



SUSANA A. MENDOZA  
CITY CLERK

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Mayor Emanuel, Clerk Mendoza announce launch of municipal ID program**

*Program to ensure a form of identification for populations  
that have trouble accessing official identification*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago City Clerk Susana Mendoza today announced that they are launching the first phase of a far-reaching Municipal ID program to ensure all Chicago residents are able to access official identification.

“Chicago is and has been a City that welcomes everyone, and an individual’s background should never be a barrier to participating in the economic, social, or cultural life of Chicago,” said Mayor Emanuel. “With this program, we ensure that all Chicago residents have the identification they need to access vital services.”

Though many vital services require proof of identity and/or address, many populations have difficulty accessing official identification, including undocumented immigrants, homeless individuals, the formerly incarcerated, young adults and the elderly.

Clerk Mendoza, whose office will be charged with administrating the program, said a municipal ID can enrich the lives of tens of thousands of Chicagoans.

"We want to provide access to the resources and economic and educational opportunities that are fundamental to life in our great City. By putting this pass in the hands of people across all ages and demographics we're opening doors that may be otherwise closed. We're honored Mayor Emanuel has partnered with us on this initiative and we're going to run with it in 2017," said Clerk Mendoza.

The Chicago Municipal ID will be available to all city residents, granting them access to City services, cultural institutions, programs, and other benefits. To support its implementation, the Mayor’s 2017 Budget will allocate \$1 million in funds to the program.

“We have a fundamental belief that all human beings have a greater value than the documentation that they carry,” said Sol Flores, Executive Director of La Casa Norte. “Chicago's proposed Municipal ID program takes a first step at contributing to the belonging and dignity for those Chicagoans who may need it the most. We know that individuals can be most productive in their endeavors when they are included and allowed access to resources that contribute to their success.”

“In our world today, technology and streamlining processes have led to many ways to bring added convenience to our lives. Cellular smart phones allow us to talk, take photos, and stream the internet,” said Dennis Mondero, Executive Director of the Chinese Mutual Aid Association. “As a community member involved with the city’s municipal ID task force, I’m excited that the City is examining how a municipal ID can meaningfully improve the lives of Chicagoans. A successful Municipal ID in Chicago will provide better access and benefits to all Chicagoans.”

Other large cities have implemented Municipal ID programs, including New York City and San Francisco. As the program is designed and implemented, the City will determine specific features of the Chicago Municipal ID, which may include some or all of the following:

- Universal recognition from City departments and agencies as proof of identity and residency.
- Integrated access to City services. For example, the ID could also be used as a library card at Chicago Public Libraries.
- Discounts for recreation and entertainment, cultural institutions, and goods at partnering businesses.
- Increased or streamlined access to financial or medical services.

"A Chicago Municipal ID will be an asset to all Chicagoans and has the potential to link our libraries, cultural institutions, and city services under a unified platform," said Alderman Ameya Pawar. "The Municipal ID will also provide our undocumented and homeless neighbors with the needed identification to access critical City services and cultural resources."

"This proposed municipal ID program is a step in the right direction to equipping residents with the resources necessary to lead productive lives," said Alderman Daniel Solis. "All residents of Chicago, regardless of their immigration status, will feel safe and secure and give residents access to services they need to contribute to our great city."

The first phase of the program, which is now underway, will identify the scope of services to be provided under the ID program. This phase will also include outreach to financial, medical, and cultural institutions and local businesses that may serve as potential partners. The City expects to issue the first Municipal ID before the end of 2017.

In 2015, Mayor Emanuel formed a working group comprised of people from different backgrounds and perspectives to explore whether a municipal ID program can work in Chicago and how it can be used to help underserved residents access essential City services.

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