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January 20, 2025

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Dear Honorable Officials:

My office has been planning for the incoming federal administration transition and the potential impacts on our residents in our welcoming County. In addition, we are in coordination with the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago in response to actions that may be taken by the federal government. We also remain committed to working with our suburban partners throughout this transition. I recognize that there is a lot of concern among Cook County residents right now, especially in our immigrant communities.

While this federal transition will undoubtedly pose challenges, our focus remains on ensuring Cook County continues to thrive. Our principles will guide us as we advocate for our residents and adapt to any changes that may come from Washington D.C.

Pursuant to Ordinance 11-O-73, Cook County (County) is a “Fair and Equal County for Immigrants.” The County and its law enforcement officials also operate under the sanctuary laws of the State of Illinois. This means that local law enforcement is generally prohibited from participating in immigration enforcement actions carried out by the federal government. Unless U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents have a criminal warrant, or law enforcement has a legitimate law enforcement purpose that is not related to the enforcement of immigration laws, ICE agents shall not be given access to individuals or allowed to use County facilities for investigative interviews or other purposes. Moreover, County personnel shall not expend their time responding to ICE inquiries or communicating with ICE regarding individuals' incarceration status or release dates while on duty.

Furthermore, under State law, local law enforcement officers cannot arrest an individual for violation of a federal law without a warrant unless state law has granted them authority to do so. Illinois law prohibits local law enforcement from stopping, arresting, searching, or detaining an individual based on his or her citizenship or immigration status. Guidance on Illinois laws that govern law enforcement Interactions with immigrant communities published by the Illinois Attorney General can be found here. [2021 Guidance for Law Enforcement on Immigration Issues](#). In addition to guidance for law enforcement, the Illinois Attorney General publishes resources and guidance for immigrants, including a “Know our Rights” pamphlet. [Immigration Rights](#).

While the County does not have direct authority or responsibilities related to immigration policy or enforcement actions, many of our offices and agencies serve in support roles to our immigrant community. The County is committed to providing services, including health care, to all residents without regard to immigration status. Cook County Health does not ask a

patient's immigration status. If a patient shares their immigration status, it is not maintained in their medical record and it is kept confidential

Within the County, our Cook County Public Defender's Office Immigration Division is a group of lawyers dedicated to defending and protecting people who are faced with immigration enforcement actions. In addition, the Public Defender's Office shares "Know Your Rights" information, which is to prepare people who may be confronted by a police officer or immigration agent. That information can be found here: [Immigration Division | Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender](#). This site offers several resources for the immigrant community, including how the division works and information regarding immigration court, the asylum process and temporary protected status. The division works with assistant public defenders representing clients before the Circuit Court of Cook County to ascertain potential adverse immigration consequences arising from their Cook County cases and recommend alternate resolutions. The Immigration Division represents noncitizens, including current and former public defender clients, before the Chicago Immigration Court.

Additionally, my office, in collaboration with the Department of Human Rights and Ethics (DHRE), has created an updated County resources link on the DHRE website for those of you who may wish to share with your constituents the resources Cook County offers. [Immigration | Cook County](#).

In addition to our efforts to protect all our Cook County residents, it is important to note that Cook County is entering 2025 with stable finances and strategies in place; from our Policy Roadmap to our fiscal prudence, my administration's guiding principles remain the same. We have spent the last few months taking stock of potential changes to federal policies, funding streams, and priorities to assess how they might affect our programs and residents. We will continue to be in contact with the State, our suburban local governments and City of Chicago to partner and collaborate regarding any impacts that we may encounter as a result of changes at the federal level.

We hope you will keep in touch on what you are hearing from residents and what impacts you may be planning for as we all navigate this uncertain time together. We will continue an open line of communication with your offices as new information unfolds and we encourage you to do the same.

Sincerely,



Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County Board President