



COOK COUNTY
BUREAU OF
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

Xochitl Flores
Bureau Chief
 (312) 603-1000
 Xochitl.Flores@cookcountyil.gov

69 West Washington St
 Suite 2900
 Chicago, Illinois 60602

TONI PRECKWINKLE
 President
 Cook County Board
 of Commissioners

May 26, 2026

TARA STAMPS
 1st District

MICHAEL SCOTT JR.
 2nd District

BILL LOWRY
 3rd District

STANLEY MOORE
 4th District

KISHA MCCASKILL
 5th District

DONNA MILLER
 6th District

ALMA E. ANAYA
 7th District

JESSICA VASQUEZ
 8th District

MAGGIE TREVOR
 9th District

BRIDGET GAINER
 10th District

JOHN P. DALEY
 11th District

BRIDGET DEGREN
 12th District

JOSINA MORITA
 13th District

SCOTT R. BRITTON
 14th District

KEVIN B. MORRISON
 15th District

FRANK J. AGUILAR
 16th District

SEAN M. MORRISON
 17th District

Honorable Toni Preckwinkle
 President, Cook County Board of Commissioners
 and Members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners
 118 North Clark Street, Room 537
 Chicago, IL 60602

RE: Legistar Board Item #26-1562 / Independent Evaluation of Cook County Legal Aid for Housing and Debt Early Resolution Program

Dear Madam President and Cook County Commissioners:

The Bureau of Economic Development (BED) respectfully proposes submitting Stout’s Independent Evaluation of Cook County’s Early Resolution Program and asks the Board to receive and file this item. Cook County Legal Aid for Housing and Debt (CCLAHD) is a groundbreaking program that has assisted more than 125,000 Cook County residents with eviction, foreclosure, and consumer debt cases since January 2022. Developed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, CCLAHD is an innovative and nationally recognized partnership between the County, the Circuit Court of Cook County, The Chicago Bar Foundation, the Illinois Housing Development Authority, the City of Chicago, and many other government, legal, and community partners.

A new, independent evaluation report by global advisory firm Stout will provide an in-depth assessment of the CCLAHD Early Resolution Program (ERP) for eviction and consumer debt. Stout brings a national perspective on eviction diversion and right-to-counsel programs, and the evaluation will demonstrate how CCLAHD-ERP offers a cost-effective, scalable model for legal services. While many other jurisdictions have expanded the availability of legal aid, CCLAHD is unique in building legal assistance into a comprehensive and redesigned system where the court is an active partner. The report will highlight how CCLAHD-ERP:

- makes the court process fairer and more accessible for unrepresented residents;
- increases court participation;
- helps prevent disruptive displacements; and
- provides an estimated return on investment of \$3.89 to \$4.91 for every \$1 spent.

BED intends to formally introduce this item at the Cook County Board meeting scheduled for June 11, 2026, for referral to Finance Committee for a presentation and discussion. The final report will be shared in advance of the Finance Committee meeting. Please direct questions to Elizabeth Schuh, Assistant Deputy Bureau Chief, Policy & Strategic Planning, at Elizabeth.Schuh@cookcountyil.gov.

Thank you,

Xochitl Flores
 Bureau Chief

CC: Lanetta Haynes Turner, Chief of Staff
 Laura Lechowicz, General Counsel
 Antonio Favela, Associate General Counsel
 Sukmeke Watkins, Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs