

Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL



Journal of Proceedings

Thursday, October 9, 2025

10:00 AM

Special Meeting: Presentation of the FY 2026 President's Executive Budget Recommendation

**Cook County Building, Board Room,
118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois**

FRANK J. AGUILAR
ALMA E. ANAYA
SCOTT R. BRITTON
JOHN P. DALEY
BRIDGET DEGNEN
BRIDGET GAINER
BILL LOWRY
KISHA E. MCCASKILL

DONNA MILLER
STANLEY MOORE
JOSINA MORITA
KEVIN B. MORRISON
SEAN MORRISON
MICHAEL SCOTT JR.
TARA S. STAMPS
MAGGIE TREVOR
JESSICA VÁZQUEZ

**MONICA GORDON
COUNTY CLERK**

Board met pursuant to law and pursuant to the following call:

October 3, 2025

The Honorable Monica Gordon
Cook County Clerk
69 West Washington Street, Fifth Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE for October 9, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.

Dear Clerk Gordon:

Pursuant to the authority vested in me, I hereby call a Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County to be convened on Thursday, October 9, 2025, at the hour of 10:00 a.m. at 118 N. Clark Street, Room 567, Chicago, Illinois 60602. The Special Meeting will be an in-person meeting and will also be able to be viewed by the public at [cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings](https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings).

At said meeting the following items will be considered.

- Item 25-3579, President's recommended Cook County Budget Resolution and Annual Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2026
- Item 25-4003, Resolution for the Fourth Installment Spending Plan for the Budgeted FY2026 Equity and Inclusion Special Purpose Fund

Instructions for how to attend this meeting and participate in public comment will be provided on the Cook County webpage at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FBLWH5>. The proceedings will be able to be viewed at [cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings](https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings) on October 9, 2025 starting at 10:00 a.m. Written public comment or live (virtual) testimony on any of the items listed on the Agenda will be accepted at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FBLWH5>. Written testimony will also be accepted at cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. Written comments prior to the start of the Special Board meeting will be posted at <https://cook-county.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> and may be read aloud or summarized at the meeting. Three minutes per comment will be allowed.

On or around 8:45 a.m. Central Time on the morning of the meeting, a Microsoft Teams link and phone number to join the meeting will be sent to all live (virtual) speakers. You may not log into the meeting until the scheduled meeting time. You may not forward the link to anyone. To reduce the chance of meeting disruption, MEETING PARTICIPANTS WHO FORWARD LINKS WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE MEETING, AS WILL THOSE WHO RECEIVED THE FORWARDED LINK. Speaking order is to be determined by the Chair. You will have three (3) minutes to make your statement. Once your statement is completed, you will be removed from the meeting. Once removed, you will still be able to follow the proceedings for that day at: <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings>

Copies of the Agenda for the October 9, 2025 Special Board Meeting of the Cook County Board of Commissioners and items to be considered at this meeting will be made available electronically on the Cook County website at <https://cook-county.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Please issue the Notice of this Special Meeting and Agenda as required by law.

Very truly yours,

Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County Board President

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO ALL COMMISSIONERS

October 3, 2025

President and Members
Cook County Board of Commissioners

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Toni Preckwinkle, President of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, has directed me to call a Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County on Thursday, October 9, 2025 at the hour of 10:00 a.m. the Special Meeting will be an in-person meeting for the County Board and will be able to be viewed by the public at cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings.

At said meeting the following items will be considered.

- Item 25-3579, President's recommended Cook County Budget Resolution and Annual Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2026
- Item 25-4003, Resolution for the Fourth Installment Spending Plan for the Budgeted FY2026 Equity and Inclusion Special Purpose Fund

Instructions for how to attend this meeting and participate in public comment will be provided on the Cook County webpage at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FBLWH5> . The proceedings will be able to be viewed at cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings on Thursday, October 9, 2025, starting at 10:00 a.m. Written public comment or live (virtual) testimony on any of the items listed on the Agenda will be accepted at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FBLWH5>. Written testimony will also be accepted at cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. Written comments prior to the start of the Special Board meeting will be posted at <https://cook-county.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> and may be read aloud or summarized at the meeting. Three minutes per comment will be allowed.

On or around 8:45 a.m. Central Time on the morning of the meeting, a Microsoft Teams link and phone number to join the meeting will be sent to all live (virtual) speakers. You may not log into the meeting until the scheduled meeting time. You may not forward the link to anyone. To reduce the chance of meeting disruption, MEETING PARTICIPANTS WHO FORWARD LINKS WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE MEETING, AS WILL THOSE WHO RECEIVED THE FORWARDED LINK. Speaking order is to be determined by the Chair. You will have three (3) minutes to make your statement. Once your statement is completed, you will be removed from the meeting. Once removed, you will still be able to follow the proceedings for that day at: <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings>

Copies of the Agenda for the October 9, 2025, Special Board Meeting of the Cook County Board of Commissioners and items to be considered at this meeting will be made available electronically on the Cook County website at <https://cook-county.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Very truly yours,

Monica Gordon
County Clerk

LEGAL NOTICE

Toni Preckwinkle, President of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, has directed me to call a Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County on Thursday, October 9, 2025 at the hour of 10:00 a.m. the Special Meeting will be an in-person meeting for the County Board and will be able to be viewed by the public at cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings.

At said meeting the following items will be considered.

- Item 25-3579, President's recommended Cook County Budget Resolution and Annual Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 2026
- Item 25-4003, Resolution for the Fourth Installment Spending Plan for the Budgeted FY2026 Equity and Inclusion Special Purpose Fund

Instructions for how to attend this meeting and participate in public comment will be provided on the Cook County webpage at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FBLWH5> . The proceedings will be able to be viewed at cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings on Thursday, October 9, 2025, starting at 10:00 a.m. Written public comment or live (virtual) testimony on any of the items listed on the Agenda will be accepted at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FBLWH5>. Written testimony will also be accepted at cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov. Written comments prior to the start of the Special Board meeting will be posted at <https://cook-county.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> and may be read aloud or summarized at the meeting. Three minutes per comment will be allowed.

On or around 8:45 a.m. Central Time on the morning of the meeting, a Microsoft Teams link and phone number to join the meeting will be sent to all live (virtual) speakers. You may not log into the meeting until the scheduled meeting time. You may not forward the link to anyone. To reduce the chance of meeting disruption, MEETING PARTICIPANTS WHO FORWARD LINKS WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE MEETING, AS WILL THOSE WHO RECEIVED THE FORWARDED LINK. Speaking order is to be determined by the Chair. You will have three (3) minutes to make your statement. Once your statement is completed, you will be removed from the meeting. Once removed, you will still be able to follow the proceedings for that day at: <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings>

Copies of the Agenda for the October 9, 2025, Special Board Meeting of the Cook County Board of Commissioners and items to be considered at this meeting will be made available electronically on the Cook County website at <https://cook-county.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Very truly yours,

MONICA GORDON, Cook County Clerk and
Clerk of the Board of the Commissioners of Cook County, Illinois

OFFICIAL RECORD

President Preckwinkle in the chair.

CALL TO ORDER

At 10:00 A.M., being the hour appointed for the meeting, the President called the Board to order.

QUORUM

County Clerk Monica Gordon called the roll of members and there was found to be a quorum present.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Commissioners Aguilar, Anaya, Britton, Daley, Gainer, Lowry, Miller, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Scott, Stamps, Trevor and Vásquez (14)

Absent: Commissioner Degnen (1)

REMOTE PARTICIPATION

In accordance with Cook County Code Section 2-102(i) Remote Participation in Meetings, a motion was made by Commissioner Daley, seconded by Commissioner Lowry, to allow for remote participation in meeting. The vote of yeas and nays being as follows:

Yeas: Commissioners Aguilar, Anaya, Daley, Gainer, Lowry, Miller, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Scott, Stamps, Trevor and Vásquez (13)

Nays: None (0)

Absent: Commissioner Britton, Degnen, McCaskill and Moore (4)

The motion carried.

Commissioner Lowry, McCaskill, K. Morrison and Stamps participated remotely.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Authorization as a virtual public speaker shall only be granted to those individuals who have submitted in writing, their name, email address, phone number, subject matter, and organization (if any) to the Secretary 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Duly authorized virtual public speakers shall be sent a link to virtually attend the meeting and will be called upon to deliver testimony at a time specified in the meeting agenda. Authorized public speakers who are not present during the specified time for public testimony will forfeit their allotted time to speak at the meeting. Public testimony must not exceed three minutes; the Secretary will keep track of the time and advise when the time for public testimony has expired. After each speaker has completed their statement, they will be removed from the meeting. Once removed, you will still be able to follow the proceedings for that day at: <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings> or in a viewing area at 69 W. Washington Street, 22nd Floor Conference Room D, Chicago, IL. Persons authorized to provide public testimony shall not use vulgar, abusive, or otherwise inappropriate language when addressing the Board; failure to act appropriately; failure to speak to an item that is germane

to the meeting, or failure to adhere to the time requirements may result in expulsion from the meeting and/or disqualify the person from providing future testimony. Written comments will not be read aloud at the meeting but will be posted on the meeting page and made a part of the meeting record.

1. Dutch De Groot, Veterans of Foreign Wars
2. Emma Gonzalez, Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice
3. Reverend Booker Vance, Chicago
4. Shanika Webb
5. George Gartner
6. Tiwon Sims?

PRESIDENT

25-3979

Sponsored by: TONI PRECKWINKLE (President), Cook County Board of Commissioners

EXECUTIVE BUDGET RECOMMENDATION

Department: Office of the President

Summary: Executive Budget, Cook County Budget Resolution and Annual Appropriation Bill for FY2026.

Good morning, Commissioners, Cook County employees, partners, and residents.

It's an honor to present the Fiscal Year 2026 Executive Budget Recommendation.

We meet at a time of deep division and fear in our country — a time when the very role of government is being tested.

We see federal overreach and neglect: shutdowns that grind services to a halt, troops deployed into our cities as if our neighborhoods were battlefields and ICE raids that tear families apart.

This is not leadership.

Let's call it what it really is. Intimidation masquerading as strength. Cruelty disguised as policy. And a shameful time in American history.

The Trump administration has chosen to divide rather than to serve. It's turned its back on immigrant families, dismissed the fundamental right to healthcare, and dismantled the protections that make our communities strong.

These actions threaten the safety, security, and stability of millions of Americans, including the residents of Cook County.

That's why Cook County government will not stand by. We will stand up.

We will continue to speak out.

We will continue to act.

We will continue to choose humanity over hostility. Compassion over cruelty. Unity over fear.

And we will continue to stand with our neighbors regardless of their zip code, their immigration status, where they pray, or whom they love.

See, we believe and fully understand the strengths of having Diversity. Equity. And Inclusion.

That's why this budget is more than a ledger of dollars and cents.

Now more than ever, what I present to you today is a moral document. It's a reflection of who we are and what we believe. It represents our collective commitment to fairness, to dignity, and to opportunity.

It's how Cook County delivers on its mission as government you can trust and lean on, especially in these uncertain and chaotic times.

We remain open for business when the federal government is not. No matter what the federal government may throw our way, Cook County will be here. We will continue to welcome you and continue to help all of our residents — our people — thrive.

Over the last decade, including this year, we've balanced budgets without increasing taxes or cutting services. At the same time, we've addressed structural deficits, secured pension stability and, more recently, secured historic bond rating upgrades.

That strength has allowed us to make transformative investments. It has helped us bolster our partnerships with leaders across business, philanthropic, and education sectors.

We've proven that when government is disciplined, determined and collaborative, we can deliver real results for our communities.

This year, though, the progress we have made in Cook County is under threat.

Proposed cuts to Medicaid threaten to unravel the healthcare safety net that hundreds of thousands of residents rely on.

Federal reductions in violence prevention funding jeopardize the 55% drop in gun homicides we've worked so hard to achieve.

And political instability in Washington threatens the advances we have secured in economic and regional development.

Cook County has always risen to meet challenges with discipline, creativity, and resolve and this moment is no different. The budget I present today is designed to safeguard our residents from these threats while continuing to build a foundation of equity, stability, and opportunity.

It's rooted in four clear commitments:

Protecting and strengthening our health safety net;
Advancing safety and justice;
Modernizing technology; and

Expanding economic development and opportunity.

These are much more than line items. They are commitments that define our path forward. Every dollar strengthens our ability to serve. Every choice affirms our responsibility to protect and uplift those who need us the most.

II. Fiscal Responsibility

All of the investments and protections in this budget rests on a foundation of fiscal responsibility.

This \$10 billion budget continues the County's commitment to a stronger and financially solid future. It does all this without layoffs, tax increases or cuts to vital public services.

Last month, Moody's upgraded Cook County's bond rating. This is a clear recognition that our approach to long-term fiscal stability is working. Even after facing pandemic and economic challenges, we have secured four bond rating upgrades in four years.

It shows that we can do more without asking more. It keeps taxpayer dollars in taxpayer pockets. And, it means the work we've done over the last 15 years continues to pay off.

I would add that it also saves the County millions upon millions of dollars by reducing borrowing costs. This, in turn, frees up resources for the work that truly matters: improving services and enhancing programs that directly benefit our residents.

We are following the adage that someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.

We are the ones planting those trees.

Look, I get it. Building reserves, increasing pension payments, finding structural solutions for structural problems and lowering debt... by today's standards these significant wins for our County might not go viral.

But, make no mistake about it, when combined with sensible budgeting and a clear vision for the future, we are in a solid... fiscal... position.

Our pension system faced insolvency before I took office. Today, we've paid more into the system, changed state law and have funded more than 66% of future liabilities.

Over the last decade, we've paid \$3 billion above what was required by state law. We're now on track to fully fund pensions within 25 years — a milestone we are proud to achieve.

Over the last decade, we have also reduced debt by over \$800 million. And we've created dedicated reserves to prepare for emergencies — from health crises to federal funding cuts.

This budget reflects year, after year, after painstaking year, of hard work. It balances responsibility with vision, fiscal discipline, and bold investment.

This is a testament to the dedication of our finance team, the leadership of this Board of Commissioners, and our commitment to making the tough but necessary choices.

Our priorities are clear: protect essential services and ensure that every decision aims to ease the financial pressures residents face. Cook County is strong, prepared, and ready to continue delivering results for our residents.

III. Protecting Medicaid and Healthcare Access

As Cook County Board President, I'm proud of the healthcare system we've built — a system where healthcare is a right, not a privilege.

For 190 years, Cook County Health has served everyone, regardless of ability to pay or immigration status. And 13 years ago, we launched CountyCare. Today, it serves nearly 400,000 members and has covered over 1 million residents.

It's the only government-sponsored, provider-led Medicaid plan in Illinois. It's also known as the highest quality plan in the entire state, earning a four-star rating from the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

This demonstrates that when we put people before profits and prioritize community needs, we can deliver excellence at scale.

But, as we know, that progress is under threat. Federally proposed cuts to Medicaid jeopardize one of the most vital lifelines our residents have.

Protecting Medicaid is not just a matter of fiscal responsibility. It's a moral responsibility to uphold the promise of health and dignity for all.

That's why earlier this year, we opened our newest community health center, bringing primary care, rehabilitation and psychiatric care into Bronzeville. We established a 24-hour stabilization center for people in mental health crisis at Provident Hospital. And we are opening a new dental clinic in Belmont Cragin later this month.

This level of service allows patients to stay in their local hospital, close to their families, their communities, and their support systems, while receiving specialty care from our top doctors.

I want to take a moment to highlight the vital reproductive health services Cook County Health provides.

Since the Dobbs decision, Illinois has become a refuge for those seeking care denied elsewhere. Cook County has led the way with compassion.

Over the summer, Cook County Health awarded a \$2 million grant to the Chicago Abortion Fund, which helps cover travel, lodging, and procedure costs for patients who have nowhere else to turn.

This investment ensures that every person, regardless of income or circumstance, can access the care they need. And it reaffirms our commitment to the fundamental right to make personal health decisions.

This same commitment to removing barriers to care, and supporting residents' health, drives other initiatives in this budget, including our ongoing efforts to relieve medical debt.

Take County resident Berenice, who was diagnosed with thyroid cancer and was unable to work. This caused her to fall behind on her medical payments. She didn't qualify for financial assistance from the

hospital while attending graduate school full time because she lived with her parents.

Her medical debt was abolished, and she can now focus on other things like her career.

I am proud to announce today, that as we speak, 105,000 letters are being mailed out to Cook County residents to notify them that Cook County Government — in partnership with Undue Medical Debt — has forgiven \$122 million dollars of medical debt.

That brings our total, since the Medical Debt Relief Initiative first began, to \$900 million dollars in medical debt forgiven for over 700,000 Cook County residents.

IV. Investing in Public Safety

When it comes to the health of our communities, public safety is inseparable.

Right now, Donald Trump and anyone spreading his false narratives are waging a deliberate campaign of misinformation. They paint our communities as lawless and out of control, stoking fear for political gain.

I genuinely love this County... and our residents, our communities. I have the privilege of waking up and serving you each and every day.

So, to hear this steady drumbeat of lies and mischaracterization of our neighborhoods infuriates me. It also undermines trust, distracts from proven interventions and puts lives at risk.

Here's the real truth — what we are doing works. But don't take my word for it. Listen to this fact.

In the last four years in Cook County, violent crime, including gun homicides have been reduced by more than half. More than half.

And that's been with steady decreases each year.

They represent lives saved, families spared, and communities given the chance to heal.

This progress comes from intentional, evidence-based investments, putting resources where they could make the biggest difference.

Four years ago, the State of Illinois and Cook County declared gun violence a public health crisis.

That declaration was more than symbolic. It was a call to action. When the pandemic hit, it created new challenges for communities all across America.

We met that moment with intentional, thoughtful investments, putting resources where they could make the biggest difference. Through the Government Alliance for Safe Communities, led by my office, our region maximized federal relief funds to invest more than \$350 million in community safety.

We also initiated a historic public sector collaboration with our private partners including philanthropy and business.

Get Toni Preckwinkle's stories in your inbox
Join Medium for free to get updates from this writer.

Enter your email

Subscribe

Altogether, we've built one of the strongest violence prevention ecosystems in the nation, and today we are safer because of it.

Cook County alone has invested over \$110 million in Community Violence Intervention and other prevention strategies. Cook County Health has invested \$44 million in behavioral health services through our Stronger Together initiative.

And just this summer, we awarded an additional \$25 million to support intervention and wraparound services for survivors of gun violence.

This fiscal year, we will again invest \$20 million dollars into violence prevention.

This is all to say that public safety cannot — and will not — be achieved through enforcement and incarceration alone.

While we're proud to be making incredible progress in reducing violence, we have a lot of work to do to ensure all neighborhoods are truly safe and thriving.

One of the Community Violence Intervention (or CVI) grants we awarded over the summer went to Breakthrough, a non-profit focused on community development, wellness and violence prevention.

With this funding, Breakthrough is expanding their team to provide 24/7 coverage in Garfield Park on the westside.

Damien Morris is the head of Breakthrough's Violence Prevention programs. He spoke to me about "relentless engagement." By working with young people in the community, they're reaching those most at risk of being lost to gun violence.

They're also developing the next generation of peace makers where 70 percent of Breakthrough's new outreach workers are past program participants.

Damien shared the story of a young man from his community. He saw incredible potential in him. But this young man was dealing with the trauma of surviving a shooting. He believed he would be incarcerated or dead by the age of 30.

Yet, relentless engagement helped him forge a new path. After 150 weekly engagements with Damien, this young man now has multiple jobs including doing outreach for Breakthrough. He is now a confident and hopeful 34-year-old man.

This speaks volumes about the impact of CVI. It's effective. It can save lives. And the impact of CVI extends to the wider community.

Just like violence, peace is contagious. When we invest in people, they invest in their communities.

Yet even as we see progress, federal support is being rolled back. The Department of Justice has already cut more than \$500 million in community safety programs, including CVI. These are proven strategies that are being cut and abandoning them now is short-sighted and dangerous.

Cook County will continue to fight for the restoration of these funds, and we will continue to invest in violence prevention programs that work.

Looking forward, our vision is about persistence. We will expand programs that break cycles of violence before they begin. We will continue to unite resources across sectors, ensuring that every intervention is guided by data, grounded in community expertise, and informed by compassion.

To ensure our justice system can operate effectively, we are also providing the tools and staff that allow prosecutors, defenders and judges to do their jobs efficiently and fairly.

We're investing \$4.6 million to implement an advanced system for managing and transferring digital evidence, keeping pace with the growing volume of evidence in legal proceedings. We're also investing \$5 million into the Public Defender Case Management System.

And it's important to note that in this budget, we are increasing full-time employees for the State's Attorney's office, whose budget also includes resources to retain talent. And we're increasing full-time employees for the Chief Judge's office.

In fact, over the past decade, Cook County has made significant investments to strengthen our public safety system. Since 2016, the combined budgets of our public safety offices have grown from about \$1 billion dollars to nearly \$1.8 billion.

The State's Attorney's Office has seen its budget double over that time, reflecting our commitment to pursuing justice fairly and effectively.

The Office of the Chief Judge has increased its budget by more than 70 percent since 2016, supporting expanded court operations and additional staff to better serve residents.

And the Sheriff's Office has also grown, with its budget increasing by nearly \$300 million dollars.

Together, these investments show how Cook County continues to adapt — putting resources where it's needed most, while modernizing our approach to public safety and justice.

When we combine support for the justice system with significant violence prevention investments, we build safer, stronger, and healthier communities.

V. Technology Investments

And just as we invest in our communities, we must invest in the systems that serve them. That means modernizing County government.

As we recognize Digital Inclusion week this week, we know that too often, technology is treated as an afterthought — an optional upgrade if the budget allows. I reject that view. In Cook County, technology is an equity imperative.

It's the difference between a senior waiting hours in line for a paper form and that same senior accessing services from the comfort of her home. It's the difference between a small business owner struggling with outdated procurement processes and that same owner easily bidding on contracts online.

Outdated systems burden the residents who can least afford it. That's why our FY2026 technology strategy is built on two fundamental pillars — accessible services and modernization.

When I first came into office, the technology we had was so outdated and didn't serve the employees or residents of Cook County. So, we took on the arduous task of modernizing all our technology platforms.

This includes retiring a 50-year-old mainframe that ran COBOL programs — the kind of system with green-on-black text and no mouse in sight. Programming was used with paper punch cards, if you can believe that.

This system, which literally got built when Gerald Ford was President, was the cornerstone of the entire court and property tax system until I took office.

Reforming the property tax system and retiring a mainframe is one of the largest and most complex undertakings in the County's history.

This is due in part because no single official controls the system. Our Property Tax Reform Group, which brings together the Assessor's office, Treasurer's office, Clerk's office and the Board of Review has been working together to address decades of neglect, including inefficient practices, flawed data and outdated technology.

This work, though, is about more than software. It's about staffing, training and building a system that operates seamlessly across multiple offices and touches millions of properties. We knew it would take time, resources and unprecedented interagency collaboration.

After this significant amount of work, this year, we will finally move off the mainframe and deliver a fairer, more equitable, more transparent, more efficient modernized property tax system.

Cybersecurity is also a top priority given how the Trump administration has defunded and deprioritized local cyber support. Just as storms and floods test our resilience, so do cyberattacks threaten our ability to operate. This budget funds stronger defenses, rapid response teams, and resilient infrastructure.

In addition, technology must extend beyond government walls. That means broadband access, affordable devices, and training.

Digital equity is a hallmark of my administration, and we will continue to invest in historically under-resourced communities to bridge the digital divide.

For example, at Argo High School in Summit and Ridgewood High School in Norridge, students are gaining early exposure to coding, cybersecurity, A.I., and digital safety through camps and after-school programs. This, in turn, sparks confidence and interest in tech careers, especially for girls.

Now — if you haven't noticed — a new big tech neighbor is moving in next door at the former Thompson Center. And today I'd like to announce a new and exciting partnership with that soon to be new neighbor — Google.

Through Cook County's Project Rainbow initiative, I'm proud to announce that hundreds of no-cost scholarships will be made available for Google Career Certificates, helping residents gain the skills they need to grow their careers or start new ones.

The scholarships are flexible online courses that prepare learners for jobs in high-demand areas such as IT support, data analytics, cybersecurity, digital marketing and project management. No college degree or prior experience will be necessary.

Born out of the pandemic, Project Rainbow is Cook County's Emmy award-winning initiative that seeks to inform, inspire, and impact children's and families' lives.

Project Rainbow created the County's first ever app, curated hundreds of hours of educational content, and envisioned the Provident Scholarship fund, which has provided \$4 million in scholarships for students in the medical field.

Now, through our Google partnership, we are further expanding our impact to include adult learners who are eager to re-skill or take the next step in their professional journey.

VI. Investing in Public and Private Partnerships (“Radical Collaboration”)

Strong partnerships are how we turn ideas into real change. Government alone cannot solve the complex challenges facing our communities.

We have worked with our partners in all sorts of ways. From violence prevention to medical debt relief to economic development and more.

We've called our approach radical collaboration.

Partnerships are not optional; they're the force multipliers that allow government to do more, reach further, and create lasting impact.

Public-private collaboration allows us to combine the innovation of government with the industry knowledge of business leaders; the capacity-building resources of philanthropies; the research capabilities of higher education; and the lived experience of our community partners.

Through the Greater Chicagoland Economic Partnership, counties, cities, businesses, universities, and labor are working together to shape a regional vision for growth, investment, and opportunity.

Through Cook County's Small Business Source program, we are continuing to invest in programs that strengthen the backbone of our economy: small businesses.

Since 2020, we have distributed \$67 million in grants to businesses with 20 employees or fewer. And more than 16,000 businesses have been directly served.

These aren't just numbers. They're entrepreneurs like Tracey McGee, the founder of Ms. Jetsetter, a Cook County-based business that offers travel accessories for frequent travelers.

Tracey has worked with the Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council, one of The Source's Business Support Organizations, since launching her business. With their help, she's been able to place Ms. Jetsetter products at a variety of national retailers in addition to her own website.

And with the guidance of her advisor, Anita, Tracey was able to get her Minority-Owned Business Enterprise certification and her Woman-Owned Business Enterprise certification. These are important because they can help open the door to more opportunities for contracting with local government.

Our programs have overwhelmingly served microbusinesses with fewer than 10 employees, and have uplifted the small business community, including minority and women-owned businesses.

This year, we are building on that foundation with the 2025 Catalyst Grant program. This will provide \$100,000 dollars each, for up to 88 small businesses, ready to take the next step in their growth.

These investments do more than sustain businesses — they stabilize neighborhoods, create jobs, and build wealth in communities that have long been excluded from opportunity.

We are also putting residents at the center of our development decisions. Through our Transforming Places initiative, in partnership with United Way, we are anchoring community voices in the decisions that shape their futures.

With a \$15 million pilot program, we are empowering residents in eight communities — including Harvey, Robbins, Ford Heights, and Park Forest — to identify and advocate for their unique needs. They will get an opportunity to develop a community vision, and implement a program that's tailored to each community's specific challenges.

This work is about more than bricks and mortar; it's about trust, equity, and long-term stability. From food access to clean energy workforce training, Transforming Places is already proving what can happen when government listens and invests in partnership with the people it serves.

And through programs like 211 Metro Chicago, we are ensuring residents across Cook County can connect to opportunity. As of Aug. 1, 2025, 211 Metro Chicago's social service and homelessness support helplines fielded more than 450,000 contacts via phone, text message, website search and online chat for housing, health, food, other essential resources.

This includes information about our \$15 Million Homeowner Relief Fund. This fund will assist homeowners with a one-time payment of \$1,000 for those who have experienced a 30% or more increase in property taxes in recent years. This is an expansion from the previous 50% threshold.

I want to also note here that applications are still open, and the deadline will be extended to the end of this month so that every impacted homeowner can get a chance to apply.

So, whether it's helping a mother find safe housing for her family, connecting a worker to healthcare after losing coverage, or providing information on homeowner relief, 211 represents the very best of what government can do: meet people where they are and guide them to the help they need.

Our partnerships and investments in small businesses, in community-driven development initiatives, and more are all connected.

They represent a vision for Cook County's future that's both ambitious and grounded in inclusion — where opportunity reaches every community.

VIII. Conclusion

Let me close by saying this:

This budget protects healthcare. It strengthens public safety. It invests in technology. It embraces radical

collaboration and strengthens economic opportunity. And it's built on a foundation of fiscal strength that allows us to be innovative — even in times of uncertainty.

Cook County has proven we can deliver results: balancing the budget, stabilizing pensions, earning historic bond rating upgrades, and making transformative investments that improve lives every day.

To our residents: I say to you, stay engaged. Testify at our hearings. Help us ensure these investments reach the communities that need them most.

To our employees: thank you. From nurses to engineers, caseworkers to clerks, department heads to janitors, and all of our union workers, you make government work, and you make it matter.

To our commissioners — thank you for your constant leadership and collaboration. Together, we will work on this budget so it reflects our shared values and meets the needs of every resident.

And a special thanks to my chief of staff, Lanetta Haynes Turner, for her incredible leadership. Thanks to our bureau chiefs — Zahra Ali, Tanya Anthony, Xochitl Flores, Liz Granato, Velisha Haddox, and Tom Lynch.

We are at a critical moment in our country's history. One of great uncertainty but also great possibility. And Cook County is ready to meet this moment.

This budget is more than a plan. It's a statement: Cook County will protect people today, invest in our shared future, and keep building a stronger, safer, and more resilient county for generations to come.

Thank you.

A motion was made by Commissioner Daley, seconded by Commissioner Scott, that the Proposed Resolution be referred to the Finance Committee. The vote of the yeas and nays being as follows:

Yeas: Commissioners Aguilar, Anaya, Britton, Daley, Gainer, Lowry, McCaskill, Miller, Moore, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Scott, Stamps, Trevor and Vásquez (16)

Nays: None (0)

Absent: Commissioner Degnen (1)

The motion carried.

25-4003

Sponsored by: TONI PRECKWINKLE (President), Cook County Board of Commissioners

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

FOURTH INSTALLMENT SPENDING PLAN FOR THE BUDGETED FY2026 EQUITY AND INCLUSION SPECIAL PURPOSE FUND

WHEREAS, in November 2021, the Cook County Board of Commissioners passed Resolution No. 21-5542 creating a special purpose fund for Equity and Inclusion ("Equity Fund") dedicated to addressing

historical disparities and disinvestment communities that are marginalized or have experienced other social and economic disparities; and

WHEREAS, through the Equity Fund, intentional investments from government resources are allocated to address historical and continued disparities and disinvestment, (as defined in the Equity Report) and to bring advocates, service providers, and other partners to the table as thought partners and decision-makers; and

WHEREAS, since the establishment of the Equity Fund, the administration and the Equity Fund Taskforce have worked diligently to design and implement the broad range of Equity Fund systemic recommendations and initiatives across the six Policy Roadmap pillars; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, the County has invested nearly \$200M in the Equity Fund, allocating revenue from the general fund and a diversified stream of revenue including the Casino Tax, Cannabis and Firearm taxes, the latter being designated specifically to the Justice Advisory Council's legacy grant portfolio; and

WHEREAS, for the development of the FY26 Fourth Installment Spending plan, members of the Equity Fund Taskforce participated in the County's first participatory budgeting pilot to help determine the recommendations and initiatives that would be prioritized for funding through the Equity Fund which is set forth below.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners supports the Fourth Installment Spending Plan totaling \$85.6M which does not contemplate a new allocation of funding to the Equity Fund, but instead leverages the accumulated unspent, unallocated Equity fund reserves of approximately \$63.7M. Said spending plan includes carry-forward expenditures that have been previously approved in the amount of \$53.1M and an additional \$32.5M in new funding recommendations from the Taskforce itself. Any carryover estimates provided below will be adjusted once the fiscal year closes and final reconciliations will be provided by the Bureau of Finance through its monthly revenue and expense reports.

1. The Cannabis Business Development Program under the leadership of the Bureau of Economic Development will carry forward an estimated \$389,321 to support grant awards for social equity applicants, with the goal to enhance economic opportunity for those within communities most impacted prior to the legalization of cannabis.
2. The Cook County Land Bank Authority will carry forward an estimated \$2,502,144 to continue supporting the administrative and operational costs of their work to increase affordable housing stock and economic opportunity in systematically disadvantaged communities.
3. The Community Engagement Pilot Program under the leadership of the President's Office, will carry forward an estimated \$510,028 which includes a new nominal allocation of \$1,000, to continue strengthening the County's ability to conduct meaningful and authentic community engagement to residents and other stakeholders across Cook County.
4. The Health Equity in all Policies (HEiAP) Equity Fund recommendation 1.1, led by the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) will carry forward an estimated \$507,540, to continue its efforts to operationalize health equity across CCH and community partners and municipalities.

5. The Property and Taxation recommendation 2.1, led by the President's Office and the separately elected property tax stakeholders, will carry forward an estimated \$619,469, to continue the support of research needed to help inform the ongoing collaborative work to reform Cook County's property assessment and taxation system.
6. The Bureau of Economic Development, in furtherance of recommendation 2.9, will be allocated \$5,000,000 to continue supporting its Transforming Places Initiatives in partnership with United Way of Metro Chicago. Through this initiative, Cook County will continue to support highly vulnerable communities over a sustained period to ensure implementation and capacity-building and help attract additional public, private, and philanthropic resources.
7. The Bureau of Economic Development, in furtherance of recommendation 2.6, will be allocated \$7,500,000 to support the Guaranteed Income Pilot, an ARPA initiative geared towards supporting residents' economic security and increasing economic mobility and opportunity. The Guaranteed Income Pilot is currently being funded through ARPA, and this allocation will ensure that the Bureau has the needed resources to provide direct financial assistance to residents across Cook County in future funding cycles.
8. The Justice Advisory Council will be allocated a total of \$37,622,103 which includes a carry forward estimated at \$17,622,103 in addition to a second installment of \$20,000,000 to administer the scaling of CVI strategies and investments in partnership with the Government Alliance for Safe Communities (GASC), an unprecedented collaboration between leaders at the State of Illinois, City of Chicago and Cook County. Established in 2021, GASC has worked closely together to sustainably reduce gun violence and increase community safety in the communities and municipalities most impacted by the gun violence crisis in our region.
9. The Equity in Transit recommendation 4.1, led by the Department of Transportation and Highways, will carry forward an estimated \$2,063,119 to continue to support the implementation of a regional income-based fare model as the second phase of the Fair Transit Pilot, which launched during the pandemic in 2020.
10. The President's Office, in furtherance of recommendation 4.2 will carry forward an estimated \$850,000 to support the implementation of digital navigators as part of its broader Digital Equity Action plan.
11. The Department of Environment and Sustainability, in furtherance of recommendation 5.1, will carry forward an estimated \$1,650,000 to continue its work to improve community health and resilience in communities within suburban Cook County.
12. Led by the President's Office, the Equity in Grantmaking recommendation 6.1, will carry forward an estimated \$26,342,866 to continue supporting the implementation of a comprehensive equity-centered grantmaking strategy to promote equitable access and capacity building training and resources for community-based organizations funded by the County and through the Government Alliance for Safe Communities (GASC).
13. The remaining \$32.5M of the unspent, unallocated reserve will be used in future years to continue providing resources to support the Equity Fund recommendations and related initiatives and to serve as a stop gap as the County works to shore up the longer-term sustainability planning for our ARPA initiatives and those that are most closely aligned to the goals and priorities of the Equity

Fund. The President's Office will provide advance notice to the Cook County Board of Commissioners regarding any allocation of the reserve.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Justice Advisory Council will carry forward an estimated \$3,189,373 from the FY2025 Equity Fund allocation into FY2026 to continue addressing community safety through a holistic approach. These efforts include continued investments in promising Community Based Violence Intervention ("CVI") strategies through its Gun Violence Prevention Grant Portfolio, housing and wrap-around services for returning residents through its Returning Resident Grant Portfolio, and Capacity Building Grant Portfolio. Starting in FY2027, these efforts will be funded exclusively by the General Fund appropriation. To facilitate this transition, for FY2026 the Justice Advisory Council will use this estimated carryover from the Equity Fund in the amount of \$3,189,373 and a General Fund appropriation of \$31,810,627, totaling \$35,000,000, to advance community safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Budget Director and Comptroller shall be authorized to execute any additional budgetary transfers or chargebacks to effectuate these programs and the spending plan provided herein; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Budget Director and Comptroller shall continue providing financial updates on the Equity Fund as part of the monthly Revenue and Expense report provided to the Cook County Board of Commissioners Finance Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, A presentation on the annual progress of the Equity Fund will be made to the Finance Committee of the Cook County Board within 60 days of the close of the County's fiscal year.

A motion was made by Commissioner Daley, seconded by Commissioner Scott, that the Proposed Resolution be referred to the Finance Committee. The vote of the yeas and nays being as follows:

Yeas: Commissioners Aguilar, Anaya, Britton, Daley, Gainer, Lowry, McCaskill, Miller, Moore, Morita, K. Morrison, S. Morrison, Scott, Stamps, Trevor and Vásquez (16)

Nays: None (0)

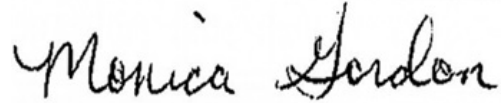
Absent: Commissioner Degnen (1)

The motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Daley, seconded by Commissioner Lowry, that the meeting do now adjourn to meet again at the same time and same place on October 23, 2025, in accordance with County Board Resolution 24-5720.

The motion prevailed and the meeting stood adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and 'G'.

COUNTY CLERK