

Making the Case: City of Chicago Investment in Workforce Services

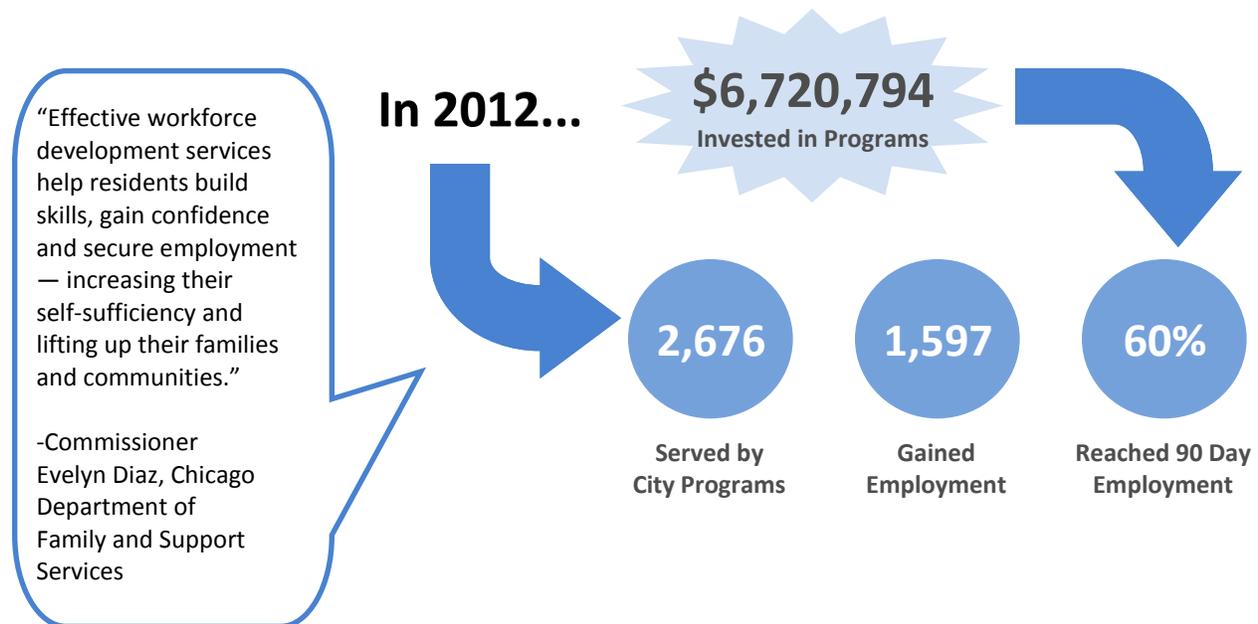


The **Chicago Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS)** designates resources for workforce development initiatives to meet the unique needs of disadvantaged Chicago residents. As the City agency that focuses on meeting the needs of Chicago's most vulnerable residents, this is an important function for DFSS. DFSS invests in workforce programs for the hardest to serve individuals who are low-income and have limited work skills, with a special focus on three target populations:

- 1) Persons with criminal records
- 2) Persons who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness
- 3) Persons with limited English proficiency

City-level investment in workforce services is especially critical because the federal Workforce Investment Act program is not designed to serve populations with multiple barriers to employment. For over 20 years, DFSS has used City corporate, Community Development Block Grant, and Community Service Block Grant funds to support programs that are located in or near communities of high poverty and that are disbursed geographically across Chicago.

DFSS Program Statistics



Recommendation

It is vital that the City budget increase funding (or at least maintain level funding) for DFSS workforce services targeted to job seekers with multiple barriers to employment. It is a particularly critical time to maintain this local investment due to: the challenging budget climate at the federal level, exacerbated by sequestration; the fiscal crises at the state level; decreased private funding; and the potential dismantling of the federal workforce system. Significant local investment is also crucial in order to prevent the erosion of the local service delivery system. Chicago's neighborhoods, families, and economy will all benefit when vulnerable residents are able to achieve employment, earn family-sustaining wages, and positively contribute to the community.

Making the Case: Workforce Investment for Ex-Offenders



Thousands of individuals return to Chicago each year after incarceration with a great need for assistance in obtaining employment, housing, and an array of support services. City investment in workforce services tailored to ex-offenders helps to address these challenges, while increasing public safety, saving taxpayer dollars, and strengthening Chicago's communities. Since 2004, DFSS has prioritized investment in workforce services targeted to ex-offenders and its continued role in funding workforce services is a critical strategy to reintegrate individuals and reduce recidivism.

Reentry Statistics

It Costs...

\$143 a day/ **\$52,195** per year to house an inmate in Cook County Jail.

\$5,495 to provide workforce services to an ex-offender that results in employment.



DFSS Program Statistics

"By getting ex-offenders into the workforce, we'll lower unemployment, increase self-sufficiency, and reduce recidivism – all key priorities that will have long-term, valuable impacts on Chicago."

-Mayor Rahm Emanuel

In 2012...

\$3,204,860

Invested in Programs

1,123

Served by City Programs

565

Gained Employment

70%

Reached 90 Day Employment

Why Invest?



Ex-offenders who obtain a job and support services are less than

1/2 as likely to return to prison within 3 years.

Recidivism reduction results in:

- Taxpayer savings
- Stronger families
- Safer communities
- Reduced reliance on public supports

One in every 28 children has a parent behind bars. Successful reintegration affects the long-term success of both ex-offenders and their children.

Making the Case: Workforce Investment for Homeless Individuals



DFSS' investment in workforce services for Chicagoans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness is directly aligned with Chicago's Plan to End Homelessness 2.0. A key goal of Plan 2.0 is to increase meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for people experiencing or most at-risk of homelessness and DFSS is tasked with helping to manage the Plan's successful implementation. With less than one quarter of households employed at exit from the homeless assistance system, and loss of a job cited as a primary reason for homelessness, continued investment in workforce services targeted to this population is one of the best policy and budget choices the City can make to support its Plan to End Homelessness.

The Plan to End Homelessness 2.0 reports...

38% of homeless individuals report a lost job or income as their primary reason for becoming homeless.

Yet only **18%** received workforce development services.

About **6,500** individuals are homeless each night in Chicago. It is estimated that **93,779** unduplicated individuals experience homelessness over the course of a year. **47%** are families.

DFSS Program Statistics

While **66%** of interim housing clients gained permanent housing by the end of a year, **only 24%** of households were employed at exit from Chicago's homeless services system.

In 2012...

\$1,042,505

313

Served by
City Programs

293

Gained
Employment

57%

Reached 90 Day
Employment

Why Invest?



**Stable
Employment
+
A Living Wage =
Stable Housing**

In the evaluation of Chicago's first Plan, employment services were cited as one of the resources in greatest demand but shortest supply.

Expand workforce system capacity and flexibility to better meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Making the Case:

Workforce Investment for People with Limited English Proficiency

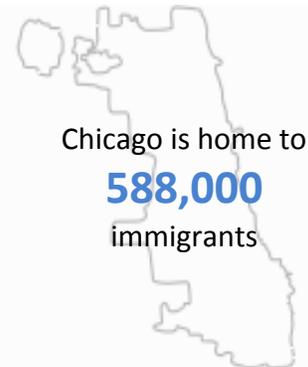


In 2011, the Mayor created the Office of New Americans and set the aspiration for Chicago to become the world's most immigrant-friendly city. The plan to achieve this includes several initiatives aimed at increasing the human capital of our city's immigrants, many of whom have limited English proficiency (LEP). DFSS' investment in workforce initiatives for Chicago's LEP population is a critical component to achieving the human capital goal, leading to a stronger local economy and expansion of the bilingual workforce.

The Facts

LEP individuals are more likely to live in poverty than English-proficient individuals.

In 2011, there were **25.3 million** LEP individuals residing in the United States.



DFSS Program Statistics

Immigrants who speak English will earn **2 x** as much on average as those with little to no English skills.

In 2012...

\$660,840

Invested in Programs

402

Served by City Programs

294

Gained Employment

65%

Reached 90 Day Employment

Why Invest?



Higher proficiency in English means more employment, income, tax payments, and spending in the community.

The creation of a bilingual workforce is a strong asset to the needs of Chicago businesses and customers.