



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT
MAYOR

December 29, 2022

Honorable Chicago Delegation Members
Illinois General Assembly
Illinois State Capitol
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Legislators:

I write to request your immediate assistance in securing supplemental appropriation funds on behalf of the city of Chicago to support the on-going wrap around services for migrant and asylum-seeking individuals who currently live within our municipality or who will soon call our neighborhoods home.

As you are aware, since August 31, 2022, the City has received an unusually large number of migrants who have been compelled to leave Texas by bus transport. We have also seen an uptick in migrants from Haiti, various African countries, Cuba, and Nicaragua who are coming to Chicago in need of support. We currently have 1,531 migrants in our care.

To respond to this crisis, the city of Chicago has stood up 11 alternate shelters that provide meals, clothing, and showers; hosts a Multi-Agency Resource Center to connect asylum seekers to legal services, CityKey IDs and diversion services; connects individuals to medical care in partnership with Cook County and other local providers; and have provided \$17 million in supports. In preparation for this continued need, the city of Chicago's FY2023 budget contains a multimillion-dollar investment for migrant services. However, these funds without state assistance will not be nearly sufficient to address this on-going need.

Yesterday afternoon, the state of Illinois informed us it will soon terminate all fiscal support to the city of Chicago for migrant services; we are dependent upon these funds to help us address the growing need for migrant supports. Attached please find the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Illinois Department of Human Services' letter to the city informing us they are out of funds and will no longer be able to support city migrant services efforts as of February 1, 2023.

In December 2022, the city will spend over seven million dollars for migrant shelter, food, staffing, and other resources. After state funding support terminates, the city projects it will spend approximately \$53.5 million through June 30, 2023 for migrant services, and this amount will only increase based on the number of new migrants that arrive in Chicago.

The city is grateful to the state of Illinois for its partnership and collaboration on this mission to date, but we are simply unable to provide migrant services at today's levels after February 1, 2023 if the state withdraws its financial support.

As a Chicago Delegation Member, I respectfully request you to advocate for \$53.5 million to the city of Chicago for emergency services to migrant and asylum-seeking individuals in a supplemental appropriations bill that may be considered before the 102nd Illinois General Assembly adjourns. These funds will support the city's resettling efforts for thousands of new arrivals for emergency shelter; diversion services; necessities like food and mobile showers; legal services; and provide for significant physical and behavioral health support needs.

As you know, asylum-seekers are not eligible for employment authorization for months at a time at best. While we continue to push the federal government to step up with additional resources and a comprehensive plan, many of these migrants are entirely dependent on city services and support. They arrive to our city with few belongings and are ill-prepared for Chicago's colder weather. These funds will ensure we can continue to welcome people with dignity and respect by providing the basic needs all people deserve and help them stabilize as they wait for a federal government response.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. I hope you and your family have a safe and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Mayor