welcoming City training:** The City will train key personnel, including police officers, fire and emergency personnel, and other City staff about the Welcoming City ordinance.
- 18 **Engage the Chicago Police Department:** The City will work with the Chicago Police Department to create opportunities for regular meetings between immigrant advocates, community-based organizations, and local police commanders.
- 19 **Reduce immigration services fraud:** The City will launch a targeted campaign to reduce immigration services fraud, increasing inspections of immigration services providers and providing information on fraud to immigrants.

### F. Access to services

- 20 **Implement a language access policy:** The City will implement a language access policy to ensure that immigrants are able to access critical services and information in the most common languages spoken in Chicago. The City will work to develop customized language access plans for departments and agencies that interact with immigrants.
- 21 **Establish cultural sensitivity training:** The City will develop and provide cultural sensitivity training to City employees, including police officers, fire and emergency personnel, and other City staff, to better serve and protect immigrants.
- 22 **Launch Welcoming City campaign:** The City will create a one-stop online portal to connect Chicago's immigrants with services and provide information to immigrants considering moving to Chicago.
- 23 **Create Welcome stations:** The City will create public stations where immigrants can access targeted resources, services, and information, such as naturalization workshops and health screenings.
- 24 **Ensure access to local healthcare services:** The City will convene a committee of healthcare providers and subject matter experts to analyze opportunities to expand immigrants' access to healthcare.

### G. Civic engagement

- 25 **Encourage civic participation:** The City will prepare immigrants for civic participation by offering civic engagement classes and linking immigrants to civic opportunities like board membership and leadership programs.
- 26 **Expand naturalization campaign:** The City will work with community partners to develop, publicize, and host naturalization workshops. The City will also open "Citizenship Corners" in community hubs, where information on naturalization will be provided to immigrants in the most common languages spoken in Chicago.
- 27 **Host citizenship celebrations:** The City will host citizenship swearing-in ceremonies, inviting communities to share in immigrants' achievement.



## INTRODUCTION

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Chicago's history has largely been shaped by immigrants. Immigrant labor played a crucial role in building Chicago's early infrastructure, from the Illinois and Michigan Canal to the railroads that helped Chicago establish itself as a commercial and transportation hub. With residents from over 140 countries<sup>12</sup> and more than 100 languages<sup>14</sup> spoken in our city, Chicago is a city of immigrants. Immigrants contribute billions of dollars to our local economy through taxes, consumer spending, and business ownership.<sup>13</sup> They are also responsible for many of our culturally rich ethnic neighborhoods, which help to make Chicago attractive to corporations, tourists and newcomers from around the world.

The Chicago New Americans Plan outlines a set of 27 initiatives to help immigrants overcome obstacles and contribute more fully to our city. All these initiatives will be implemented by 2015. The plan focuses on improving the day-to-day experiences of our city's 560,000 foreign-born residents, while delivering economic, social, and cultural benefits for all Chicagoans.

Each initiative will have significant impact in the lives of many immigrants. Together, the initiatives will help our city to become the world's most immigrant-friendly city, benefiting all residents in the following ways:

### ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOBS

- Supporting new and existing businesses will create new jobs.
- Attracting highly skilled immigrant talent will lead to new innovations, increased entrepreneurship, and more jobs.
- Building a large, qualified, and diverse immigrant workforce will help to fill existing skills gaps and attract more companies to our city.
- Increasing visitor traffic to ethnic neighborhoods will support business development.

### BETTER EDUCATED YOUTH

- Developing immigrants' professional skills will help immigrants to start careers in growing sectors.
- Engaging immigrant parents in their children's education will improve student performance.
- Bolstering our education system to serve immigrant students will prepare those students to meet Chicago's workforce needs.

### VIBRANT WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

- Building trusting relationships between immigrant communities and police officers will reduce crime.
- Taking an inclusive approach to serving city residents will ensure that immigrants can overcome language and cultural barriers to access City services.
- Increasing immigrant civic engagement will help our schools and non-profits to consider diverse perspectives.

Immigration policy is set at a federal level, and this plan does not aim to change state or federal law. However, the City has thousands of interactions with immigrants every day, each one an opportunity to welcome, support, and celebrate immigrants. The Chicago New Americans Plan will help us to succeed in supporting the creation and expansion of immigrant-owned businesses, developing, attracting, and retaining the world's leading talent, and affirming our status as a welcoming city.

<p><b>OUR GROWTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Immigrant-owned businesses</li><li>B. Human capital</li></ul>	
<p><b>OUR YOUTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>C. Children of immigrants</li><li>D. Parents and schools</li></ul>	
<p><b>OUR COMMUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>E. Public safety</li><li>F. Access to services</li><li>G. Civic engagement</li></ul>	

## INTRODUCTION

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### METHODOLOGY

To identify the initiatives, more than 100 leaders of immigrant community-based organizations and regional and national experts were interviewed by the Office of New Americans and a team of consultants contributing their work through the Civic Consulting Alliance partnership. Mayor Emanuel convened an advisory committee of 50 leaders representing Chicago's business, academic, civic and philanthropic communities.

Over a period of two months, from June to August 2012, the advisory committee was charged with:

1. Identifying challenges that are unique to immigrants.
2. Recommending high-impact initiatives to be implemented over the next three years.
3. Developing detailed implementation plans for the Office of New Americans.

In identifying initiatives for the plan, the advisory committee looked for ways the Office of New Americans could collaborate with other City departments and sister agencies. Committee members were supported in their analysis and deliberations by a pro-bono team from A.T. Kearney, the University of Michigan Ross School of Business, and Civic Consulting Alliance. The committee met, in whole or in part, more than a dozen times in a two-month period to shape the initiatives included in this plan. The intensive process to develop this plan received additional pro-bono support in communications from Res Publica Group and in graphic design from Downtown Partners Chicago. Commissioners, agency heads and City staff also supported the committee with data and analyses to assist in evaluating ideas. The initiatives laid out in the following Chicago New Americans Plan represent the best, boldest ideas arising from this broad-based inclusive process and are designed to make a lasting impact on Chicago, its future, and its place in the global economy.



OUR  
GROWTH

## OUR GROWTH

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Chicago can accelerate its economic growth over the next decade by supporting businesses and ensuring that its workforce is ready to fill employers' needs. The city's immigrant population will be a key component of both of these economic growth strategies.

Immigrant business-owners contribute to job growth and economic productivity in Chicago. Chicago can do more to support these business-owners, by increasing exports, providing expert guidance, facilitating access to capital, and making City services more accessible. By investing in these business supports, Chicago will create jobs and help existing businesses to grow. The resulting economic growth will benefit all Chicagoans.

Immigrants are also an important component of the city's workforce. To increase the contribution immigrants make to the city's economy, Chicago will help high-skilled immigrants to earn the credentials they need to take jobs that match their skills. The City will also facilitate training to help immigrants take on middle-skilled employment opportunities. By helping immigrants to succeed, more jobs will be created for all residents.



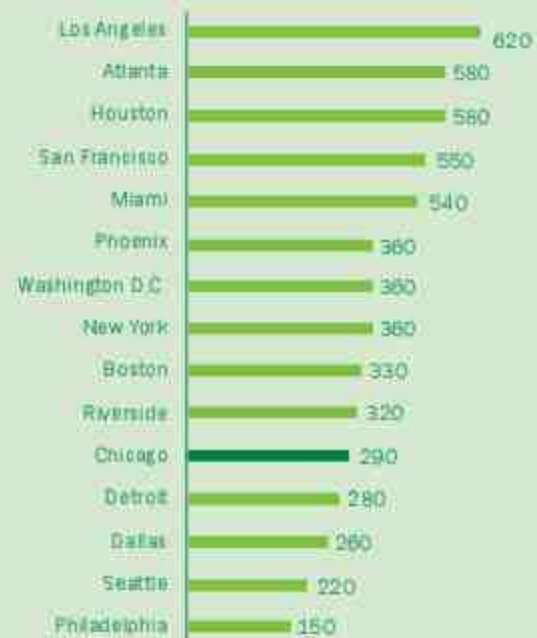


### A. Immigrant-owned businesses

Immigrants are more than twice as likely as non-immigrants to form businesses.<sup>16</sup> However, Chicago's overall rate of entrepreneurship lags those of other major cities. Chicago has 290 entrepreneurs per 100,000 residents, less than half the ratio in Los Angeles.<sup>17</sup> Chicago will work to match the rate of entrepreneurship in peer cities by supporting immigrant business-owners.

Chicago's economy in the past decade has been marked by below-average growth in its employment rate, average annual wage and gross regional product.<sup>18</sup> To reverse this trend and to achieve parity with the best-performing cities in the United States, Chicago will lower barriers to entry and growth for immigrant-owned businesses. And to fully capitalize on this vital part of the economic engine, the City will proactively spur immigrant entrepreneurship.

#### ENTREPRENEURS PER 100,000 PEOPLE 2008-2010



Source: Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity

#### Initiative 1. Increase exports from immigrant-owned businesses

Exports have fueled nearly half of the country's growth in gross domestic product since mid-2009 and support almost ten million jobs nationally.<sup>19</sup> While Chicago is ranked third in the country in export volume, only 5,000 of its 100,000 small and medium enterprises export. Of those, 3,000 export to just one country.<sup>20</sup>

Immigrant-owned businesses are 60% more likely to export than their native counterparts (7.1% of immigrant-owned businesses export, compared to 4.4% of non-immigrant-owned businesses).<sup>21</sup> Because immigrant-owned businesses are more likely to export, the City will ensure that they are supported through this strategy.

#### EXPORTING BUSINESSES BY IMMIGRATION STATUS OF OWNER



Source: U.S. Small Business Association

World Business Chicago is launching initiatives within its export strategy with the goal of doubling exports from small and medium enterprises by 2017. These initiatives can help connect immigrant-owned businesses to organizations that support and facilitate business exports. Additionally, World Business Chicago will work with other export support providers to link expertise in export-related issues:

## OUR GROWTH

Within three years, the Office of New Americans will work with World Business Chicago and external partners to increase the capacity of exporting immigrant-owned businesses. World Business Chicago and the City will provide access to a catalog of resources for export assistance, posting it on the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection website. World Business Chicago and the City will also develop forums and networking opportunities for immigrant business-owners, expanding their reach into other countries.



### Initiative 2. Create a small business incubator

Access to capital is essential to the success of small businesses.<sup>22</sup> However, immigrant entrepreneurs are often unaware of available sources of capital; they are more likely than non-immigrants to use personal funds to start or to expand their businesses.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, fewer immigrant entrepreneurs use loans or reinvest profits in starting or expanding businesses.<sup>24</sup> Strategically designed incubators can help immigrant business-owners to succeed. As firms that help early-stage companies through the initial development phase, incubators provide an array of business support resources and services, such as mentorship and technical assistance.

Within three years, the City will identify a non-profit partner to develop and pilot an incubator for small restaurants and other food businesses through a shared-kitchen concept. Focusing on launching, growing, and formalizing small businesses, the incubator will be designed to reduce the obstacles that often prevent immigrants from creating successful and sustainable small businesses. Through the shared-kitchen pilot, selected businesses will participate in an intensive incubation period where they will receive technical assistance in establishing their businesses (e.g., product, marketing, financing, operations, and licensing). Businesses that successfully complete the incubation period will continue to receive technical assistance and access to the incubator's affordable shared-kitchen space for one to five years. The City will connect graduates of the program with a team of mentors who will help the entrepreneurs to grow their businesses.

### **Initiative 3. Create a “Chamber University”**

Special Service Area (SSA) service providers and chambers of commerce provide direct support to immigrant-owned businesses, often delivering assistance in immigrants’ native languages. These entities generally operate independently of one another, creating their own materials and training modules to support businesses.

Within three years, the City will launch a “Chamber University” to train chambers of commerce and SSA service providers. The City will assemble a training team, drawing from multiple City departments, corporations, and non-profits. To increase the effectiveness of SSA service providers and chambers of commerce, the City will compile best practices that are already being used by SSA service providers and chambers of commerce and will incorporate these practices into its training. By broadly distributing the most effective materials, the City will help SSA service providers and chambers of commerce to give the best possible support to businesses. The training team will collaborate with City departments to deliver the training.

### **Initiative 4. Create pop-up City services**

As is common around the world, immigrants regularly build businesses in the neighborhoods in which they live: neighborhoods that, generally, are populated by immigrants from the same country of origin. Chicago’s immigrant business-owners sometimes struggle to access City services, renew licenses, and engage with City employees. These business-owners often rely on local chambers of commerce for assistance in their own languages.

To better serve immigrant business-owners, within one year, a team of City departments will launch pop-up City services, going into immigrant neighborhoods on a periodic basis to provide City services. Immigrant business-owners will have access to on-the-spot online license renewals, advisory services, and other services in the community’s language. Developing pop-up services will allow the City to extend its reach into these neighborhoods and augment the support provided by local agencies.

#### **Chicago New American Small Business Series<sup>25</sup>**

In March 2012, the Office of New Americans and the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection launched the Chicago New American Small Business Series, providing free quarterly workshops that are open to the public. At the workshops, attendees have access to business education, as well as resources on financing, licensing, and tax law.

On March 31, 2012 the Office of New Americans and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection hosted the first expo at the National Museum of Mexican Art with 300 people in attendance.

On June 2, 2012, the second expo took place as part of the Asian American Business Expo with 700 people in attendance.

**Initiative 5. Promote tourism in immigrant neighborhoods**

Immigrant-owned businesses often cluster together, creating distinct immigrant commercial districts. Chicago has more than 15 immigrant business corridors (concentrations of retail stores serving a common trade area and surrounding or lying along a single street) in neighborhoods with large immigrant populations.

These heavily concentrated immigrant-owned businesses are often isolated from areas that draw heavy tourist foot traffic, limiting their exposure to non-local customers. By developing a campaign to draw tourists to immigrant business corridors, the City will increase tourists' contribution to Chicago's economy while also benefiting immigrant neighborhoods.

Within one year, Choose Chicago, the City's official tourism organization, will begin working with immigrant neighborhoods to develop a marketing strategy to actively promote neighborhoods to tourists. These neighborhoods will be highlighted as part of rotating series on immigrant destinations in the city through a coordinated effort between Choose Chicago and other organizations.

The City will also work with chambers of commerce and Special Service Area service providers to bring expertise from Chicago's hospitality industry to support business-owners. These experts will advise business-owners in marketing their businesses to visitors and providing customer service to tourists.

**CHICAGO'S LARGEST IMMIGRANT BUSINESS CORRIDORS**

Neighborhood	Business corridor	Business licenses in corridor <sup>26</sup>
Little Village	W 26th St	376
West Ridge	W Devon Ave	341
Rogers Park	Howard St/N Clark St	289
Albany Park	W Lawrence Ave	280
Pilsen	W 18th St	165
Lincoln Square	N Lincoln Ave/W Lawrence Ave	162
Portage Park	W Irving Park/N Cicero/N Milwaukee	161
Beverly	S Western Ave	161
Bridgeport	S Halsted St	98
Little Vietnam	W Argyle St/N Broadway	97
Chinatown	S Wentworth/S China	96
Little Italy	W Taylor St	78
Avondale/Irving Park	N Milwaukee Ave	67
Greektown	S Halsted St	33
North Park	W Foster Ave	31

**B. Human capital**

For an economy to thrive, businesses must be able to acquire and retain talented, skilled employees. Nationally, 52% of employers are struggling to fill jobs.<sup>27</sup> In Chicago, there were over 100,000 unfilled positions as of December 2011. This gap includes vacancies in both high- and middle-skilled positions and is expected to increase over the next ten years.<sup>28</sup>

### **Initiative 6. Ease transition back into professional careers**

Immigrants are especially well-positioned to address gaps in the workforce. Many immigrants in Chicago were originally trained in their home countries as doctors, nurses, or financial professionals, but are employed in jobs that do not utilize these skills.<sup>29</sup> The City will grow its pool of high-skilled workers by facilitating the transition of these immigrants into professional careers in the United States.

Within three years, the City Colleges of Chicago will develop a plan to provide credit for prior education to help students, including immigrants, transition to professional careers. This program will initially focus on the healthcare sector, and will be developed in coordination with City Colleges' College to Careers program. This effort will be gradually expanded to other sectors.

#### **College to Careers at City Colleges of Chicago**

College to Careers is a partnership between the City Colleges of Chicago and industry leaders to better align City Colleges' curricula with the demand in growing fields.

City Colleges is launching College to Careers in a phased approach, starting with high-growth industries:

- Healthcare at Malcolm X College
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics at Olive-Harvey College
- Business, Professional Services and Entrepreneurship at Harold Washington College



### **Initiative 7. Expand access to English as Second Language and General Educational Development programs**

Over one-third of Chicago's foreign-born population has not obtained a high school diploma, compared to 14% of native-born residents.<sup>30</sup> For these residents to gain access to well-paying jobs, they will need support in developing language skills and educational credentials. The City Colleges of Chicago offers General Educational Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs that help immigrants along this path.

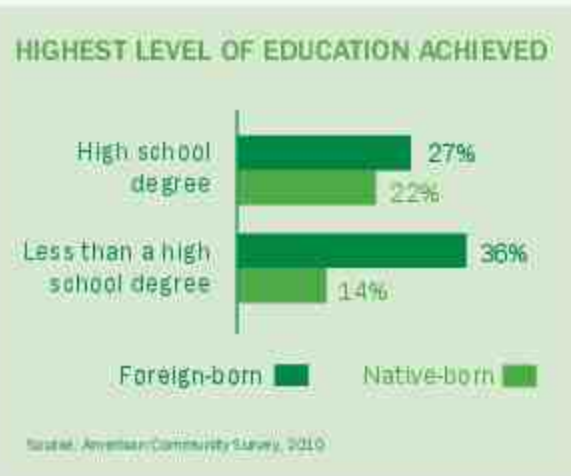
Between 2007 and 2011, 6,400 students completed the GED program at the City Colleges of Chicago. In 2011, 17,000 students enrolled in ESL classes at City Colleges.<sup>31</sup>

Over the next year, the City Colleges of Chicago will expand access to ESL and GED programs in areas of high need. Within three years, the City Colleges of Chicago will restructure adult education to increase the rate of successful student program completion. City Colleges will promote best practices such as contextualized ESL (teaching language skills that are relevant to an immigrant's working environment) and computer literacy.

### **Initiative 8. Enhance skills through employee programs**

To help immigrants develop skills such as literacy and English language ability, the City will partner with employers. Employers represent a significant potential partner, as they have a stake in cultivating the skills of their employees. Language and skills training can increase employee retention, staff morale, and worker productivity.<sup>32</sup>

The City Colleges of Chicago is working to develop bridge programs, which provide pathways from English as a Second Language and General Educational Development programs into earning occupational college-level credentials. The City Colleges will work with employers to increase employees' access to these programs and to improve the suitability of these programs for working adults:





# OUR YOUTH



Many immigrant parents come to this country looking for better opportunities for themselves and their children. These parents make sacrifices so that their children can succeed in school, graduate from college, and find satisfying, well-paying jobs. All Chicagoans have a stake in the educational outcomes of immigrant students. If immigrant students are able to succeed, they will be better poised to contribute to Chicago's economic, social, and cultural future.

There are many immigrant-specific challenges that these children must overcome. These challenges include language barriers and information gaps, which prevent children from accessing critical educational enrichment programs. In addition, undocumented youth face obstacles in finding employment and financing a college education. Immigrant parents often have difficulty engaging with schools. Finally, school staff are sometimes not sufficiently aware of issues faced by immigrants. These issues make it more difficult for immigrant children to graduate from high school and succeed in college.

Chicago can do more to support immigrant children. By working with community-based organizations, Chicago Public Schools, the City Colleges of Chicago, and other key stakeholders, the City will take steps to help immigrant youth succeed in high school and college. Through these initiatives, the City will also help immigrant parents to become more involved in their children's education and access critical resources.



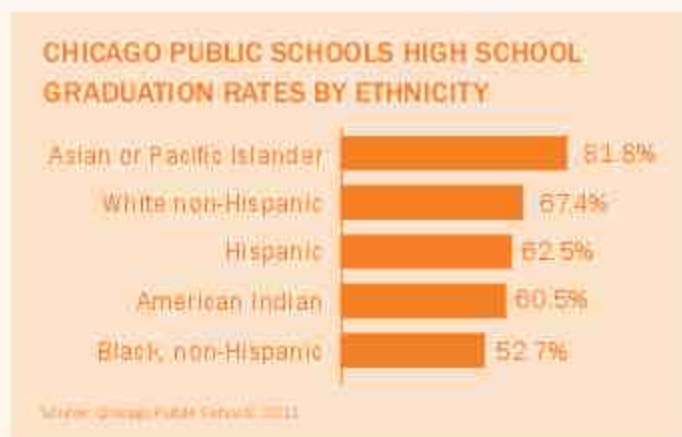


### C. Children of immigrants

Thirty-seven percent of children in Chicago have at least one foreign-born parent; more than three out of four of these children are second-generation immigrants.<sup>33</sup> One out of seven Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students is considered an English Language Learner, and as many as one third have been considered English Language Learners at some point during their education.<sup>34</sup>

Data on the performance of children of immigrants in Chicago is difficult to isolate. Since data on children of immigrants is generally not available, this plan instead uses data on ethnicity, the best available proxy. Much of the available data on immigrants report on *foreign-born* residents, a grouping which excludes second-generation immigrants born in the U.S. Eighty-six percent of immigrants under 18 years old were born in the U.S., meaning that they are counted as native-born, a grouping which also includes all non-immigrants.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, Chicago Public Schools does not track the immigration status of children or parents due to Chicago's non-inquiry policy.

Graduation rates for different ethnicities vary drastically. In CPS high schools, Asian and Pacific Islander students have the highest graduation rates of any ethnic group, with 81.8% of the entering class graduating within five years. Hispanic students have graduation rates that are 4.9 percentage points lower than those of non-Hispanic whites. Black, non-Hispanic students have the lowest graduation rates, at 52.7%.<sup>36</sup>



CPS is working to improve the performance of all students through a variety of programs, including the implementation of a longer school day and the Common Core State Standards, a set of standards that describes what students are expected to learn at every grade in order to be prepared for success in college and careers. The initiatives identified in this plan complement CPS priorities and focus on areas where children of immigrants are underserved.

#### Initiative 9. Improve early education

In Illinois, four-year olds in immigrant families are 17.5% less likely to be enrolled in early childhood programs than native-born children, the fifth largest gap in the country after Arkansas, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Rhode Island.<sup>37</sup> Early childhood education programs deliver proven benefits to children, and benefit all residents by reducing government spending (see sidebar on following page). It is critical that Chicago increase the number of immigrant children who are enrolled in such programs.

Within the next year, the Office of New Americans will support Chicago Public Schools and the Department of Family and Support Services to ensure that early childhood sites are well-placed and well-equipped to serve immigrant children across the city.

In coordination with the expansion of early childhood education sites near immigrant neighborhoods, the Office of New Americans will partner with Chicago Public Schools and the Department of Family and Support Services to launch a targeted campaign to reach out to immigrant parents in their own languages to encourage them to register their children. The campaign will leverage immigrant parents to conduct parent-to-parent outreach and youth volunteers to run informational events and distribute information. The City will coordinate with faith-based organizations to organize these volunteers. Outreach will be conducted in the most common languages spoken in Chicago. Additionally, the Office of New Americans will work with Chicago Public Schools and the Department of Family and Support Services to increase language capacity at early childhood education sites.

### **Initiative 10. Encourage participation in summer enrichment programs**

Summer programs that provide educational experiences for young students and build job skills for older students help stave off the break in learning that takes place during the summer. On average, students who do not participate in meaningful summer learning activities lose approximately two and a half months of grade level equivalency in computational math by fall.<sup>39</sup> To help improve im-

### **Early Childhood Education benefits<sup>38</sup>**

Children who participate in high-quality early childhood education are:

- Twenty-nine percent more likely to graduate high school.
- Less likely to need remedial coursework.
- More likely to have higher lifetime earnings and less likely to commit crimes.

In addition, early childhood education is a smart investment for the City. Every dollar invested in early childhood education saves taxpayers up to seven dollars in government spending.



migrant educational outcomes, the City will make jobs and educational summer activities accessible to immigrant youth, decreasing summer learning loss.

For the summer of 2013, the Department of Family and Support Services and the Office of New Americans will distribute information to immigrant students and families on summer enrichment programs, so they can access jobs and summer education opportunities more easily.

One Summer Chicago provides 168,000 educational and recreational opportunities and 17,000 summer employment opportunities to teens through City departments, sister agencies, and the Cook County government.<sup>40</sup> Over the next three years, the Department of Family and Support Services and the Office of New Americans will identify ways to increase immigrant students' access to One Summer Chicago programs, such as identifying positions that require language skills and informing immigrant youth of these opportunities.

#### **Initiative 11. Support undocumented childhood arrivals**

Undocumented youth face significant challenges to leveraging their skills. Because of their undocumented status, even children who demonstrate academic success and achievement find that most employment opportunities are not accessible to them. They need better access to resources, greater awareness of available support programs, and hope for a better future.

In June 2012, President Obama announced the Executive Order for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. With this order, eligible undocumented youth who arrived as children will be able to apply for a temporary reprieve from deportation and two-year renewable work permits. As of today, there are 49,000 immigrants in Illinois who could benefit from this order.<sup>42</sup>

#### **Chicago hosts largest DREAM Relief Day event in the United States**

On August 15, 2012, The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and the Illinois Department of Human Services hosted a DREAM Relief Day event at Chicago's Navy Pier. It was the first day that eligible youth could apply for temporary work authorization and reprieve from deportation under the Executive Order for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

The purpose of the event was to provide assistance for undocumented youth to apply for temporary work authorization and to provide information and training. The event was by far the largest such event in the U.S.

#### **Key Event Facts<sup>41</sup>**

**12,000** people attended

**7,250** people received information and training

**1,500** applications were completed

Today, Chicago can demonstrate its support for these immigrants by helping them to benefit from the executive order, while enhancing their ability to contribute to the city's economy. By supporting these children, the City will grow Chicago's pool of middle- and high-skilled immigrants:

Within the next year, a broad coalition of stakeholders will launch targeted efforts to support undocumented youth who could benefit from the 2012 Executive Order on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The coalition includes City departments and agencies (Office of New Americans, Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, Chicago Public Schools, and Chicago Public Libraries), and community-based organizations. Through a series of workshops, the coalition will provide legal assistance, support those who want to earn GED certificates, and increase protection and enforcement against immigration services fraud.

One key requirement of the Executive Order on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is that immigrants must be pursuing a high school diploma, or have earned a high school diploma or GED certificate, to be eligible for deferred action. To help undocumented immigrants gain and maintain eligibility, the City will encourage students to stay in school to maintain their eligibility, and assist adults in earning their GED certificate. City Colleges of Chicago will provide support where feasible and appropriate.

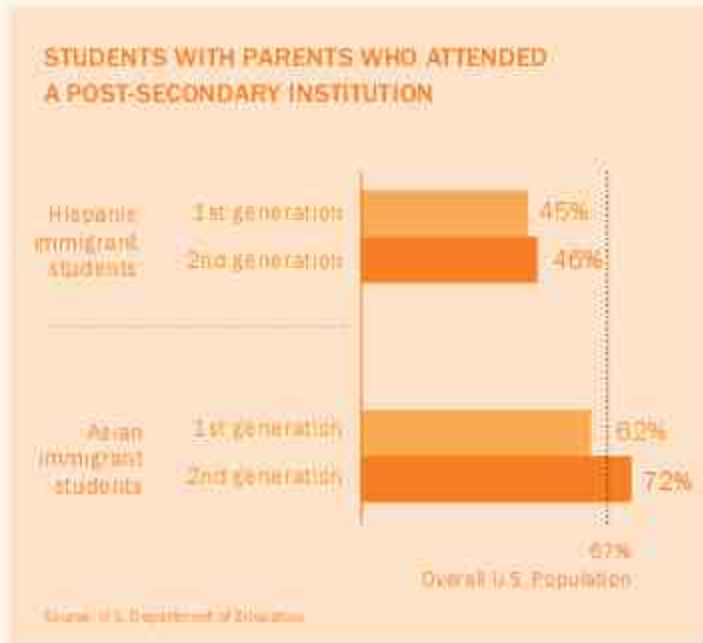
### D. Parents and schools

Many immigrants come to this country to provide better opportunities for their children. However, they are often unaware of the opportunities available to support their children. If Chicago's schools succeed in engaging immigrant parents, while creating a supportive network of resources within schools, Chicago's immigrant students will be more likely to succeed.



**Initiative 12. Increase access to college savings programs**

With college tuition costs rising, parents are concerned more than ever about their ability to pay for their children's post-secondary education. College savings accounts help families save money for college. By saving for college, a family sets the expectation that their children will attend college, increasing the likelihood that they will do so.<sup>43</sup> In fact, students from families that designate a portion of their savings for college are four times more likely to attend college than students whose families do not save for college.<sup>44</sup>



Immigrant students who are the first members of their families to attend college often receive limited guidance on how to save for, apply to, and enroll in college. A sample of 100,000 undergraduate students nationwide found that less than half of first- and second-generation Hispanic immigrant students had parents who attended college, compared to two-thirds of parents for the overall population.<sup>45</sup> Among first- and second-generation Asian immigrant students, 62% and 72%, respectively, had parents who attended college.<sup>46</sup>



Over the next three years, the Office of New Americans will partner with Chicago Public Schools and Bank-On Chicago (a cooperative effort to offer easy-to-access checking accounts for unbanked and under-banked individuals) to host workshops for immigrant parents on financial literacy and college savings programs. This will be done in coordination with Chicago Public Schools as they launch and expand a K-12 financial literacy program to equip students with the knowledge and skills to make wise financial decisions. The K-12 program will provide content tailored for each grade level that is aligned with the rest of the curriculum.

### **Initiative 13. Expand parent mentor programs**

Chicago's schools strive to engage parents; there is an expectation that parents will be active participants in their children's education. Some immigrant parents come from countries where there is no such expectation and may need prompting to understand the role they are expected to play. Language barriers also present an obstacle to immigrant parent engagement. Sixty-four percent of Illinois children in immigrant families have a parent with limited English proficiency, increasing the difficulty of communicating with schools and teachers.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, undocumented parents often avoid engaging with school staff, for fear that their immigration status will be discovered.



Over the next year, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Office of New Americans will collaborate with community organizations to expand parent mentor programs to additional CPS schools. Through these programs, immigrant parents will act as ambassadors to other immigrant parents, reaching out to provide information and resources. The involvement of immigrant parents will help schools to bridge the language and trust gaps that often prevent schools from reaching immigrants. These parent mentor programs will also bring immigrants into classrooms to support teachers, creating close ties between immigrants and schools.

#### **Initiative 14. Create more parent engagement centers**

Schools serve as community hubs, places where parents, children and teachers congregate. They are a natural location for resource centers to connect parents with information and tools. Chicago Public Schools is working to launch parent engagement centers across the city where parents will be able to access technology, engage with schools, help their children, and develop their own skills.

Over the next year, the Office of New Americans and Chicago Public Schools will conduct demographic analysis to identify schools with large concentrations of immigrant families that could benefit from parent engagement centers. Over the next three years, the Office of New Americans will support Chicago Public Schools in opening parent engagement centers in immigrant neighborhoods. In addition, the Office of New Americans will identify additional resources and materials for these centers to provide to parents, including information on the naturalization process and information on Chicago City services.

#### **Initiative 15. Provide specialized training for school personnel**

Students need caring, knowledgeable, and involved teachers and counselors to succeed in school. Chicago Public Schools provides a broad range of supports to its students, and many of these supports should be specially tailored for immigrants. Immigrant students face a range of unique issues, and school staff must be aware of the best ways to support them. Schools should also understand legal changes that affect the guidance that immigrant students should receive.

Immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, can be misinformed about the options available to them. Around the country, there are instances of college counselors incorrectly telling undocumented high school students that it is illegal for them to attend college, or that they should drop out of high school. Illinois has taken steps to support undocumented students. For example, Illinois House Bill 60, passed in 2003, allows undocumented immigrants to pay in-state tuition at Illinois colleges. Additionally, through the Illinois DREAM Act, undocumented students have access to State-run college savings programs and can apply for scholarships from the Illinois DREAM fund. Every school employee who works closely with undocumented students needs to be aware of the opportunities available to them.

## OUR YOUTH

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Over the next year, the Office of New Americans and Chicago Public Schools will partner with community-based organizations to train teachers, counselors, and other school administrators on the challenges immigrants face and resources available to immigrant students. School-based DREAM clubs (student-led clubs for undocumented youth), the Illinois DREAM Commission, and the Illinois State Board of Education will help develop and conduct training for Chicago Public Schools and the City Colleges of Chicago staff and counselors. This training will help immigrants to receive accurate, helpful information about opportunities available to them.



An aerial night photograph of a city, likely Chicago, showing a dense urban landscape. In the foreground, there are several multi-story brick buildings with lit windows. The middle ground is filled with a mix of residential and commercial buildings, interspersed with green trees. In the background, the city skyline is illuminated with various lights, with the Willis Tower (formerly Sears Tower) being the most prominent skyscraper. The sky is a deep blue, indicating twilight or early evening. The text "OUR COMMUNITIES" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

**OUR  
COMMUNITIES**

Like all residents, immigrants want to feel safe, welcome, and respected in their communities. Chicago can do a better job of serving these immigrants – not just because it is the right thing to do, but also to build Chicago’s reputation as an immigrant-friendly city. The Office of New Americans believes that if Chicago is seen as an immigrant-friendly city, more immigrants will come to live in Chicago, creating jobs and growth that all residents will benefit from.

Currently, immigrants in Chicago struggle to access services, build relationships with law enforcement officials, and integrate fully. Some City services are not provided in the languages immigrants speak, and because Chicago does not have a city-wide language access policy, immigrants do not know which services will be made accessible to them. Many immigrants report poor relationships with public safety officials: some immigrants have had poor experiences with police officers in their home countries, leading to a mistrust of Chicago police officers. Finally, immigrants often live in segregated neighborhoods, limiting their interactions with non-immigrants and slowing their integration.

The above conditions are exacerbated by the fact that Chicago has never attempted a comprehensive, citywide approach to welcoming and supporting immigrants – until now. The City will improve its policies and procedures to ensure immigrants feel welcomed and protected.



## **E. Public safety**

Immigrants are important allies in building safe, stable neighborhoods. Increasing trust and communication between the Chicago Police Department and immigrant communities will better equip police officers to solve crimes, strengthen communities, and reduce violence. By demonstrating its commitment to immigrant safety, the City will ensure that immigrants play an active role in cooperating with police to reduce violence.

### **Initiative 16. Pass Welcoming City ordinance**

Since Mayor Harold Washington issued Executive Order 85-1 in 1985, Chicago has had a longstanding commitment to facilitating relationships between immigrants and the City. The order mandated that City services be provided to immigrants regardless of immigration status, and prohibited City employees from making inquiries regarding immigration status. In 2006, the Chicago City Council codified this policy, setting clear guidelines for the Chicago Police Department. Today, Chicago is one of dozens of cities with immigrant non-inquiry policies.<sup>48</sup>

Several challenges remain in building strong relationships between police and immigrants. Many immigrants are unaware that Chicago's immigrant non-inquiry policy exists, in part because various county, state, and federal public safety officials who work in the Chicago region operate under different regulations. As a result, immigrants fear that interactions with public safety officials may result in detention or deportation.

For immigrants to build stronger relationships with City staff, immigrants need to have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities as Chicago residents. Immigrants should know that they have a right to access City services, regardless of their immigration status. They should also feel that they are welcomed and respected by the City of Chicago. City staff also must better understand their responsibility to serve immigrants. (Initiative #17 addresses the training that will be connected with this ordinance.)

Within one year, Chicago will pass an ordinance affirming and expanding basic protections for undocumented Chicagoans to ensure all immigrants are served and welcomed. The Office of New Americans will partner with community-based organizations to write and pass the Welcoming City ordinance. Within three years, the Office of New Americans will work with City departments to develop a citywide process to receive immigrants' complaints and distribute them to the appropriate departments and agencies for follow-up. For example, if an immigrant is denied access to a City service for which he or she is eligible, that immigrant will be able to call 311 to have the complaint addressed.

### **Initiative 17. Establish Welcoming City training**

Once Chicago passes the Welcoming City ordinance (described in initiative #16), City employees will need to be trained to understand and uphold the new rules. The passage of this ordinance will also serve as an opportunity to help Chicago City employees to think about how best to welcome immigrants. The Office of New Americans will communicate the requirements of the ordinance to all City employees. City employees who have significant interactions with immigrants will be given additional training to help them uphold the ordinance. The training will ensure City employees know that immigrants have the right to enjoy all City services, and that City employees are prohibited from asking about immigration status (with the exception of some federally-funded programs for which applicants must verify their immigration status).

Within one year, the Office of New Americans will inform City departments about the pending changes caused by the Welcoming City ordinance. Within three years, the City will build partnerships with outside partners, including community-based organizations, to develop a training program for City employees. The Chicago Department of Human Resources will conduct the trainings, providing training to Chicago Police Department officers, fire and emergency personnel, 311 center personnel, and other City staff. The Welcoming City training will also be built into existing training materials and procedures for new and current employees.

### **Initiative 18. Engage the Chicago Police Department**

Trust between communities and public safety officials is essential to building safe neighborhoods. However, some immigrants can be hesitant to reach out to police officers to report crimes or assist in investigations. Undocumented immigrants may believe that interactions with police will lead to detention or deportation. Additionally, friends and family of undocumented immigrants may hesitate to report incidents involving undocumented immigrants, again for fear of detention or deportation. Some immigrants have had poor experiences with corrupt public safety officials in their countries of origin, and assume that Chicago police are similarly untrustworthy. Finally, language barriers limit engagement between immigrants and police officers.



Ensuring that police officers understand immigrant needs and concerns will lead to stronger police-immigrant relationships and, ultimately, safer neighborhoods.

Within three years, the Chicago Police Department will create opportunities for regular interaction between immigrant community-based organizations and Chicago Police Department officers. This initiative will be implemented in coordination with the Welcoming City ordinance training program (described in initiative #17) to allow immigrant involvement in designing training processes. These efforts will help police to understand immigrant needs and concerns.

#### **Initiative 19. Reduce immigration services fraud**

As immigrants try to navigate the immigration system, they sometimes become the targets of scams involving the unauthorized practice of immigration law. For example, one type of fraud occurs when an individual who is not an attorney offers to provide legal advice or representation regarding immigration matters. This sort of fraud becomes more prevalent when legal changes that impact immigrants are introduced: while immigrants are adjusting to understand new laws and regulations, they are more vulnerable to fraud.

Fraudulent service providers who take advantage of immigrants often charge exorbitant fees for commonplace services; misrepresent procedures; or commit fraud in other ways. Because these predators sometimes pretend to be licensed by the government, the fraud they perpetrate erodes immigrant trust of City government. The City has an opportunity to protect immigrants and improve City-immigrant relationships by taking steps to combat immigration services fraud. When Chicago protects immigrants against practices like these, it builds trust in immigrant communities, while demonstrating its commitment to welcoming immigrants.

Within one year, the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) will launch a targeted campaign to reduce immigration services fraud by conducting proactive investigations and spot checks of immigrant services providers. The Office of New Americans and BACP will increase the information available to immigrants by developing and posting an online resource guide. They will also host information sessions on immigration services fraud in partnership with community-based organizations and Chicago Public Libraries. Finally, BACP will make consumer protection complaint forms available online in the most common languages spoken in Chicago.

#### **F. Access to services**

In Chicago, there are 350,000 foreign-born residents who describe themselves as speaking English “less than very well” – 62% of the total foreign-born population in Chicago.<sup>49</sup> This language gap presents the

City with a deep challenge – how can Chicago effectively serve such a diverse population, and accommodate their language needs? The situation also provides the City with a great opportunity – Chicago can improve immigrant access to City services, and in doing so, welcome, support, and build its immigrant population. By reaching out to immigrants to engage them with City services, the City will welcome immigrants while encouraging them to put down roots and invest in Chicago.

### **Initiative 20. Implement a language access policy**

To truly integrate immigrants, the City must welcome them by encouraging them to exercise their rights as Chicago residents, and supporting their understanding of those rights. All immigrants have the right to access City services – but unless they receive those services in a language in which they are proficient, the right is not exercised. Sixty-two percent of Chicago's foreign-born population rate themselves as speaking English less than very well. To overcome this challenge, Chicago will take a comprehensive approach to providing services to immigrants in their own languages.

Most Chicago City departments and sister agencies provide some services and information in multiple languages. Currently, these entities do not meet a consistent standard for language accessibility. By requiring City departments to implement language access plans, the City will increase the quality and reliability of services provided to immigrants. As a result, immigrants will benefit from increased accessibility and predictability of services.

Within two years, Chicago will implement a language access policy that requires departments to develop language access plans, outlining how they will provide information and critical services in the most common languages spoken in Chicago. Within three years, The Office of New Americans will work with City departments and agencies to develop customized language access plans. The City will roll out language access plans in two phases, addressing the highest-priority services first, and then moving to make a broader range of information and services accessible.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF CHICAGO'S FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION**

62% - Speak English  
Less Than Very Well



38% - Speak  
English Very Well

Source: American Community Survey, 2010

### **Initiative 21. Establish cultural sensitivity training**

Cultural misunderstandings can make it difficult for City staff to effectively engage with immigrants. Additionally, due to differences in culture and background, some immigrants may be less likely to seek help for domestic violence and child abuse issues. To build a truly welcoming environment, Chicago will ensure that City staff are equipped to welcome and interact with immigrants. Cultural sensitivity training will help City employees and police officers to better serve and welcome immigrants. As a result, immigrants will be more likely to engage with City staff and partner with police officers.

Within one year, the Office of New Americans will develop a roadmap to launch cultural sensitivity training in coordination with the implementation of language access plans (described in initiative #20). The Office of New Americans will identify departments and services for which cultural sensitivity training will be most impactful, identify outside partners to help develop the training curriculum, and create a plan to institute regular training, targeting key personnel first.

Within three years, the Chicago Department of Human Resources will provide cultural sensitivity training to police officers, fire and emergency personnel, and other City staff, including direct service providers and 311 call center staff. This training will cover issues of immigration status, nationality, race and ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The training will address issues of domestic violence and child abuse, equipping City staff to effectively, and sensitively, work with immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **Initiative 22. Launch Welcoming City campaign**

Information on City services exists in many places: it is transmitted through departmental websites, printed materials, and word of mouth. However, it has not been gathered and consolidated, and there are no consistent guidelines regarding which materials should be translated. As a result, immigrants face greater challenges in accessing key City services, and are less likely to know that they are eligible for programs that would support them and their families.

The Office of New Americans will create an online portal to connect immigrants with resources available to them (e.g., City services, business workshops, and community-based organizations). The website will contain information pertaining to specific immigrant needs, with content translated into the most common languages spoken in Chicago.

Over the next three years, the Office of New Americans will develop content for the campaign and portal. The Chicago Department of Innovation and Technology will develop a website to host this material. The Office of New Americans will also launch an awareness campaign targeted at immigrants, residents, and City employees to share key information, promote the portal, and extend a welcoming message.

### Initiative 23. Create Welcome Stations

Options must be developed to enable all immigrants to easily find information on City services. Immigrants with low levels of computer literacy need to be able to access City services and work with City employees. Although community-based organizations play a critical role in serving these immigrants, the City also has a role to play.

Over the next three years, the Office of New Americans will partner with other City departments and agencies including Chicago Public Schools and Chicago Public Libraries to create Welcome Stations. These resource centers will allow immigrants to access information, resources, and services in the languages spoken in their communities. The spaces will also be used by community-based organizations on a regular basis to provide additional services, such as naturalization workshops and health screenings.

Consolidating information and services in physical spaces will build connections between immigrants and service providers. The stations will serve as a demonstration of the City's commitment to immigrants, facilitating trust and integration. Additionally, the Welcome Stations will support community-based organizations by providing them spaces to hold workshops, building connections between immigrants and those organizations.

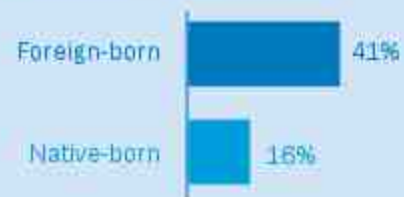
### Initiative 24. Ensure access to local healthcare services

Two in five of Chicago's foreign-born residents are uninsured. In contrast, 16% of native-born residents are uninsured, meaning that foreign-born residents are two and a half times more likely to go uninsured than the native-born.<sup>50</sup> Immigrants face serious challenges in accessing healthcare. If the City finds ways to reduce the insurance gap and increase preventative healthcare opportunities, it will improve immigrant health outcomes while decreasing costs for emergency services.

To address issues of immigrant healthcare access, the Chicago Department of Public Health will convene a committee of healthcare providers and subject matter experts within one year. The committee will focus specifically on immigrant health needs and identify ways to reduce barriers immigrants face in accessing healthcare. The committee will disseminate findings on an annual basis, providing guidance to health-



#### CHICAGO RESIDENTS WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE BY IMMIGRATION STATUS



Source: Economic Consulting



care providers to better serve immigrants. Topics for analysis may include best practices for providing care to uninsured immigrants and implications of changing federal regulations such as the Affordable Care Act.

### **G. Civic engagement**

Immigrants contribute to Chicago not only through the economic and cultural assets they bring, but also through their civic participation in religious and community-based organizations. Many immigrants also seek to become citizens and set down roots in Chicago. If Chicago provides the tools immigrants need to become civically engaged, immigrants will rise to the challenge.

#### **Initiative 25. Encourage civic participation**

Chicagoans have numerous opportunities to actively engage in civic activities. These include informal civic opportunities, such as volunteer activities through faith-based organizations, and formal civic opportunities, such as running for a Local School Council seat. These civic opportunities allow immigrants to interact with a broad range of residents, learn about City government, and integrate into Chicago. By increasing immigrant involvement, entities like schools, parks, and non-profits will better represent immigrants' interests and concerns.

Currently, new immigrants are underrepresented in civic organizations: in fact, first-generation immigrants are 25-55% less likely to participate in formal civic opportunities than second-generation immigrants.<sup>51</sup> By failing to involve new immigrants in civic organizations, Chicago has deprived its residents and neighborhoods of the benefits that immigrant volunteers could provide. Like other Chicagoans, immigrant volunteers can assist teachers, work with seniors, serve on boards, and provide guidance to City parks and schools. If



Chicago more effectively involves immigrants in civic activities, immigrants will build deeper ties to Chicago communities and strengthen our institutions.

Within three years, the Office of New Americans will identify and promote civic engagement opportunities to immigrants, including Local School Councils and Park Advisory Councils. The Office of New Americans will also partner with community-based organizations to prepare immigrants for civic participation through classes and leadership programs.

### Initiative 26. Expand naturalization campaign

Immigrants who become naturalized citizens make a significant commitment to the United States. It is in Chicago's interest to promote naturalization: naturalization is correlated with a five to twelve percent increase in wages.<sup>82</sup> This benefits both immigrants and non-immigrants: immigrants earn more, while non-immigrants benefit from increased economic productivity. Over one-third of Chicago's foreign-born population is naturalized, a rate which is lower than peer cities.<sup>83</sup> Chicago has already demonstrated its commitment to immigrants by pledging to, over the next three years, directly help 10,000 immigrants to become U.S. citizens through the Chicago New Americans initiative.

Within one year, the Office of New Americans will partner with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights to host informational workshops on naturalization at the City Colleges of Chicago. The Office of New Americans will pilot "Citizenship Corners" at Chicago Public Libraries, where information on the naturalization process will be made available in the most common languages spoken in Chicago. The Office of New Americans will also adapt and translate informational materials, distributing them to immigrants through a variety of channels, such as Chicago Public Libraries.

Within three years, the Office of New Americans will launch a targeted campaign to naturalize City employees, and integrate informational materials on naturalization into the Welcoming portal (described in initiative #22) and Welcome Stations (described in initiative #23).

### NATURALIZED FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION OF TEN LARGEST METRO AREAS



Source: American Community Survey, 2010

### **Initiative 27. Host citizenship celebrations**

Too often, immigrants are criticized and judged by their needs and not celebrated for their contributions. Chicago has already taken the lead in reframing this discussion by committing to welcome, celebrate, and integrate the immigrants who come to reside in the city.

To ensure that its welcoming message is heard, the City will host citizenship swearing-in ceremonies at City Hall, inviting communities to share in immigrants' achievements. These public celebrations will help immigrants to feel more welcome, making Chicago a more attractive place for immigrants.

Within one year, the Office of New Americans will hold a citizenship swearing-in ceremony celebration at City Hall. These celebrations will be held annually. The Office of New Americans will work with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and community-based organizations to publicize and organize the events.

#### **Swearing-in ceremony at City Hall**

On Wednesday, June 6, 2012, Mayor Emanuel hosted Chicago's first ever citizenship swearing in ceremony in Chicago's City Council Chambers.

The ceremony marked an historic event, where 25 Chicagoans pledged an oath to the United States of America and became naturalized citizens. With more than ten countries represented, these Chicagoans exemplified the diversity of Chicago's immigrant community.



## MEASURING SUCCESS

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To make Chicago the world's most immigrant-friendly city, the City must effectively manage the implementation and success of this plan. With 27 interdependent initiatives and dozens of stakeholders, the Chicago New Americans Plan requires a robust measurement system that is capable of monitoring the success of initiatives, while also tracking progress toward higher-level goals.

The Office of New Americans will utilize a multi-tiered scorecard to measure initiative implementation and results. The scorecard will also evaluate the extent to which the initiatives together are improving economic, civic, and cultural vitality for Chicago. This scorecard will evaluate the progress of peer cities in comparison to Chicago's progress. Regular scorecard updates will keep stakeholders informed on initiative-level performance, allowing them to react to challenges and make adjustments as needed. The following table provides a sample of the metrics that will be used.

### Sample performance indicators

#### ■ OUR GROWTH

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- Export revenue for immigrant-owned businesses participating in program
- Number of applications received for shared-kitchen incubator
- Number of immigrant entrepreneurs trained through "Chamber University" program
- Number of immigrants using pop-up City services
- Number of immigrant neighborhoods promoted by Choose Chicago
- Number of candidates successfully completing GED or ESL programs
- Number of unfilled positions in science, technology, engineering, and math
- Number of participants in employer programs that enhance skills

#### ■ OUR YOUTH

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- Enrollment gap between immigrants and non-immigrants in Early Childhood Education programs
- Academic performance gap between immigrant and non-immigrant children
- High school graduation rate gap between immigrants and non-immigrants
- Number of work permits issued through the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program

#### ■ OUR COMMUNITIES

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- Percentage of police officers trained to uphold the Welcoming City ordinance
- Number of people participating in regular meetings between the Chicago Police Department and immigrant community-based organizations
- Number of annual immigration services fraud complaints
- Percentage of City departments and sister agencies that have implemented language access plans
- Number of visitors to the Welcoming Chicago portal
- Number of people attending Welcome Stations
- Percentage of Chicago Public Schools, Local School Council, and Park District advisory council seats filled by ethnic minorities
- Percentage increase in number of naturalization applications received

The Chicago New Americans Plan outlines a set of initiatives to welcome immigrants and maximize the contributions they make to the city. The plan recognizes that improving the ability of Chicago's 560,000 foreign-born residents to participate in the city's economic vitality will lead to economic, social and cultural benefits for all Chicagoans. By tapping into the intrinsic potential of our many immigrant communities, as part of a broader economic development plan, all Chicagoans will benefit.

Potential economic impact from The Chicago New Americans Plan initiatives

<b>WHEN CHICAGO...</b>	<b>... THE CITY WILL BENEFIT GREATLY</b>
Helps immigrant-owned businesses flourish	Immigrant-owned businesses could create 10,000 to 20,000 more jobs if Chicago increased its job growth rate from small and medium-sized businesses to match the highest-performing U.S. city. <sup>54</sup>
Doubles the exports from immigrant-owned businesses	Doubling immigrant-owned business exports could produce an additional 24,000 to 30,000 jobs. <sup>55</sup>
Becomes a more attractive city for high-skilled, foreign-born workers	For every 100 additional high-skilled foreign-born workers who work in science, technology, engineering or math fields, 250 jobs could be created for U.S.-born workers. <sup>56</sup>
Increases graduation rates for high school immigrant students and helps more immigrants earn their GED certificate	For every additional high school diploma earned by Chicago students, gross state product could increase by \$15,000. <sup>57</sup>
Increases immigrant participation in early childhood programs	For every dollar invested in early childhood education, Chicago could save seven dollars in government spending. <sup>58</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Immigrants present enormous opportunities for Chicago's future, both in terms of cultural and economic prosperity. The initiatives outlined in the Chicago New Americans Plan will expand the potential of Chicago's thriving immigrant community, whose contributions, in turn, will push Chicago even further ahead as a dynamic, world-class city. The plan's positive impact on Chicago will accelerate over time as more initiatives are deployed in full measure. Additionally, as changes are made to federal and state law, the Office of New Americans and local stakeholders will look for new ways to support Chicago's immigrant population.

The goal of making Chicago the most immigrant-friendly city in the world will be achieved through the collaborative efforts of the City of Chicago, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and other stakeholders. Working together, all residents can look forward to a city with abundant jobs and economic opportunities, with a rich cultural life enhanced by diversity of perspective, and with youth who are better educated and ready to become successful contributing adults.

### Acknowledgments

The Office of New Americans thanks all of the members of the advisory committee for their contributions and leadership, and looks forward to continued engagement during the implementation of the Chicago New Americans Plan.

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Maricela Garcia	Gads Hill Center
Sue Gin	Flying Food Group
Layla Suleiman Gonzales	Illinois Department of Human Services
Roberto Gonzalez	The University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration
Luis Gutierrez	Latinos Progresando
Ahlem Itara	The Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago
Alié Kabba	United African Organization
Gary Kenzer	Polish American Association
Clara Lopez	El Valor
Ernie Lozano	Centro Sin Fronteras
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 Muslim Women Resource Center  
 United Neighborhood Organization  
 Council on American-Islamic Relations - Chicago Office  
 Albany Park Community Center  
 Erie Neighborhood House  
 Instituto del Progreso Latino  
 Chicago Cultural Alliance  
 Iglesia Rebaño Church  
 Archdiocese of Chicago  
 MillerCoors  
 Chicago Legal Clinic  
 Evans Food Group  
 Upwardly Global - Chicago Office  
 The Association of Latino Men for Action  
 Azteca Foods  
 Illinois Department of Human Services - Illinois Welcoming Center  
 Chinese American Service League  
 Africa International House

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Thank you,



Adolfo Hernandez  
 Director of the Office of New Americans  
 Office of the Mayor  
 City of Chicago  
 November 2012

## INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

### People Interviewed

Cindy Agustin - Immigrant Youth Justice League, Sioban Abiol - DePaul University College of Law, Leroy Allala - Chicago Sister Cities International, María Almeida - Accion Chicago, Louis Dan Alvarez - Golden Hill Foods, LLC, Isabel Anadon - Latino Policy Forum, Augusto Aquino - Asociación de Vendedores Ambulantes, Sally Armbruster - World Business Chicago, Dale Asis - Coalition of African, Arab, Asian, European and Latino Immigrants of Illinois, Jonathan Breerton - Accion Chicago, David Brinn - Jewish United Fund/ Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, Rachel Bronson - Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Joanna Brown - Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Maria Buclo - The Resurrection Project, Vanessa Carter - University of Southern California Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, Melissa Cherry - Choose Chicago, Victoria Chou - University of Illinois at Chicago, Cathy Domanico - Choose Chicago, Javier Esguevillas - University of Notre Dame, Mark Fleming - Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center, Suzanne Franklin - Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society of Chicago, Michelle Garcia - Access Living, Hannah Gill - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Institute for the Study of the Americas, Ana Guajardo - Centro de Trabajadores Unidos, Luis Gutiérrez - U.S. House of Representatives, Fourth Congressional District of Illinois, Joshua Gutstein - Minority Business Development Agency Business Center - Chicago, Claudia Henriquez - Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Jake Henry - McKinsey & Company, Juan Hernandez - Nuevo Labs, Jorge Hidalgo - The Mexican Consulate in Chicago, Barbara Higgins - Allstate Insurance, Joshua Hoyt - Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Elisabeth Jansen - Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Liz Jellema - World Business Chicago, Janice Kaufman - Jewish Vocational Service Chicago, Christine Kenny - Literacy Works, Scott Leff - Leff Communications, David Lubell - Welcoming America, Sara Lundquist - Santa Ana College, Mary Carmen Madrid-Crost - Madrid Crost Law Group, Patricia Martinez - Nuevo Labs, John McDermott - Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Margie McHugh - National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, Sarah Mesick - Southwest Organizing Project, Bridget Murphy - Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Brittney Nystrom - National Immigration Forum, Rhonda Ortiz - University of Southern California Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, Marta Pereyra - Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly, Olga Prutnikov - Dina and Eli Field EZRA Multi-Service Center, Roberta Rakove - Sinai Health System, José Rico - U.S. Department of Education, Idalma Robles - Accion Chicago, Israel Rodriguez - Confederación de Federaciones Mexicanas, Richard Rodríguez - Res Publica Group, Juanita Salvador-Burris - Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment, Fatima Shama - New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Andrea Flores Shelton - County of Santa Clara, Office of Supervisor George Shirakawa, Sharon Shi - Law Offices of Xiaoming Shi, Tony Shu - Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Juan Soto - Gamaliel of Metro Chicago, Rachel Steinhardt - Welcoming America, Carlos Tortolero - National Museum of Mexican Art, Fred Tsao - Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Warren Wilkinson - Choose Chicago, Karolina Zaczek - U.S. House of Representatives, Fifth Congressional District of Illinois, Amie Zander - West Ridge Chamber of Commerce, Marwa Zohdy - McKinsey & Company

### Departments and Agencies

Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Department of Family and Support Services, Department of Housing and Economic Development, Department of Innovation and Technology, Department of Law, Department of Public Health, Commission on Human Relations, Office of the City Treasurer, Office of Emergency Management and Communications, Office of the Mayor, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago Park District, Chicago Police Department, Chicago Public Libraries, Chicago Public Schools, City Colleges of Chicago

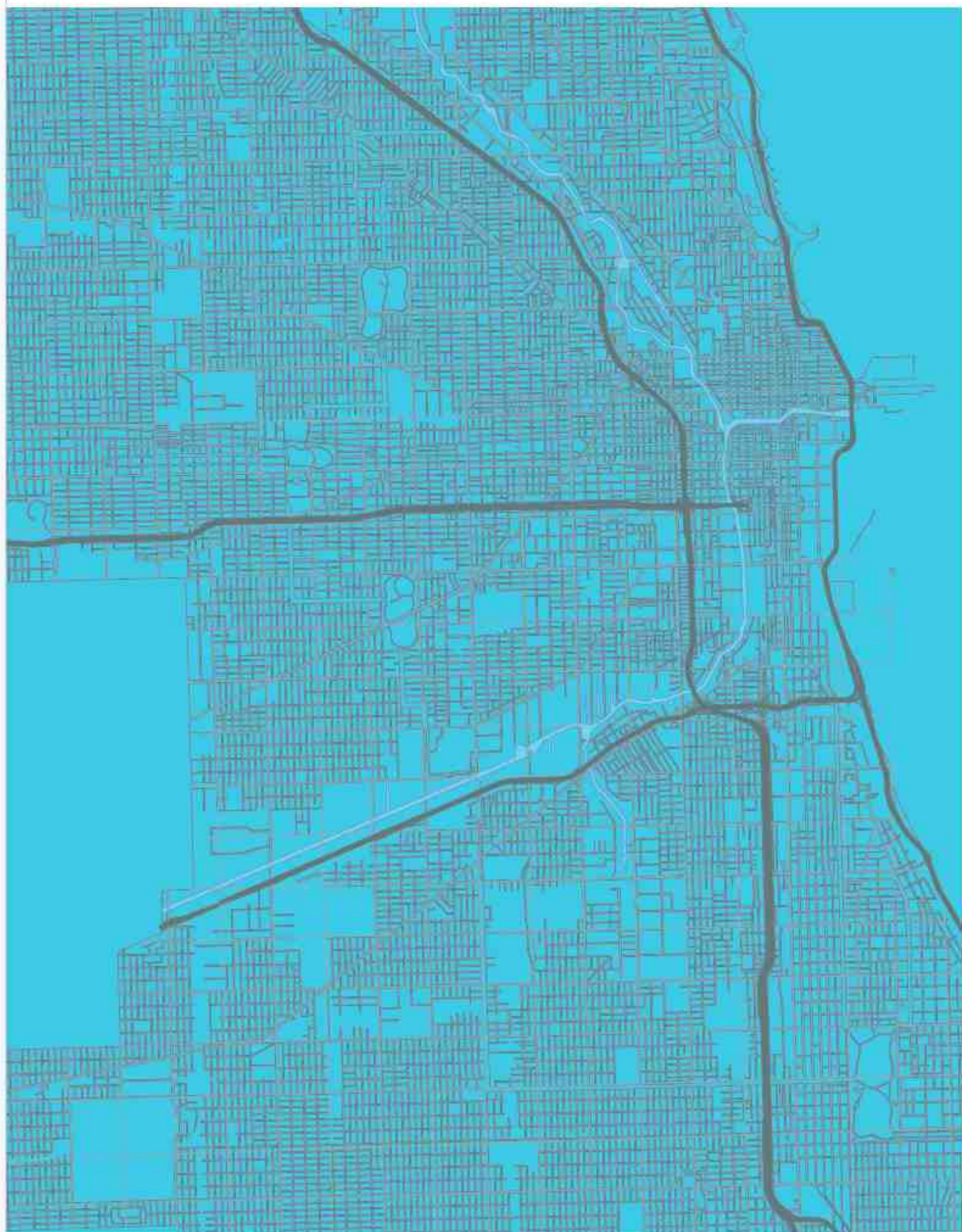


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