

January 07, 2022

Cook County Board of Commissioners
118 North Clark Street, Room 567
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Cook County Commissioners:

The Center for Housing & Health writes in strong support of the proposed funding framework for Cook County, put forth by President Preckwinkle, for American Rescue Plan Act resources.

The Center for Housing & Health, established in 2010, continues its work of helping Chicago and Cook County residents find permanent housing solutions and the other wraparound services that help them thrive. President Preckwinkle's ambitious spending plan prioritizes healthcare and housing-specific investments allowing Cook County to maximize the impact of ARPA dollars for Cook County's most in need, including those living with or vulnerable to chronic health conditions, as well as those experiencing housing instability or homelessness.

Specifically, CHH wants to highlight our support of both the Healthy Communities: Health and Wellness portion of the framework, as well as the Vital Communities: Community and Economic Development portion of the plan. President Preckwinkle's proposed \$21.7 million investment in healthcare, specifically funding supportive housing through the Flexible Housing Pool, providing Medical Respite care, and establishing a Homeless Housing Navigation program, was a key part of the plan we are especially grateful to see included. Additionally, CHH is pleased with the proposed \$15.4 million investment in mental and behavioral health services focusing on creating and standing up a new Department of Mental Health Services, expanding existing Cook County Health programs, and planning for long term expansions to reach Cook County's most at-risk communities. Working from a harm-reduction and person-first model of care, CHH is happy to see the \$9 million investment in Opioid Overdose and Substance Use Prevention Initiatives, expanding on existing prevention activities to address opioid and substance use disorder in suburban Cook County. Finally, CHH is highly supportive of the proposed \$7.5 million Housing investments President Preckwinkle is proposing to stand up fixed-site shelter locations and services as well as continuing the hotel-based sheltering approach, including case management and supportive services.

The Center for Housing & Health would like to thank President Preckwinkle for her continued investments in housing and healthcare, as evidenced by her proposed spending plan. These investments in programs translate directly into investments in people and communities. We would also like to thank Commissioner Kevin Morrison for meeting with our staff to discuss our funding priorities and the County's process for developing this funding framework. Commissioner Morrison continues to be a champion and advocate for our communities when it comes to housing, healthcare, and mental health services.

The Center for Housing & Health looks forward to continuing to work closely with the Cook County Board of Commissioners to create a county where all residents can reach their full potential.

Sincerely,



Peter Toepfer
Executive Director
Center for Housing & Health