

# Cook County Annual Performance Report

for Fiscal Year 2020



Thank you to our partners throughout Cook County for your hard work in creating this report. We could not have successfully launched this report without your active participation and support.

Toni Preckwinkle  
Cook County Board President

Brandon Johnson  
Commissioner, 1<sup>st</sup> District

Dennis Deer  
Commissioner, 2<sup>nd</sup> District

Bill Lowry  
Commissioner, 3<sup>rd</sup> District

Stanley Moore  
Commissioner, 4<sup>th</sup> District

Deborah Sims  
Commissioner, 5<sup>th</sup> District

Donna Miller  
Commissioner, 6<sup>th</sup> District

Alma E. Anaya  
Commissioner, 7<sup>th</sup> District

Luis Arroyo Jr.  
Commissioner, 8<sup>th</sup> District

Peter N. Silvestri  
Commissioner, 9<sup>th</sup> District

Bridget Gainer  
Commissioner, 10<sup>th</sup> District

John P. Daley  
Commissioner, 11<sup>th</sup> District

Bridget Degnen  
Commissioner, 12<sup>th</sup> District

Larry Suffredin  
Commissioner, 13<sup>th</sup> District

Scott R. Britton  
Commissioner, 14<sup>th</sup> District

Kevin B. Morrison  
Commissioner, 15<sup>th</sup> District

Frank Aguilar  
Commissioner, 16<sup>th</sup> District

Sean M. Morrison  
Commissioner, 17<sup>th</sup> District

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## Letter from the President

To the residents of Cook County:

Cook County government plays a pivotal role in serving and supporting the needs of the 5.15 million residents of Cook County. We oversee the criminal justice system, provide healthcare to all regardless of the ability to pay, build and maintain critical infrastructure and administer property taxes. We also care for 69,000 acres of open lands through the Forest Preserves of Cook County, and provide affordable housing through the Housing Authority of Cook County and the Cook County Landbank Authority.



In 2011, Cook County adopted the Performance Based Management and Budgeting Ordinance in an effort to increase transparency and accountability and use data to drive decision-making. We created a Performance Management Office to oversee the work across all separately-elected offices and sister agencies and track and report metrics on an annual basis.

This report is organized by the Office of Research, Operations and Innovation (ROI) to foster continuous improvement in Cook County government. The report highlights achievements across all offices, and the data that we use to measure our success. We have also included goals and initiatives in 2021 that we look forward to reporting in our next Annual Report.

As part of our effort to be a leader in prudent fiscal stewardship and provide excellent public service, Cook County government strives year over year to improve efficiencies and save taxpayer dollars while continuously improving services and streamlining processes.

2020 has been a challenging and difficult year for all of us. While some of our metrics did not meet their targets due to the considerable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am incredibly proud of the work Cook County did to meet urgent needs during the crisis, which is apparent through this Annual Report.

Across every agency, the dedicated public servants of Cook County launched new relief programs, provided direct aid, helped fellow employees pivot to working remotely, and ensured that our residents, businesses, and economy could survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our 2021 goals reflect our commitment to equitable recovery, transparency, and responsive leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Toni Preckwinkle". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Toni Preckwinkle  
President Cook County Board of Commissioners

# Introduction

## Performance Management: The Purpose of this Report

Performance management is the process that organizations, departments, and individuals use to meet their goals effectively and efficiently. One key component of that process is the use of data to monitor progress. In Cook County, each separately elected office is responsible for operating their own performance management program:

- In the Offices Under the President, the Office of Research, Operations and Innovation assists departments in establishing key performance indicators (KPIs), manages the performance data platform and facilitates annual performance discussions.
- In early fiscal year 2021 (FY2021) the Forest Preserves and the Assessor's Office began auditing and creating KPIs for each of their departments and aim to complete sets of KPIs before the end of the fiscal year.
- All separately elected offices publish performance data annually, which can be accessed online. The State's Attorney and Assessor's Office also have open data portals.

The purpose of this report is to display to the public and to the Cook County Board of Commissioners the operational achievements of all Cook County offices and sister agencies throughout fiscal year 2020 and preview upcoming initiatives for fiscal year 2021. It acts as a key part of the Cook County performance management framework by compiling key data points for each office that illustrate those achievements and initiatives, which are published in an accompanying public dataset.

## Covid-19 Pandemic

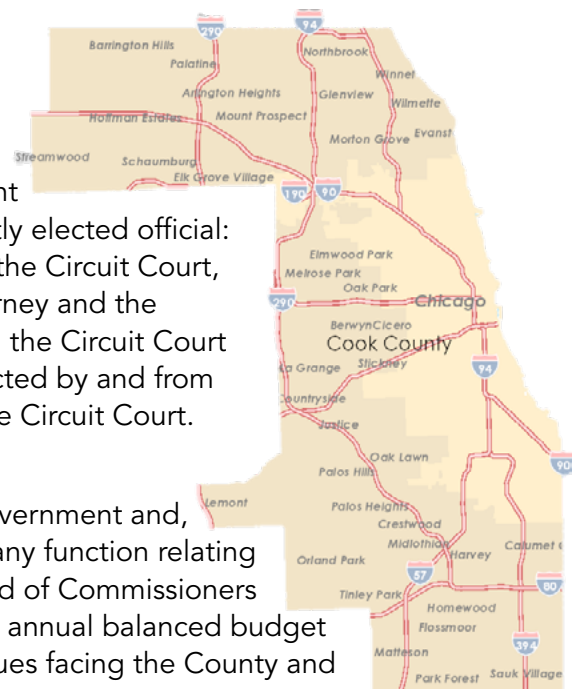
As with the rest of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted all Cook County operations. Our hard-working technology departments transitioned all offices to remote work to keep employees safe while ensuring that residents would continue to be served efficiently and equitably. The Health and Hospital System, Department of Public Health, Sheriff, Medical Examiner and Department of Emergency Management were especially hands-on in dealing with the direct effects of the pandemic, but all offices created extraordinary new processes and programs to serve Cook County residents during these tremendously challenging times. Some initiatives were delayed, but others described in this report continued as planned due to excellent staff and leadership. In FY2021, Cook County will continue to serve residents as we rebuild and move forward from the effects of the pandemic.

## Cook County Overview

### County Government

Cook County is governed by the County Board President, seventeen Board Commissioners and eleven additional Cook County government offices. Eight of these offices are under the control of an independently elected official: the Assessor, the three Board of Review Commissioners, the Clerk of the Circuit Court, the County Clerk, the Recorder of Deeds, the Sheriff, the State's Attorney and the Treasurer. The Chief Judge of the Circuit Court is elected by and from the Circuit Court Judges. The Chairman of the Board of Election Commissioners is elected by and from the three Board of Election Commissioners and then appointed by the Circuit Court. The Public Administrator is appointed by the Governor of Illinois.

Under the Illinois Constitution, Cook County is a home rule unit of government and, except as limited by State law, may exercise any power and perform any function relating to its government and affairs. The President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Cook County and presents an annual balanced budget to the Board of Commissioners, provides leadership on key policy issues facing the County and



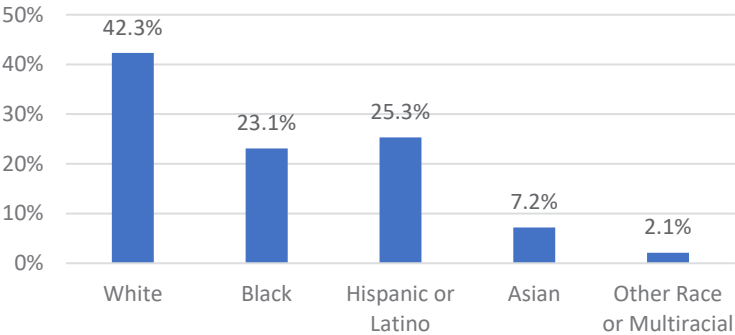
# Cook County Government

oversees the Offices Under the President (OUP). The President has the power to veto County Board resolutions and ordinances. The County Board requires a two-thirds vote to override a Presidential veto.

## County Profile

An Act of the Illinois General Assembly created Cook County on January 15, 1831. The new County was named after Daniel Pope Cook, Illinois' second congressman and first attorney general. The Fort Dearborn settlement at the mouth of the Chicago River became the new county's seat.

Cook County Population by Race



Cook County, Illinois is the Midwest's cultural and economic center. As the second most populous county in the United States, Cook County is home to 5.2 million residents, comprising 59 percent of Illinois' total population. Cook County encompasses the 2.7 million residents of the City of Chicago, the third largest city in the United States. Cook County is racially and ethnically diverse, with a growing Latino and Asian population. As of the 2019 ACS estimate, African Americans made up about 23 percent of the Cook County population, Asians 7 percent and non-Hispanic white individuals 42 percent.

25 percent of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race. The remainder of the population self-identity as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander (Other Race) or multiracial. Although Cook County is densely populated, the Cook County Forest Preserve District protects over 69,000 acres of natural land or 11 percent of Cook County.

Households in Cook County have a median annual income of \$69,429, which is more than the national median annual income of \$65,712. About 66% of the population older than 16 is employed, and the most common industries are educational services, health care, and social assistance; professional, scientific, management & technical services; and manufacturing (US Census 2019 ACS estimate).

## Functions of Cook County

### Healthcare

Cook County provides public healthcare access and services to its residents, regardless of an individual's ability to pay or documentation status. Through its network of hospitals, clinics and health centers, Cook County Health (CCH) cares for more than 300,000 patients each year and is one of the largest public health systems in the country. CCH offers a broad range of services from specialty and primary care to emergency, acute, outpatient, rehabilitative, long-term and preventative care. Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) serves 2.5 million residents in 124 municipalities within suburban Cook County through effective and efficient disease prevention and health promotion programs.



### Criminal Justice

Cook County maintains and operates the Circuit Court of Cook County, the second largest unified court system in the United States, which hears civil, criminal and administrative cases. The Circuit Court is overseen by the Office of the Chief Judge and administrated by the Clerk of the Circuit Court. The Cook County Jail, overseen by the Sheriff, is one of the largest single-site pretrial detention facilities in the United States. The Juvenile Tem-

# Cook County Government

porary Detention Center, overseen by the Office of the Chief Judge, is the first and largest juvenile detention facility in the country. The State's Attorney prosecutes and litigates for Cook County government, and the Public Defender provides court representation for indigent defendants. The Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security coordinates countywide emergency and disaster preparedness planning and assists jurisdictions in recovering from disaster. The Sheriff's Police conduct investigations, make arrests and provide other police services to unincorporated Cook County, as well as coordinate with municipal police forces throughout the County.

## Property And Taxation

Cook County administers the second largest property taxation system in the United States. There are 1.8 million taxable parcels of land in Cook County, with an annual collection of over \$12 billion dollars. Cook County assesses one third of the region each year—rotating among the northern suburbs, the southern suburbs and the City of Chicago—and determines the value of each property through a mass appraisal system rather than on an individual basis. Cook County sends bills to property owners twice a year.

How does it work?



The Assessor assesses all real estate throughout the County and establishes a fair market value for each property.



The Board of Review accepts appeals and decides on changes to a property's assessment, classification, or exemptions.



The County Clerk determines the tax rates based on the levy ordinances passed by taxing agencies and applies the rates to the assessments received from the Assessor to determine the amount of property tax a property owner owes.



The Treasurer mails out property tax bills and collects the money.



The Treasurer distributes the money to over 2,200 local government agencies including school districts, villages, cities, townships, parks and forest preserves, libraries, public health and safety agencies.

## Economic Development

Cook County pursues inclusive economic and community growth by supporting residents, growing businesses, attracting investment and nurturing talent. The Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) and the Cook County Land Bank were both founded in an effort to promote economic development, supporting affordable housing and property redevelopment respectively. The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership works jointly with Cook County and the City of Chicago to provide workforce development services and operate federally-funded American Job Centers throughout the County.



HACC Affordable Housing: South Suburban Senior Living, completed Nov 2019



## Offices Under the President

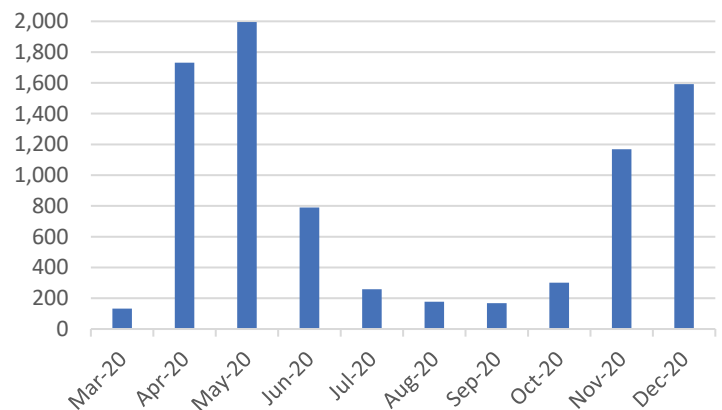
Toni Preckwinkle is the 35th President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, an office she has held since 2010. The Cook County Board President oversees the Offices Under the President (OUP) and is charged with presenting a balanced budget to the Board of Commissioners each year. In 2018, President Preckwinkle published the *Cook County Policy Roadmap: Five-Year Strategic Plan for Offices Under the President*— OUP's first comprehensive, policy-driven strategic plan since the administration's 2011 transition plan. The Policy Roadmap outlines goals and objectives in six policy priorities: health and wellness, economic development, criminal justice, environment and sustainability, public infrastructure and good government. Centered on the values of equity, engagement and excellence, OUP developed the Policy Roadmap with direct input and participation from residents, as well as its Cook County sister agencies and thought partners across policy areas and communities.

### Healthy Communities (Health and Wellness)

**Goal: Improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of Cook County residents and communities.**

In FY2020, the Medical Examiner's Office (MEO) worked with the Bureau of Technology to publish a public dashboard to track COVID-19 related deaths and map cases against the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) to demonstrate that COVID-19 infections and deaths were concentrated in more vulnerable communities. The MEO also reviewed past cases to determine when the first COVID-19 cases reached Cook County. Over the course of 2020, the MEO handled a record of 16,049 cases, more than half of which were attributed to COVID-19. The MEO handles around 6,200 cases in an average year. The increase in cases was attributed not only to COVID-19, but also to increases in both homicides and opioid overdose deaths. The MEO aims to continue providing timely and respectful service by completing 90% of autopsies within 60 days.

Cook County COVID-19 Deaths



In fall of 2020 the Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security (EMRS) procured 500,000 cloth masks for distribution to 18 of Cook County's most vulnerable communities: identified using the COVID-19 Community Vulnerability index (CCVI). The CCVI incorporates epidemiological and health-care systems themes alongside the four themes already captured by the SVI, including socioeconomic and minority status, disability, language barriers, housing type and access to transportation, to calculate COVID-19 specific vulnerability scores. EMRS coordinated distribution in partnership with the #MaskUp education campaign led by the Cook County Department of Public Health that emphasized wearing a mask, washing your hands and watching your distance. In FY2021, EMRS will continue supporting vaccination efforts by assisting with potential point of dispensing (POD) location selection and site flow creation as well as coordinating with local municipal partners and public safety officials for site support.

### Vital Communities (Economic Development)

**Goal: Pursue inclusive economic and community growth by supporting residents, growing businesses, attracting investment and nurturing talent.**

In response to the urgent needs created by the coronavirus pandemic, in FY2020 the Bureau of Economic Development (BED) created the *Cook County Community Recovery Initiative*, a rapid financial relief and essential



## Offices Under the President

support program funded by nearly \$80 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds. The Community Recovery Initiative aimed to help businesses stay open, workers stay employed, and families stay housed. BED launched a suite of over 10 programs including housing assistance, legal assistance, food distribution, small business loans, and direct cash assistance to serve Cook County residents (see Community Recovery Initiative table). In FY2021, Cook County has committed \$108 million in federal and local resources to expand housing assistance programs; support legal aid, housing counseling and foreclosure mediation; address residents' urgent needs with food, utility and direct cash assistance; and spur entrepreneurship and growth for minority-, women-, veteran-, and disabled-, owned businesses, among other initiatives.

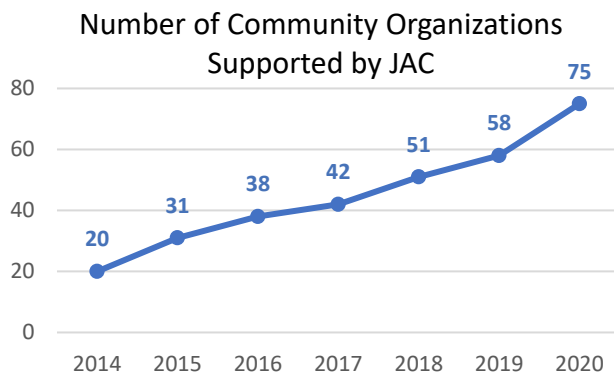
In support of the 2020 Census, Cook County funded 84 grantees for community outreach as well as marketing and media to increase census response rates in "hard to count" communities. Cook County's efforts contributed to an overall Illinois response rate of 66.8% (7th in the nation), and a Cook County response rate of 61.6%.

With support from Cook County, the Southland Development Authority (SDA) provided technical assistance to businesses and helped 167 businesses apply for \$2.8 million of COVID-19 relief funding. In 2021, the SDA will continue prioritizing support to Southland small businesses and residents in response to COVID-19 and advance projects such as the small business ecosystem, apprenticeship navigator, and manufacturing concierge services with the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center.

Program Area	Funding	Results
Small Businesses and workforce	\$33.1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$16.9 million distributed to 1,690 small business. Of the businesses, 60% are owned by people of color, 49% are owned by women, and 89% have less than \$500 thousand in annual revenue.</li> <li>1956 small businesses received technical assistance.</li> <li>148 gig workers received forgivable loans totaling \$1.4 million</li> <li>410 small businesses received forgivable loans totaling \$7.6 million</li> </ul>
Mortgage and Rental	\$24 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$9.7 million in mortgage assistance to be distributed to 891 residents</li> <li>\$6.3 million to be distributed in rental assistance to 1193 residents</li> </ul>
Critical Social Services	\$19.7 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$8.3 million of cash assistance distributed to 13,887 people</li> <li>1,679 residents received 185,000 shelter nights and 557,000 meals</li> </ul>

## Safe and Thriving Communities (Criminal Justice)

**Goal: To create safe communities and an equitable and fair justice system for all residents.**

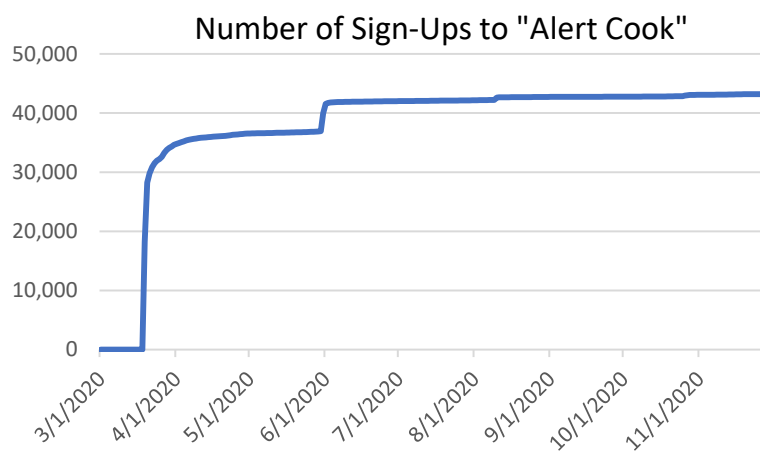


In FY2020, the Justice Advisory Council (JAC) continued Cook County's annual investment to community-based programs focused on violence reduction, recidivism, and restorative Justice. In FY2020, Cook County invested a total of \$16.5 million in violence prevention grants, increasing investment in the South Suburbs by \$1.75 million and investing an additional \$5 million to street outreach programming targeted at reducing gun violence in Chicago.

## Offices Under the President

The JAC also started a housing program for individuals ordered to electronic monitoring but who cannot leave the jail due to a lack of housing. The JAC has contracted with housing providers throughout Cook County to serve this population. In coordination with Cook County Health and the Cook County Sheriff's Office, the JAC has placed 123 individuals in housing since December 2020. Cook County was also one of five jurisdictions awarded a second MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge Initiative grant. The JAC will lead community engagement efforts, a pre-plea diversion program for emerging adults offering employment and education as an alternative to incarceration, and a peer support program that connects individuals who cycle through Cook County Jail with additional links to behavioral health care.

The Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security (EMRS), in partnership with the Cook County Department of Public Health and the President's Office, launched "AlertCook" an emergency text alert system in March 2020. "AlertCook" offers subscribers a direct line of communication to receive public health and emergency management updates from Cook County. Sign-ups reached nearly 45,000 residents by the end of 2020. In the coming year, EMRS aims to enroll 15 municipalities in the Everbridge Mass Notification System, train representatives from every municipality, and provide physical assets and/or direct investments to at least 50 percent of municipalities.



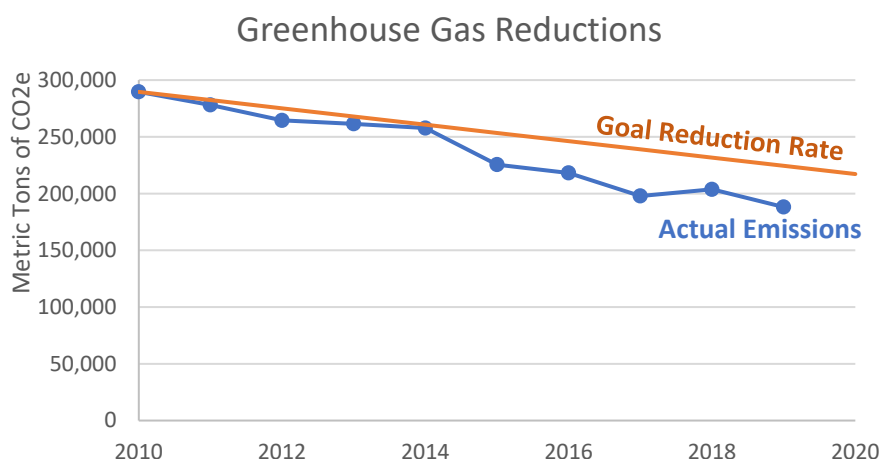
## Sustainable Communities (Environment & Sustainability)

**Goal: Support healthy, resilient communities that thrive economically, socially and environmentally.**

In July 2020, President Preckwinkle released the Clean Energy Plan, which outlines Cook County's path to achieving a 45% reduction in carbon emissions, using 100% renewable electricity by 2030 and making County-owned facilities carbon neutral by 2050. Cook County has already reduced emissions by about a third since the beginning of President Preckwinkle's administration.

The Department of Environment and Sustainability (DES) sponsors Solarize Chicagoland, a group-buy program to reduce costs for residents installing solar panels. In 2020, the program virtually educated more than 520 residents about the benefits of solar energy and garnered commitments to install 45 solar arrays in Cook County.

In February 2021, DES and the Bureau of Economic Development launched the [Cook County Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy \(CPACE\) Program](#). CPACE financing is an innovative tool that provides



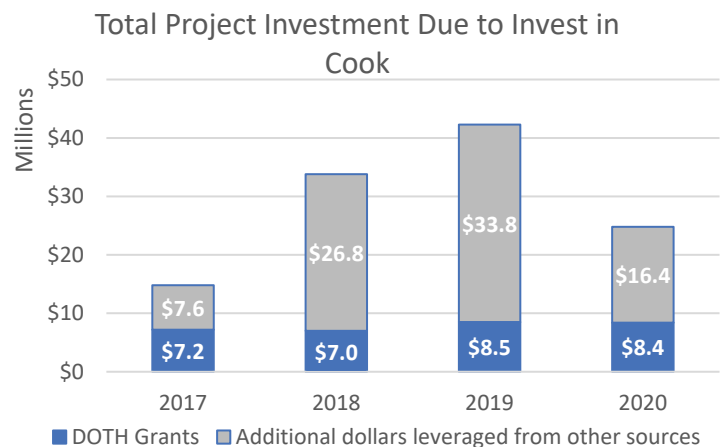
## Offices Under the President

low-cost, long-term financing for energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation and resiliency projects in commercial buildings. Cook County commercial property owners can obtain up to 100% upfront financing from private capital providers for qualified upgrades such as HVAC and lighting and solar photovoltaic systems, among others, in both existing buildings and new construction projects. Annual utility savings are generally greater than the annual C-PACE financing payments, generating positive cash flow from day one.

### Smart Communities (Public Infrastructure)

**Goal: To provide innovative infrastructure that will change how residents live, work and connect.**

In 2017, the Department of Transportation and Highways (DOTH) launched *Invest in Cook* to cover the costs of planning and feasibility studies, engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction associated with transportation improvements sponsored by local and regional governments and private partners. In 2020, Invest in Cook provided 30 awards, with over 60% of funding given to 18 projects in low- to moderate-income communities. Cook County's investment of \$8.4 million in grants leveraged an additional \$16.4 million in other funds to enable over \$25 million in project activity.



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Facilities Management enacted the following within Cook County facilities:

- Thermal scanning, wellness questions upon entry, and entry denial processes.
- Plexi-glass plastic barriers, physical distancing signage and decals and queuing throughout all Cook County properties.
- Increased janitorial staffing for more frequent sanitation and PPE distribution.
- HVAC improvement to improve air circulation and more frequent air filter changes.
- Formalized contact tracing and charting of every COVID-19 case

Launched in January 2021, *Fair Transit South Cook* is a 3-year pilot project that aims to increase transit ridership across south Cook County through improved service and reduced fares. This partnership between Cook County, Metra, Pace and the Regional Transit Authority offers riders reduced fares on the Metra Electric and Rock Island lines and extended service along Pace's 352 Halsted route. Fair Transit South Cook targets residents and essential workers in south Cook and north Will counties who may not own a personal car, spend up to 50% of their income on transportation, and spend more than one hour commuting to work.

In FY2020, DOTD and the Bureau of Technology received an approximately \$1.9 million Connect Illinois Broadband grant. In FY2021 this grant will help extend the existing Chicago Southland Fiber Network, a nonprofit utility committed to connecting communities in the Southland to high-speed, fiber optic broadband. In the coming year DOTD will also develop its *first-ever bike plan* to refine County priorities for bicycle infrastructure, expand partnerships to build and maintain bicycle facilities, and establish long-term goals for bicycling. The plan kicked off with virtual open house meetings in February 2021 and DOTD plans to host engagement activities throughout the year before the plan is finalized in spring 2022.

## Offices Under the President

### Open Communities (Good Governance)

**Goal: Ensure that Cook County provides responsive, transparent services and develops a thriving, professional workforce that reflects the communities served.**

At the beginning of FY2020, the Office of Research, Operations and Innovation (ROI), in partnership with the President's Office, and the Data Analytics team, launched public dashboards that track 3-5 key performance indicators for each department in Offices Under the President. Departments update the dashboards quarterly. In FY2021, ROI will support each department in developing a more detailed internal set of metrics to promote data-based decision-making.

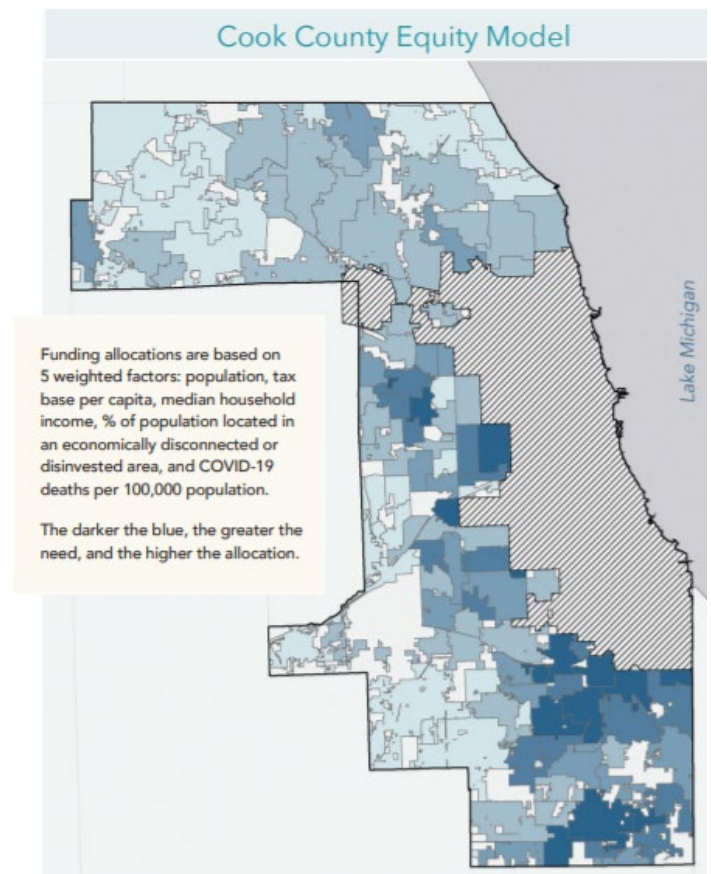
In April 2020, Cook County received \$428.6 million in Coronavirus Relief Funding (CRF) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The County was provided these funds to help offset the economic and financial impacts of COVID-19 in the region.

To make sure that relief was provided in a way that would meet the needs of all communities, Cook County decided to allocate about \$51 million to the leaders of the governments in Cook County's suburban municipalities.

Working with its regional planning partner, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the County developed an allocation method that considered the rising COVID-19 related costs experienced by all municipalities, as well as the capacity of various municipalities within the County to respond to those costs in light of unequal historic and current investment in those communities. The method is unlike any known in other counties.

The Bureau of Technology (BOT) enabled continuity of government operations during the pandemic. BOT transitioned thousands of employees to working from home via Microsoft Teams in a matter of days, increased the number of users securely accessing Cook County systems and data through our Virtual Private Network from 800 to 3,625, and set up a remote help desk phone system in two days, servicing all of Cook County's 22,000 employees. The help desk received 700 calls in the first week and more than 800 service requests. To prepare for work from home, BOT distributed over 400 laptops to employees who previously worked from desktops or without computers. BOT telecom electricians also added Wi-Fi to six divisions of the Cook County Jail to enable video visitations for people detained in the Jail.

In 2021, OUP will launch a Language Access Policy to ensure OUP serves all members of the public equitably, without placing pressure on bilingual employees to translate or interpret. The Policy will include guidance for departments on how to provide these services and will detail a process for feedback from residents and employees to ensure we can adapt it over time. Led by the inaugural Director of Equity and Inclusion, OUP will also launch its first Racial Equity Action plan, which includes a racial equity assessment rubric for budget revenues and racial equity training for all OUP employees beginning in the fall of 2021, aiming to get all employees through an initial class by early 2022.





## Cook County Health

For more than 180 years, Cook County Health (CCH) has served as the largest safety net in Cook County to “provide integrated health services with dignity and respect regardless of a patient’s ability to pay.”

One of the largest integrated public health systems in the nation, CCH is comprised of two hospitals, a strong network of more than a dozen community health centers, the Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center, the Cook County Department of Public Health, Correctional Health Services, which provides health care to individuals at the Cook County Jail and the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, CountyCare, a Medicaid managed care health plan and MoreCare, a Medicare Advantage Plan.



Through the health system providers and the health plans, CCH cares for more than 500,000 individuals each year and records nearly 1 million outpatient visits and 25,000 admissions. As guided by its strategic plan, CCH is transforming the provision of health care in Cook County by promoting community-based primary and preventive care; growing an innovative, collaborative health plan; and enhancing the patient experience.

### FY2020 Achievements

In FY2020, CCH demonstrated its ability to adapt to evolving situations by modifying services and protocols due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted 2020 initiatives, operations and expected patient volumes. Nonetheless, CCH continued to achieve progress towards CCH's transformation by continuing to implement the strategic plan that guides CCH's focus on providing high-quality healthcare, growing to serve and compete, fostering fiscal stewardship, investing in resources, impacting social determinants of health, and advocating for patients.

In FY2020, **Correctional Health Services** successfully mitigated the spread of COVID-19 and kept rates of infection low for both residents and staff. Despite the pandemic, progress towards the 2020 goals continued, including enhancement of performance monitoring; introduction of evidence based/trauma informed treatments; expansion of behavioral health training programs; and significant expansion of post-release health and behavioral health care coordination through the new CCH Juvenile Justice Care Coordination Program.

**Provident Hospital** expanded services to the community through the construction of an outpatient dialysis center and a Lifestyle Center to provide services to patients with diabetes. Provident adapted to the COVID-19 environment by temporarily postponing elective surgeries during the peak of the pandemic while redeploying staff to other departments. Telehealth services were established for routine appointments and a tent was established for COVID-19 tests for CCH patients and employees.

**CountyCare** has maintained and enhanced its community-based provider network, which includes expanding CCH referrals. Cook County Health remains the largest provider of care in the CountyCare network with over 371,000 members enrolled per month. In FY2020, membership initiatives aimed to retain and increase CountyCare membership, including assisting members with the re-determination process to maintain Medicaid eligibility, continued to develop new medical cost action plan initiatives to deliver on savings opportunities and cost strategies. These initiatives resulted in pharmacy cost savings, an increase in efficiencies within administration and a high performing CountyCare network.

# Cook County Health

CountyCare also successfully completed NCQA accreditation in 2020 and was rated one of the highest quality health plans in 2019-2020 State quality rankings.

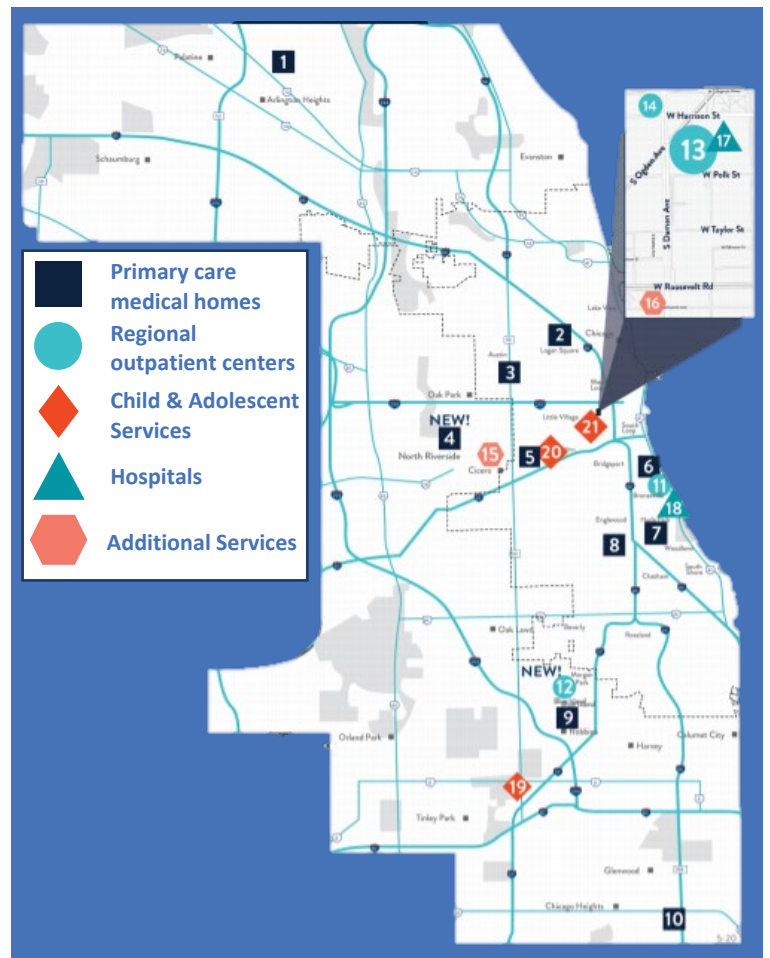
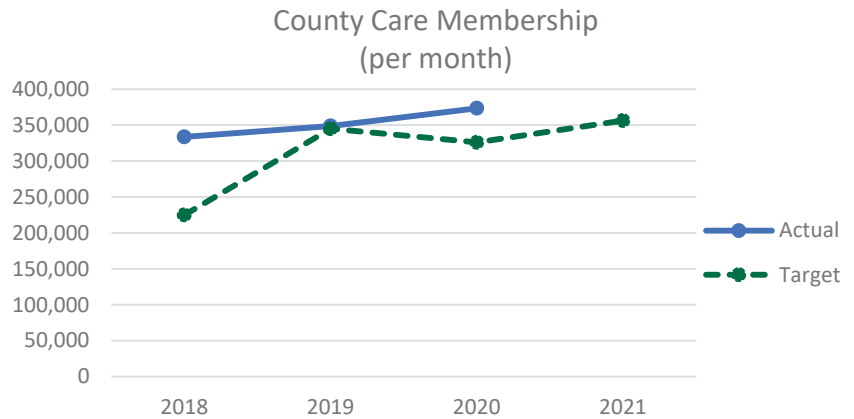
In FY2020, CCH's **Ambulatory Community Health Network (ACHN)** relocated its Cicero Health Center to a new state-of-the-art health center in North Riverside and relocated Oak Forest Health Center to a new state-of-the-art health center in Blue Island. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ACHN was able to maintain appropriate COVID-19 safety protocols in a hybrid telehealth and in-person patient-care model. ACHN also contributed to developing the COVID-19 outpatient and community testing model that included recommissioning Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) mobile unit for community testing while preparing to launch a large-scale vaccination program.

The **Core Center** has participated with State of Illinois to achieve the objectives of the "Getting to Zero" campaign to eliminate HIV by 2030 and achieved an 81% viral suppression rate, significantly higher than national trends. The CORE Center marked 20+ years of successful prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission

## FY2021 goals

In FY2021, CCH is aiming to continue interventions surrounding COVID-19 containment and mitigation, including programmatic initiatives for screening, treatment, and vaccination. Overall, efforts will continue to focus on expanding outpatient ambulatory primary care clinic, specialty clinics, diagnostic imaging, and same-day surgeries; streamlined operational processes and workflow, increased staff engagement, and strengthening the collaboration among our clinical teams.

There were several initiatives embedded in the FY2021 budget for implementation throughout the year. The two CCH's facilities Near South and Woodlawn consolidated services into the Sengstacke Clinic on the campus of Provident Hospital on December 3, 2020 to provide a better patient access to services. In addition, as part of the FY2021 budget, CCH adjusted resources based on community demand including investment in behavioral health, regional planning, colon cancer prevention,



# Cook County Health

and dental care. Low-demand services were reduced in inpatient pediatrics, Provident inpatient services, and emergency services at Provident.

CCH is expecting volumes in FY2021 that are less than the volumes achieved in 2019 as we anticipate a slow return to more normal volumes due to the impact and timing of the COVID-19 vaccination process. To achieve these volumes, CCH will continue to rely more on telehealth services when clinically appropriate. CCH is continuing to implement improvements in its revenue cycle to maximize payments for services provided.

The **Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH)**, an affiliate of Cook County Health, is the state-certified public health agency for Cook County—with the exception of Chicago, Evanston, Skokie, Oak Park and Stickney Township, which have their own public health agencies. CCDPH serves approximately 2.5 million residents in 125 municipalities and strives to meet the public health needs of suburban Cook County through effective and efficient disease prevention and health promotion programs. The agency works to prevent the spread of about 70 reportable communicable diseases and enforce Cook County and Illinois public health laws, rules and regulations. CCDPH envisions a healthy Cook County where all people and communities thrive in safe, health-promoting conditions.

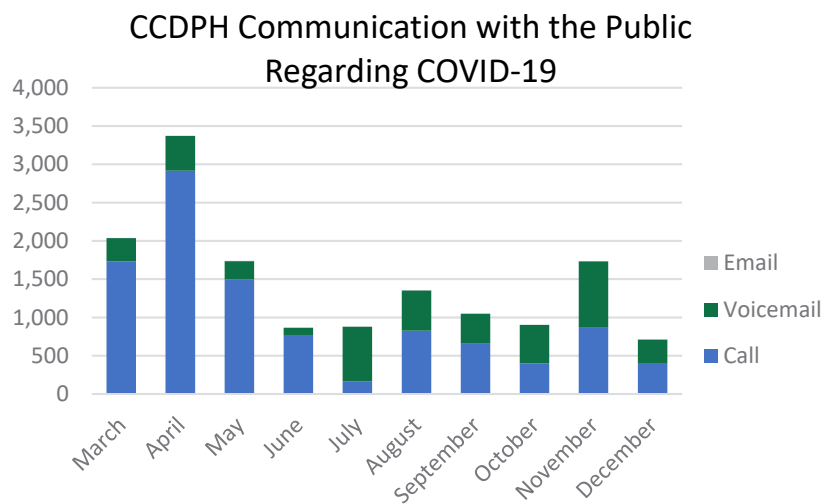
**CCDPH COVID-19 Pandemic Response  
By the Numbers**

- 12,799 COVID-19 cases investigated
- 260+ cases or close contacts related to schools investigated
- 200+ congregate settings provided with technical assistance and support
- 300+ complaints from food establishments and 100 in other workplaces handled
- 93 establishments cited for violation of Tier 3 mitigation measures
- 10,000+ inquiries from the public responded to

## 2020 Accomplishments

CCDPH led the COVID-19 response throughout the agency’s jurisdiction, which encompasses nearly all of suburban Cook County. The response, like all work of the agency, is focused on advancing health equity for communities made vulnerable through the impact of systemic racism. The COVID-19 response addressed needs throughout the agency’s suburban jurisdiction, with special attention paid to the disparate outcomes affecting communities of color. CCDPH conducted outbreak investigations, ramped up its contact tracing efforts, and offered infection control guidance to hospitals, long-term care facilities and other congregate settings to lessen the spread of the disease. The agency provided technical assistance to workplaces to promote proper mitigation strategies and assisted schools with monitoring community risk and implementing plans for safe instruction. CCDPH created a ShinyApp to make data available on the extent and spread of COVID-19 and provided timely and accurate information to nearly 15,000 callers to the COVID-19 hotline. Of these callers, over 65% had their question answered completely while still on the call.

CCDPH expanded testing capacity through the distribution of 57,680 rapid antigen tests; provided flu vaccines to over 500 residents through a partnership with Blue Cross/Blue Shield; and enforced Cook County and State





## Cook County Health

of Illinois orders required masks, physical distancing and capacity limits with 220 food establishments inspected and 143 notices of violation issued.

Recognizing the social, economic and health impacts of COVID-19, CCDPH, in collaboration with the Chicago Food Policy Action Council, continued to support implementation of the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) in Cook County departments and agencies and convened the annual Food Summit focused on building a more racially and socially equitable food system in Cook County.

### **2021 Goals**

In FY2021, CCDPH will continue to focus on advancing health equity. The agency will primarily focus on contact tracing and the phased implementation of the Suburban Cook County COVID-19 Vaccination Program. Additionally, the agency will ensure that the 2021-25 Community Health Improvement Plan for suburban Cook County is developed, continue to support GFPP implementation, and convene its 6th annual Food Summit. CCDPH will also conduct routine functions maintained during the pandemic, like case management and home inspections for lead-exposed children, and resume activities that were paused during the pandemic response.

## Clerk of the Circuit Court

The Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County (Clerk's Office) is the official keeper of records for all judicial matters brought into one of the largest unified court systems in the world. The Circuit Court Clerk's Office is mandated by the State of Illinois to attend all circuit court sessions and is responsible for preserving and maintaining all court files and papers and making and keeping a complete record of all proceedings and determinations of all court cases.

The Circuit Court Clerk's Office also provides specialized customer service assistance to both self-represented litigants and attorneys by allowing them to electronically file (e-File) circuit court cases, while also managing and organizing case information in the most efficient and effective ways possible. The Circuit Court Clerk's Office is required to charge, collect and disburse the fines and fees of the court as determined by the Clerks of Court and Criminal, Civil and Traffic Assessment Acts, along with performing other duties as required by law.

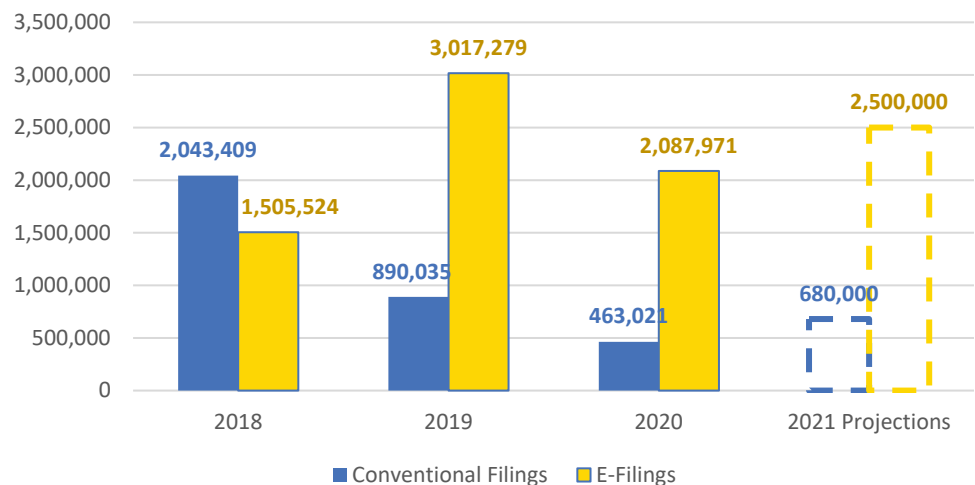
The Circuit Court Clerk's Office serves the citizens of Cook County and the participants in the judicial system in an efficient, effective, and ethical manner, providing all services, information, and court records with courtesy and cost efficiency.

### 2020 Achievements

E-Filing enables court users to electronically file cases from the comfort of their homes or offices, which saves time, travel and parking costs, reduces redundant paperwork, and allows for efficient processing of documents and fees online. The e-Filing system also manages the flow of information between filers, clerks, court personnel, and judges within the State of Illinois. On July 1, 2018, e-Filing became mandatory for all new and subsequent civil case type filings, using e-FileIL. Therefore, the Circuit Court Clerk's Office discontinued using its old e-Filing system that had been in place since 2009.

In 2019, there were more than 3 million Cook County e-Filings, which is 500,000 more filings than the office projected. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only 2,087,971 e-Filings were submitted in 2020. This is 412,029 less than anticipated. We believe this is a direct result of the Executive Order that was entered by the Governor prohibiting certain filings (i.e. evictions) and the impact of specific court orders by Presiding Judges in several areas of law, which limited either the filing or the enforcement of certain orders. The Circuit Court Clerk's Office anticipates around 2,500,000 e-Filings in 2021, a consideration which is based upon a successful mitigation of COVID-19 in spring of 2021.

**Number of Conventional Filings vs. E-Filings**



The Circuit Court Clerk's Office staff continues to provide specialized customer service to both self-represented litigants and attorneys in order for them to e-File successfully, while managing and organizing case information in the most efficient and effective ways possible. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Circuit Court Clerk's Office worked collaboratively with the Office of the Chief Judge, to implement Remote Access Services for court users. Remote services include hearings by zoom, telephone and notification by text message. The

## Clerk of the Circuit Court

Clerk's office will continue to work collaboratively with the OCJ to provide services.

In fall of 2020, the Circuit Court Clerk's Office completed the implementation of its new Disaster Recovery Plan. The Disaster Recovery Plan and supporting solution will help the Circuit Court Clerk's Office prevent severe loss of systems and core business data in the event of a major outage or catastrophic disaster.

Self-service Court Call Smart Kiosks provide court customers with detailed information about their court appearances scheduled for the current day. In 2020, the Circuit Court Clerk's Office expanded its Smart Kiosks to the Daley Center along with Court Call Information Monitors. The kiosks are easily accessed as needed, and court customers can conveniently visit them for inquiries. These kiosks help save time and allow court participants to have confidence in when and where their court appearances take place. By placing kiosks at strategic locations, the Circuit Court Clerk's Office can assist more court customers with important court information without the need of engaging court staff, providing for a highly efficient user experience and increased customer satisfaction. The kiosks are touchscreen and provide information in English, Spanish and Polish, and are ADA compliant by providing for the visually impaired. The Circuit Court Clerk's Office is in the process of determining if the kiosks can be updated to accept court payments. In addition to streamlining the general consumer experience, the Self-Service Court Call Kiosks are very expandable and can be used to share other critical information with the public like census news or public announcements.



### Looking Ahead

In FY2021, the Clerk of the Circuit Court will continue to address operational needs of the Office and ensure that initiatives implemented by former Clerk Brown, such as the e-Filing Registration Team, e-Filing Customer Service Center, e-Filing Troubleshooting Team, Pro Se and Attorney Assistance Help Desk, e-Filing Accept and Reject Team, Quality Assurance Team, Scanning Team, Back Scanning Team, and Printing Team are operating properly. Also, the Circuit Court Clerk's Office will continue to identify advanced technology opportunities to improve the efficiency of court operations, reduce costs, identify additional revenue opportunities, improve customer service, and enhance information access offered to the public.

The Circuit Court Clerk's Office is continuing to implement a new \$36 million Case Management system (CMS), which went live with the County Division on February 13, 2018. All Criminal areas of law went live in November of 2019 with the new CMS, and implementations of the Civil and Traffic areas of law are delayed by an Order of the Chief Judge Evans until it is shown that the new CMS is validated and verified ready for use. The new

## Public Defender

The Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender protects the fundamental rights, liberties and dignity of each person whose case has been entrusted to us by providing the finest legal representation. As one of the largest public defender offices in the nation with nearly 700 employees, the Public Defender’s team of attorneys, investigators, caseworkers and other support staff work collaboratively to provide holistic legal representation that extends beyond the courtroom, helping to ensure positive outcomes for clients by addressing the underlying issues that may have contributed to the client’s involvement in the court system.

Public Defender clients have a broad range of needs that should be addressed as part of their legal representation. To help address these needs, the Public Defender’s Office has taken an innovative approach to client representation through the creation of special units within the Office that are tasked with helping clients beyond the courtroom.

The Public Defender’s Office currently has 23 divisions and units, some of which are organized by location (such as the Suburban Courthouses), while others are organized by practice type (such as the Forensic Science and Juvenile Justice Divisions, and the Police Station Representation and Mental Health Units), which assist clients regardless of where their cases are pending.

### FY2020 Initiatives:

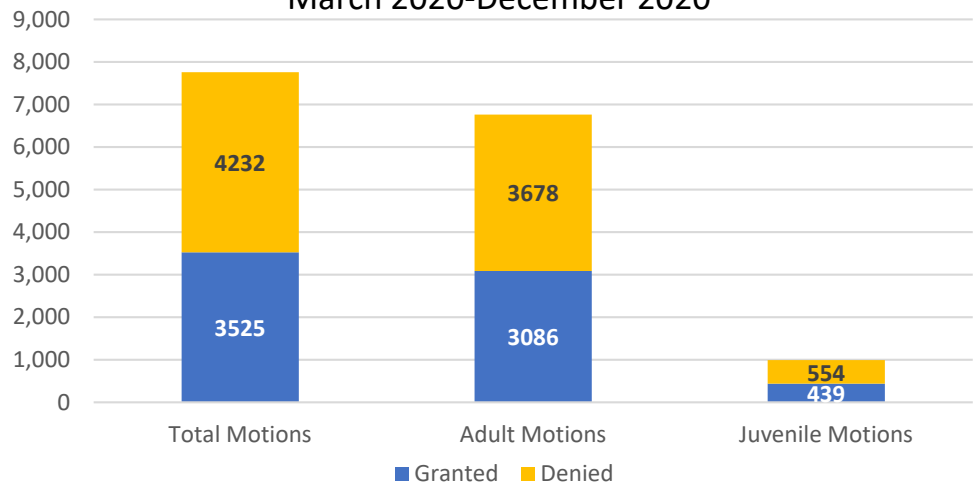
During her time as Public Defender from 2015-2021, Amy Campanelli launched several initiatives that enabled the Public Defender’s Office to work towards achieving the vision of providing unparalleled client-centered holistic legal services through zealous advocacy that result in just outcomes for our clients and the community.

#### COVID-19 Jail Reduction Strategy

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged court stakeholders to shift the way in which the criminal court system administers “justice,” prioritizing public health in conjunction with public safety. In March 2020, in anticipation of a potential coronavirus outbreak in Cook County Jail, former Public Defender Amy Campanelli filed an emergency petition seeking the immediate release of certain categories of jail detainees who were at elevated risk of contracting COVID-19, either because of age and/or because of underlying health conditions. Thereafter, the court ordered an expedited review of cases of seven categories of jail detainees who should be considered for immediate release.

Using the court’s guidance, and while balancing public safety and public health concerns, the Public Defender’s Office developed a strategy in partnership with numerous county stakeholders and community partners to request the release of thousands of jail detainees who did not pose a significant risk to public safety, while providing them access to necessary support services such as housing and telehealth services.

Outcomes of 2020 Motions to Reduce Bonds  
March 2020-December 2020



## Public Defender

Between March 23, 2020 and December 18, 2020, the Public Defender's Office filed 7,757 motions to review the bond amounts of clients detained in the jail and juvenile temporary detention center. Of those, 3,525 were granted.

### Immigration Unit

The Public Defender's Office routinely represents noncitizen clients who face potential deportation, pending the outcome of their criminal case. The Public Defender's Office, working in partnership with several community supporters who formed the Defenders 4 All coalition, launched a new Immigration Unit, which officially launched in September 2020, when an attorney supervisor with several years of experience working in immigration court was hired. Her duties include providing advice and consultation to assistant public defenders regarding the immigration consequences of their noncitizen clients, conducting trainings, and developing resource materials to help establish a baseline of knowledge officewide of the intersectionality between criminal law and immigration law.

With support from the Immigration Unit, assistant public defenders will be able to comply with guidelines for effective representation established by the United States Supreme Court, protect clients' Sixth Amendment rights, and empower noncitizens to be fully informed of the option available to them that can minimize the potential of removal from the United States.

### Chief Data Officer

To complement and bolster the Cook County court stakeholder's shared efforts to build a more equitable, more efficient and more just criminal justice system, the Public Defender's Office hired its first Chief Data Officer. Creating and filling this position aligns with the Public Defender's commitment to making data-driven decisions that help address issues of racial and ethnic disparities, reduce unnecessary jail incarceration and take a more strategic approach to addressing the underlying issues that lead people into the justice system. Analysis of the data that the Public Defender's Office will ultimately be able to capture through its case management system will not only bolster the Office's ability to contribute to the systemic reform initiatives of the court stakeholders, but will also put the Public Defender's Office in a better position to effectively represent clients in the criminal court system.

### Mental Health Resources Unit Expansion

Each year, the Public Defender's Office represents clients who suffer from some form of mental health disorder. When our attorneys suspect that a client has a mental health issue, they are ethically bound to request an evaluation of the client's fitness to stand trial. To process these cases in a more efficient manner, in September 2019 the Office established a new Mental Health Resources Unit and hired a full-time clinical psychologist to conduct in-house mental health screenings and assessments and develop community treatment alternatives.

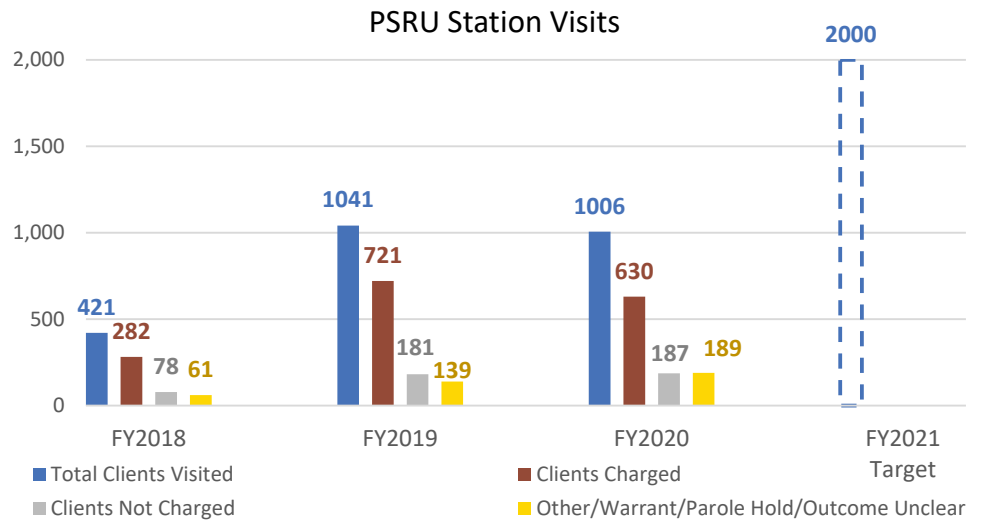
During FY2020, the Public Defender's Office expanded the Mental Health Resources Unit's capacity by hiring four mental health clinicians who work with the licensed clinical psychologist to identify clients with mental health needs and/or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), provide assessments and referrals for treatment, and aid in establishing mitigation for sentencing purposes. Prior to the Mental Health Resources Unit, assistant public defenders would hire outside experts to conduct these services. Providing these services in-house reduces the need for outside expert witness referrals, which will result in cost savings to Cook County and most importantly, more effective and efficient services for our clients.

## Public Defender

### Police Station

#### Representation Unit

The Police Station Representation Unit (PSRU) provides free legal representation to anyone held in police custody in Cook County who requests counsel. By the end of FY2020, attorneys working in the unit visited 1,006 clients at police stations. Of those, 187 clients were released without charges. Since the Unit's inception in April 2018, the PSRU has visited 2,468 clients and of those, 446, approximately 18%, were released uncharged.



## FY2021 Initiatives and Goals:

### Immigration Unit Expansion

During FY2021, the immigration unit's capacity will be expanded with the creation of four new positions – two attorneys, one paralegal, and one outreach worker – who will provide internal advice and consultation to assistant public defenders representing noncitizen clients in their criminal cases, as well as postconviction petitions of noncitizen clients whose past criminal convictions trigger immigration consequences. Eventually, the Public Defender's Office hopes to expand the scope of the immigration unit's work to include legal representation of clients in immigration detention hearings and removal proceedings, with the goal of reducing the number of individuals who are deported from the United States.

### Mental Health Resources Unit Expansion

The capacity of the Mental Health Resources Unit will continue to expand as the Public Defender's Office builds collaborative relationships with local professional schools of psychology, the Justice Advisory Council and the Cook County Health System to better serve clients who have mental health needs. In addition, the Mental Health Resources Unit will launch an officewide educational initiative to raise awareness among assistant public defenders about the services available to their clients through the Unit. These collaborative efforts will help the Public Defender's Office achieve its goal of increasing access to services for clients while reducing expert witness expenses. The efforts will also identify and address the mental health needs of clients in a more effective and efficient manner, thereby potentially reducing their length of stay in the Cook County jail. During FY2021, the Mental Health Resources Unit hopes to process approximately 250 client referrals.

### Increase Police Station Representation

The Public Defender's Office successfully worked to pass legislation during the first quarter of FY2021 that clarifies an arrestee's right to have access to a phone to make three phone calls within three hours of arrest. The passage of this legislation coupled with an increase in public awareness of the PSRU through targeted community and social media outreach, will enable the Public Defender's Office to work towards achieving its goal of doubling the number of police station visits in FY2021 to over 2,000.



## Sheriff

The Cook County Sheriff's Office is responsible for providing vital public safety services to Cook County residents. The Police Department is responsible for patrolling and investigations in unincorporated Cook County, warrant enforcement and targeted crime reduction initiatives in Chicago. The Court Services Department provides security in all courthouses and is responsible for the service and enforcement of summons, evictions, and orders of protection. The Department of Corrections is responsible for housing pre-trial defendants and County sentenced individuals, providing them programming aimed at reducing recidivism, and monitoring those ordered to Community Corrections. The Sheriff's Office is committed to fostering diversity, promoting inclusivity and improving the quality of life of every person who engages with the Office by providing them with a safe and secure environment; treating them with dignity and respect in connection with every phase of their engagement; providing them with the services they need in an efficient, effective, and timely manner; collaborating with other agencies and stakeholders as needed; and remaining fiscally responsible.

### 2020 Highlights:

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Sheriff's Office quickly adapted to new operational practices to ensure the continuation of our public safety mission. Like many businesses and government agencies, our operations could not be put on pause while we developed a plan. The Office acted swiftly and aggressively to mitigate the spread of the virus in the jail and to protect detainees and staff. By mid-July, the CDC published a study stating that the Office had dramatically reduced the virus in the jail. These efforts included quarantining and isolating detainees, creating an off-site isolation and quarantine facility at the former Boot Camp, limiting detainee and staff movement, social distancing, aggressive testing protocols, and the massive undertaking to single cell as many detainees as possible. When community cases spiked later in the year, the jail also saw an increase but worked to contain the spread as quickly as possible.

The Office further adapted to the pandemic by setting up video visitation for detainees to stay connected to their attorneys and loved ones, arranging video court to minimize disruptions to court proceedings, expanding telehealth services to increase access to care for detainees, and developing televised programs to educate detainees about COVID-19 and how to slow the spread.

Additionally, when the pandemic hit, many departments in the Sheriff's Office had to shift to working remotely while focusing on rapidly evolving new duties to keep the Office up and running. For example, HR swiftly pivoted to managing the personnel issues created by the pandemic, handling more than 1,600 employees who required time off due to COVID-19 related issues, developing and implementing policies around the use of benefit time, quickly gaining expertise on contact tracing of positive employees to minimize the spread among the workforce, and leading the reintegration team to safely bring employees back to the workplace.

The international supply chain for PPE and janitorial supplies was completely upended when the pandemic began, and the Office's Supply Chain and Fiscal units explored every avenue to get the supplies the Office needed as quickly as possible. It is noteworthy that the Office worked diligently to secure supplies with no major supply chain issues or shortages. They reached out to vendors outside of current contracts, using the Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security's emergency procurement authority for most



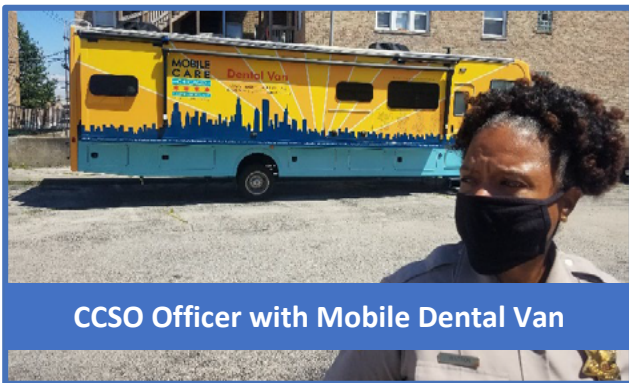
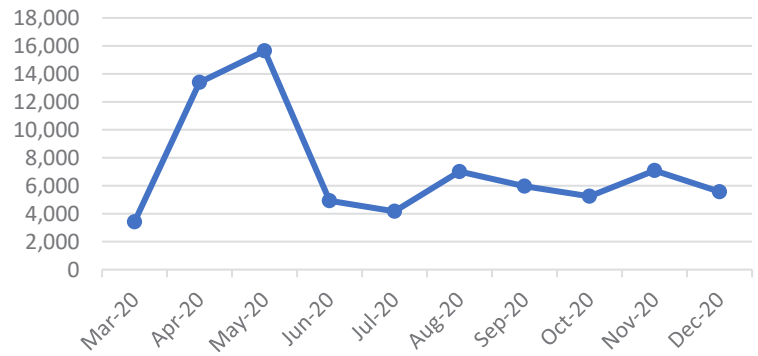


## Sheriff

purchases. Staff also collaborated with State and County agencies to receive some items from the State surplus/DEMRS until the larger orders were delivered.

Prior to COVID-19, Sheriff's Police had robust community programs in Cook County, including programs for youth, seniors and programs to rebuild distressed communities. These build positive relationships between law enforcement and community residents, increasing effective community-engaged policing and helping to reduce crime. Sheriff's Police found ways to continue supporting communities throughout the pandemic by delivering meals; conducting outreach to homeless communities; running community pop-up events that provide food, school supplies, vaccines, dental and medical services and COVID-19 testing for local residents; and starting the Sheriff Rebuild program to assist small business owners impacted by recent events. These efforts remain critical to ensuring stability for vulnerable communities who have been impacted by the pandemic, economic downturn, and civil unrest.

CCSO 2020 Meal Distribution by Month



CCSO Officer with Mobile Dental Van

Sheriff's Police also continued to prioritize treatment over arrest for those with substance abuse disorders. Sheriff's Police Officers are equipped with naloxone and have moved away from treating overdose victims with a trip to the jail. Instead, they administer naloxone to save them, and refer them to the Treatment Response Team (TRT), an innovative interdisciplinary unit that offers supportive assistance to victims. In 2020, TRT made 4,082 contacts with clients and there were 47 Narcan reversals (saves) by the Sheriff's Office.

In addition to these unique programs, Sheriff's Police's approach to law enforcement in 2020 remained community

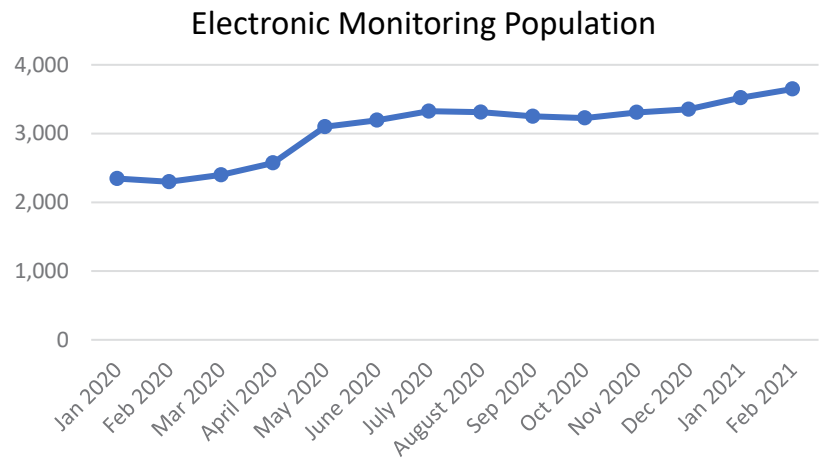
based. In Chicago's 15th District, where Sheriff's Police runs its Chicago Initiative Program, and in the suburbs, officers walk the streets and spend time talking with residents and business owners, providing police presence to deter crime, and building positive interactions with the community.

When the COVID-19 pandemic caused almost all normal court operations to shut down, including evictions and most in-person court proceedings, Court Services staff were swiftly redeployed to assist in the jail and in Electronic Monitoring (EM) to help the Office contain the virus as quickly as possible. Other Court Services staff worked with the Sheriff's Office Bureau of Information Technology (BOIT) to continue upgrading Sheriff's E-File so that more people could file for service remotely; the newest upgrade allows for bulk filing, meaning that more than 10 services can be filed at once. Court Services staff also worked with other stakeholders to implement video court proceedings.

Additionally, Court Services staff continued preparing for the "eviction cliff" by shoring up efforts to connect vulnerable families to social services, an activity that the Office has done for 12 years. The Office's goal is to do as much as possible to mitigate the health and economic impacts of the pandemic on Black and Brown communities that already bear the challenges of generations of disinvestment.

## Sheriff

2020 brought many challenges to the Sheriff's Electronic Monitoring program. The Office provided requested information to the other criminal justice stakeholders to reduce the jail population by almost 25% with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed CCDOC to implement aggressive mitigation initiatives (i.e., single-celling, social distancing) to contain the virus in the jail. While an achievement, the majority of defendants released from CCDOC were placed on EM, steadily increasing the number of criminal defendants that the Sheriff's Office is obligated to monitor to over 3,500. This increase has been a challenge for the overall EM operations specifically due to staffing levels, however the Sheriff's Office continues to manage this rising EM population.



In an effort to reduce the EM population and allow the Sheriff's Office to implement a thoughtful, effective and efficient community-based program, the Office continued reaching out to stakeholders to review the length of stay on EM and screen the appropriateness of placement. The Office also assigned redeployed civilian staff to provide progress reports to the courts to improve communication and provide additional information for decision-making.

In 2020, Sheriff's Office staff continued providing innovative and effective programming to set detainees up for success upon release and interrupt the cycle of violence and incarceration. When the pandemic hit, staff pivoted to using technology and onsite staff to continue these critical programs. These include the MHTC, SAVE Program, SMART and THRIVE, SOAR, Recipe for Change, chess, Tails of Redemption, the Higher Education Collaborative, and the Strength and Wellness Center. Additionally, the Office launched the Community Resource Center (CRC), which provides linkages to community members, including those facing eviction and recently released detainees, in need of supportive services. Services include comprehensive mental health and substance abuse screenings, as well as direct connections to financial coaching, medical and behavioral health treatment, employment opportunities, and housing resources within their communities.

### 2021 Goals:

In 2021, the Sheriff's Office will continue adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic by keeping the virus contained in the jail through social distancing, continuing to test aggressively, and maintaining isolation and quarantine units; expanding on the technologies put into place to facilitate remote work, video visitation, telehealth, and video court proceedings; assisting vulnerable populations facing eviction by connecting them to social services; and engaging with people throughout Cook County through community-based programming and policing. The Office will also continue its proactive campaign to vaccinate staff and detainees as quickly as possible, working with Chicago and Cook County Departments of Public Health and other partners.



**Social Distancing at Cook County Jail**



## Sheriff

The Sheriff's Office will continue to expand its non-traditional law enforcement and corrections initiatives in 2021. For example, CCSPD will continue its TRT program, which is comprised of clinical staff and police working hand in hand to address the opioid crisis in Cook County. The team offers case management and supportive assistance to potential clients, their families and businesses impacted by the opioid crisis and mental illness. In the jail, CCDOC staff will continue expanding their unique and effective programming, including the Mental Health Transition Center, SAVE Program, SMART and THRIVE, SOAR, Recipe for Change, Chess, Tails of Redemption, and the Higher Education Collaborative.

Court Services will continue expanding the use of technology to assist in the implementation of more self-service processes. In the Civil Division, deploying tools such as GIS and routing systems, along with communication devices and bar code scanners, will create operational efficiencies and result in streamlined planning and execution of service of process and enforcement of court orders. Court Services will also continue collaborating with BOIT to enhance Sheriff's E-File, allowing the Civil Division to process larger workloads in a shorter amount of time and focus staff on pressing issues and priority service requests.

The Office will keep working closely with State, County, and City of Chicago stakeholders to ensure that implementation of rental assistance funding aligns with the Office's process to protect vulnerable tenants and landlords and help mitigate the enormous increase in evictions that is expected.

Sheriff's Police will continue devoting its resources to effective services that support communities and interrupt the cycle of violence by providing law enforcement services to communities in need. Using specialized units, non-traditional community policing, unique data science, and community-based programming, Sheriff's Police will continue collaborating with the City of Chicago and all Cook County suburbs to reduce violence in the areas most at risk. The holistic approach used by Sheriff's Police is precisely the type of innovative strategy to policing that current times call for, and it serves as a model for law enforcement agencies countywide, statewide, and nationally.

The Sheriff's Office Electronic Monitoring program will complete its transition from radio frequency equipment to GPS, which will allow civilian staff to monitor participants via the office instead of requiring staff to be deployed. This will assist staff in ensuring participants are where they are supposed to be in order to avoid frivolous unauthorized movement and alerts. This transition will allow the EM program to operate more efficiently while also increasing participant accountability and improving public safety. The Office will also continue working with University of Chicago on innovative and effective ways to manage the EM population.

In 2021, the Sheriff's Office will continue being a leader in non-traditional corrections initiatives that seek to improve the lives of those who interact with the system, from continuing the ban on solitary confinement in the jail to enhancing programming opportunities for detainees, and from discharge planning prior to detainees' release to following up with them through the Community Resource Center post-release.

The Sheriff's Office will also continue to engage in legislative and advocacy efforts to reduce the length of time detainees stay in the jail, which benefits every person and stakeholder involved in the criminal justice system. The Office will continue advocating for the Office of the Chief Judge to adopt a court case management system, which will speed up case processing.

## State's Attorney

With more than 750 attorneys and more than 1,250 employees, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) is the second-largest prosecutor's office in the nation. The Office is responsible for the prosecution of all misdemeanor and felony crimes committed in Cook County, one of the largest counties in the United States.

In addition to direct criminal prosecution, Assistant State's Attorneys (ASAs) file legal actions to enforce child support orders, litigate to protect consumers, immigrant families, and the elderly from exploitation, and assist thousands of victims of sexual assault and domestic violence each year. The CCSAO also serves as legal counsel for the government of Cook County as well as its independently elected officials.

The CCSAO's mission is to do justice in the pursuit of thriving, healthy, and safe communities. By implementing reforms while also observing a steady decline in violent crime, the CCSAO has proven that prioritizing public safety and reforming the criminal justice system reform can be done simultaneously, and has set a commitment to do both.

### Public Health and Public Safety

In the interest of both public health and safety during COVID-19, CCSAO has worked with County agency partners, including the Cook County Sheriff, Public Defender, and Office of the Chief Judge, to ensure that individuals who are not a threat to public safety are not kept in custody in the Cook County Jail. In-custody conditions increase the opportunity for the spread of COVID-19, because it can be a challenge to implement guidelines set by public health officials regarding measures aimed at containing the virus. Because we are **obligated to ensure all members of the community feel safe, including those behind bars**, the CCSAO urgently reviewed the bond of more than 1,500 cases at the start of COVID and recommended hundreds of individuals released from custody. In May 2020, the jail population was reduced to around 4,000 individuals. However, due to the seasonal increase in criminal activity and delays in the court systems due to COVID, the population climbed to near pre-COVID levels.

### Improving Public Safety While Enacting Meaningful Criminal Justice Reforms

#### Shifting policy and resources

In June, State's Attorney Foxx released an official policy outlining the CCSAO's **decision not to prosecute individuals charged with minor offenses related to peaceful protests** that occurred in the wake of George Floyd's murder. While protesting, law enforcement agencies in Chicago and suburban Cook County arrested individuals and charged them with various non-violent offenses. Individuals gathered calling for criminal justice reform, police accountability, and systemic change. The CCSAO believes strongly in the right to peacefully protest for change, but those choosing to exploit this moment, by causing harm and damage, will be held accountable.

#### Accountability and Community Safety

As allegations of police criminal misconduct increased, State's Attorney Foxx created a **Police Criminal Misconduct Complaint Form** aimed at increasing community safety and police accountability. The form provides an outlet where these serious concerns can be acknowledged and addressed in a timely way. The submissions are reviewed by prosecutors in the CCSAO's Law Enforcement Accountability Division (LEAD), tasked with reviewing investigations and prosecuting police officers charged with criminal offenses. The LEAD prosecutor then determines whether the matter should be referred to an investigative agency or closed without additional review. The form allows for direct community access to the State's Attorney's Office and offers an immediate resource as we work to increase accountability and equity in our justice system.

# State's Attorney

## Addressing gun crime

While the total number of cases called into the CCSAO for review was lower in 2020 than in previous years, the numbers of **gun cases** approved increased by 27%. When an arrest is made, and if the law enforcement agency decides to charge a felony, the CCSAO's Felony Review Unit (FRU) must be contacted to review the evidence and decide whether charges can be filed. If a case is approved for felony charges it goes to bond court and continues through the criminal justice system.

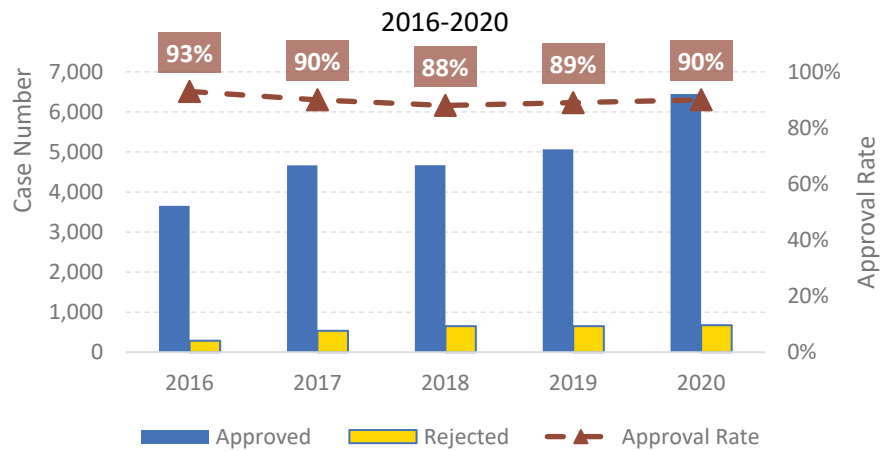
The number of gun cases peaked in the summer and slowly decreased starting in the fall. The SAO 90% approval rate for gun cases remains consistent to previous years. In 2020, the CCSAO approved 407 murder cases compared to 367 cases in 2019, a 10% increase. The approval rate for murder cases increased to 74% in 2020 from 68% in 2019.

The number of gun cases peaked in the summer and slowly decreased starting in the fall. The SAO 90% approval rate for gun cases remains consistent to previous years. In 2020, the CCSAO approved 407 murder cases compared to 367 cases in 2019, a 10% increase. The approval rate for murder cases increased to 74% in 2020 from 68% in 2019.

## Criminal justice reforms

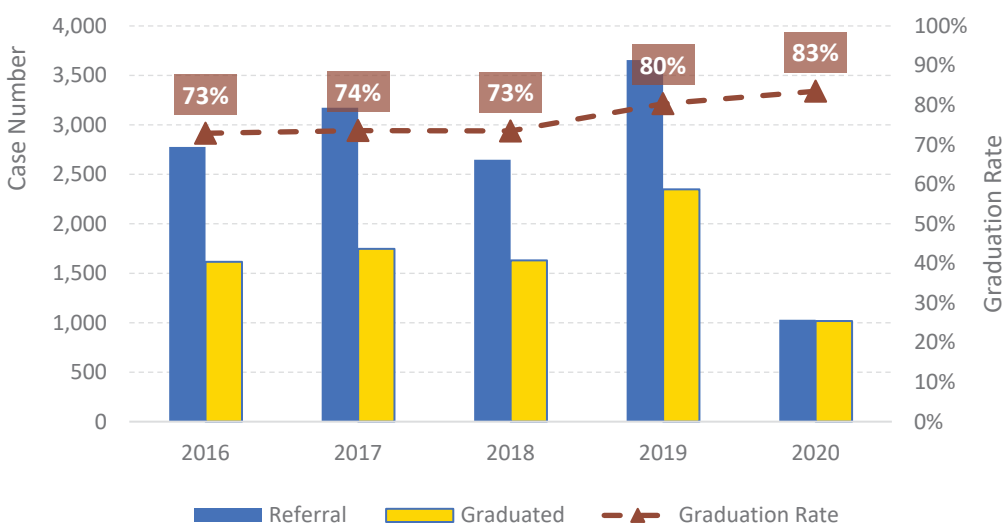
In March, amidst the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, State's Attorney Foxx announced that CCSAO would not prosecute cases of non-violent, low-level narcotics offenses and would continue to review and prioritize other charges on a case-by-case basis to make appropriate determinations in light of the public health crisis and reduced court operations and staffing.

## Felony Gun Cases



## Alternative Prosecution

2016-2020



Additional reforms include alternatives to bringing people into the justice system such as programs to decriminalize addiction, poverty, and mental health. Looking at individuals in their totality, not just as criminals, helps to create better public health and public safety outcomes. The CCSAO refers individuals to **alternative prosecution (or diversion) programs** rather than sentencing them to time in custody. In keeping with State's Attorney Foxx's policies for alternatives to incarceration, referrals for these programs continue to increase year over

year. By participating in an alternative prosecution program, individuals are able to continue contributing to their communities and avoid a felony conviction. On average, graduation rates for alternative prosecution programs also continue to increase. Graduation rate is defined as the number of graduates divided by the number of individuals who choose to participate and either successfully complete or fail a program. In 2020, court



## State's Attorney

closures due to COVID-19 caused a significant decrease in the use of alternative prosecution programs.

Routinely detaining people accused of low-level offenses who have not yet been convicted simply because they are poor is not only unjust – it undermines the public's confidence in the fairness of the criminal justice system. Since efforts to **reform the bail system** took effect, Cook County has become a national leader, where crime has decreased while the jail population continues to decline to a historic low.

### Protecting Communities and Individuals' Rights Proactively

#### Protecting Democracy

The CCSAO's Civil Actions Bureau (CAB) represents the public interest of Cook County's 5.4 million residents. During the 2020 election cycle, the CAB represented local election authorities in their efforts to **conduct safe and fair elections during the pandemic**, including defending against emergency requests to bar voting by mail. Nationally, the CAB contributed to several efforts in 2020 to protect the right to vote and safeguard democratic representation including co-authoring an amicus brief filed in Harris County, Texas opposing efforts to invalidate more than 127,000 ballots cast at drive-through voting locations. A federal judge agreed that the court could not throw out the ballots one day before the general election. Ahead of the election, the United State's Postal Service created policy changes that risked significant delays for mail-in voting. The CAB filed a local government amicus brief in support of several successful challenges to these policy changes. Additional amicus briefs include: opposition to the Texas Governor's Proclamation limiting each county to a single in-person ballot return location, and several briefs opposing the Trump Administration's decisions to cut short the 2020 Census operations and exclude undocumented immigrants from the Census population count. Amicus briefs are a way for parties not directly involved in a case to show their support, or opposition, for a particular matter to help influence the court's final decision.

#### Protecting common-sense gun laws

In June 2020, the CCSAO **successfully defended the County's Blair Holt Assault Weapons Ban** from a Second Amendment challenge in the U.S. Supreme Court. CAB continues to fight challenges to other County firearm ordinances, including the Cook County Forest Preserve District's ban on concealed weapons in the Forest Preserve.

#### Access to health care

In 2020, the CCSAO continued its fight to protect and promote quality, affordable health care. Along with two dozen other state and local governments, it **secured a final judgment vacating the Trump Administration's "conscience rule" that aimed to allow individuals to refuse health care to individuals based on religious grounds**. The matter is currently on appeal in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. The CCSAO also contributed to several healthcare-related amicus efforts; co-authoring a local government amicus brief filed in the Ninth Circuit in support of the City of Seattle, which is defending an ordinance intended to expand health care coverage for low-wage hospitality workers, and signed on to several amicus briefs opposing the Trump Administration's efforts to strip gender identity, sex stereotyping, and language access protections from the Affordable Care Act's anti-discrimination rule.

#### Public charge rule

The CCSAO **defeated the Trump Administration by securing a final judgement vacating the Department of Homeland Security's Public Charge Rule nationwide**. The Rule denied green cards to any immigrant likely to use housing vouchers, food stamps, or Medicaid at any point in the future. This litigation is ongoing in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court.

# State's Attorney

## Safeguarding the Tax Base

In 2020, the Real Estate Tax Litigation Section settled 4,909 cases by (largely commercial) property owners challenging their property taxes, resulting in a **savings of over \$148,481,588 to the taxing districts of Cook County**. Further, the Municipal Litigation Section generated more than \$60,000,000 in revenue positive settlements related to tobacco ordinance enforcement.

## Righting the Wrongs of the Past

### Cannabis legalization and conviction relief

The CCSAO played a vital role in passing legislation to **legalize cannabis and provide the broadest and most equitable form of conviction relief possible**. It was imperative that a prosecutor sit at the table with legislators in Springfield to say, *"We did it wrong, and this is the opportunity for us to repair the harm."* The Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act is not just an historic reform law but a public safety law as well. Communities most impacted by violence have the highest unemployment rates, the lowest education rate, and the highest concentration of people returning to our criminal justice system. There are systemic conditions that cause these communities to diminish. In 2020, the CCSAO continued to help move communities forward by vacating low-level convictions that occurred between 2000 and 2012.

### Conviction integrity

Chicago was once known as the "False Confession Capital of the United States." Today, the CCSAO Conviction Integrity Unit is a national model, driven exclusively by the office's efforts to proactively seek out and vacate convictions of the wrongfully accused. The investigations into misconduct of former Chicago Police Sergeant Watts alone resulted in 19 vacated conviction cases in 2020, bringing the **total of vacated cases related to Sergeant Watts to 100 under the Foxx administration**.

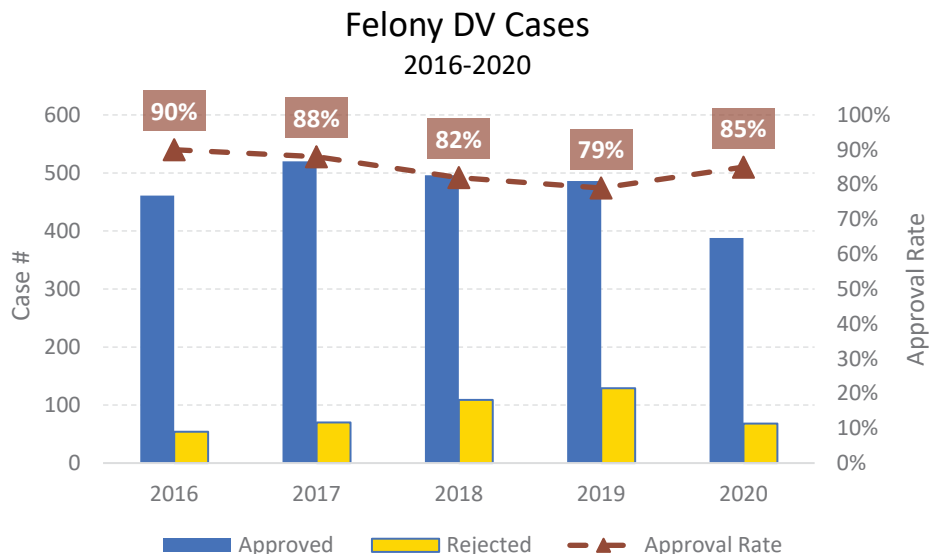
## Taking a Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centered Approach

### Ensuring victim's have access to resources

Domestic violence hotline calls increased significantly during stay-at-home orders due to COVID-19. While it remained important to listen to public health officials and stay home to save lives during the pandemic, for many people, home may not be a safe place. **As a way to ensure those most in need during the pandemic were able to access services and resources, the CCSAO partnered with Lyft**

to provide transportation for survivors of domestic violence in Cook County. Using codes entered into the Lyft app, survivors were able to use up to \$25 for rides to and from all Cook County courthouses during court operational hours.

In the interest of public safety during the pandemic the Office of the Chief Judge halted in-person court proceedings which meant shifting many procedures to ensure the work of the CCSAO could continue. The CCSAO





## State's Attorney

Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Unit quickly *adjusted to a remote screening process* so survivors could continue reporting charges and request Emergency Orders of Protection. While Domestic Violence (DV) hotlines experienced a call increase during the pandemic, the CCSAO saw a 22% decrease in DV cases called into review compared to the previous year. Of the 456 DV cases that reached a felony review decision (approved or rejected) 85% were approved for charges.

The CCSAO is fully committed to protecting all members of the community, regardless of their immigration status. The CCSAO serves as a "certifying agency" for U and T Visa purposes and provides certifications to foreign nationals that have been victims of qualifying criminal activity. In 2020, the **CCSAO issued 232 U Visa Certifications, ultimately providing recipients with the opportunity to pursue a U Visa**. U Visas provides an opportunity for immigrant victims of crime to gain legal immigration status. Encouraging victims to report crimes committed against them regardless of their immigration status, ultimately strengthens law enforcement's ability to detect, investigate, and prosecute crime in Cook County.

### What's Next

In 2022, the CCSAO will continue this work to improve public safety while meaningfully reforming the criminal justice system. Initiatives include but are not limited to building upon the success of the Gun Crimes Strategies Unit, reimagining police accountability, expanding alternative prosecution programs, and working with partners and community to decriminalize addiction, mental health issues, and poverty.

# Chief Judge

To establish justice is a primary function of government, as declared by the preambles to the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Illinois. To give substance to that declaration, the 19th-century authors of our new state’s Constitution included the requirements for a judicial system in Article IV (now Article VI). Today, the Circuit Court of Cook County is the largest of 24 statewide circuits and is managed under the centralized authority of Chief Judge Timothy C. Evans. The Circuit Court is one of the largest unified court systems in the world, with about 400 judges who serve the 5.2 million residents of Cook County within the City of Chicago and 130 surrounding suburbs. About one million cases are filed in the Court each year.

## 2020 Highlights

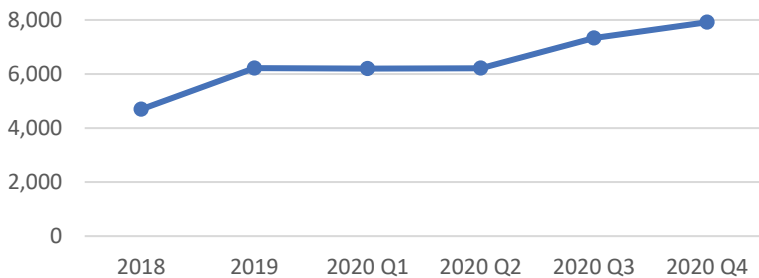
### Operational Modifications in Response to COVID-19

The Circuit Court of Cook County substantially modified its operations last year in response to the global coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), in step with Illinois Supreme Court orders, the Governor’s executive orders, and directives and publications by Cook County, the City of Chicago, other municipalities, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The court’s modifications, memorialized primarily in General Administrative Orders 2020-01, 2020-02, and 2020-07, included the implementation of remote proceedings, while scaling back or postponing non-emergency court-related activities that involved in-person contact, including jury trials. These modifications were developed with the cooperation of Cook County and other justice system partners out of an abundance of caution for the health and well-being of prospective jurors, judges, litigants, witnesses, court visitors and court staff.

In the days following the onset of the pandemic, the court began building the infrastructure to facilitate remote proceedings. Judges and court staff were provided with laptop computers and Zoom licenses for videoconferencing and streaming court proceedings live through YouTube. “Zoom Rooms” were outfitted and staffed in most court facilities to provide remote access to participants for whom access from other locations was impractical or impossible. These arrangements allowed court involved litigants and the public to safely join court proceedings and minimize virus transmission. From March through December 2020, the court conducted 49,555 remote proceedings, involving 1.25 million participants. The Zoom platform was utilized for over 1 million hours by the judiciary to provide continuous remote access to justice.

The court worked with Cook County government to prepare all court facilities for in-person operations. On June 29, 2020, the Cook County Re-Opening Committee published the *Cook County Resumption of Court Operations and Services Plan*, which reported modifications to facilities and operational protocols, and in recent days, the court submitted its plan to resume jury trials in criminal cases to the Illinois Supreme Court.

Average Daily Active Cases on Pretrial Supervision



Throughout the pandemic, the court has also been proactive in minimizing the populations of the Cook County Jail and the JTDC to minimize the risks of virus transmission. In Criminal Court, special, emergency detention calls by videoconference were established in conjunction with an overall review of all cases, to hear motions for release.

## Chief Judge

The Chief Judge's collaborative efforts to reduce the jail population prior to the pandemic with General Order 18.8A<sup>1</sup> averted infections on a larger scale. Since last March, the judiciary has released a large number of defendants to pretrial supervision on GPS monitoring. Since the implementation of General Order 18.8A, even before the pandemic, the average daily count of active cases on pretrial supervision grew from less than 4,700 to almost 6,200 cases. With the onset of the pandemic, the pretrial caseload skyrocketed to over 7,500. GPS monitoring orders have also increased.

Meanwhile, the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) has continued to operate through the COVID-19 pandemic, with the lone exception of the Nancy Jefferson School, closed by the Chicago Public Schools. The JTDC modified its protocols and operations, and special precautions have been taken to protect residents and staff. The JTDC re-structured "pod" assignments, all new youth admissions are screened for the virus, and those with symptoms are not admitted. Those without symptoms are quarantined before being allowed contact with the general population. The JTDC has implemented rigorous bi-weekly COVID-19 testing for employees and staff and additional tests have been conducted for those who have come in contact with others testing positive. The JTDC conducted over 2,300 tests in the last two FY2020 quarters. As a result, to date, there have been only limited incidences of the virus at the JTDC.

In juvenile court, Zoom-based detention hearings were held during the pandemic to minimize detention for newly arrested minors. A new temporary virtual court call was also initiated to consider detention review motions filed by defense counsel.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Court made significant progress in critical operational areas over the past year.

### **Probation Case Management System**

The court is implementing a new digital probation case management system, *cFive*, to track probation and pretrial operations as well as related cashier and contract monitoring. The new system is necessary to replace the three probation departments' outdated case management systems, the Juvenile Enterprise Management System (JEMS) developed in the late 1990s, and the Prosecutor's Management Information System (PROMIS), which was designed in the 1970s and resides on the Cook County mainframe.

Despite the pandemic, *cFive* went live in November 2020 for use by the Juvenile Probation Department. The new system will help to improve supervision of adult and juvenile probationers and pretrial defendants and respondents, upgrade the quality of information provided to the court, and enhance public safety, by improving quality assurance, program evaluation and workload management. The court is working with its bank to implement a robust *cFive* finance module, which will include an interface used by the Adult Probation Department and Social Service Department to automate reconciliation and process checks. A reporting feature will generate reports, ledgers, and audit logs that will enable the finance units to work more efficiently. The finance module will also generate customized financial correspondence and forms (e.g. receipts, ledgers). The court is planning to begin the use of the module in the second quarter of FY2021.

<sup>1</sup> Chief Judge Evans issued General Order (GO) 18.8A, "Procedures for Bail Hearings and Pretrial Release," codifying in court policy and practice that monetary bail should not be oppressive and affirming the constitutional presumption of innocence and the statutory presumption in favor of release on non-monetary bail. G.O. 18.8A changed bond court and pretrial service practices for felonies effective September 18, 2017, and misdemeanors effective January 1, 2018. In conjunction with G.O. 18.8A, Chief Judge Evans established a new division of judges to focus on bail hearings.

<sup>2</sup> The first RJCC opened in late 2017 in the North Lawndale neighborhood.

## Chief Judge

### **Restorative Justice Community Court**

In 2020, the Court expanded the Restorative Justice Community Courts Program (RJCC), by opening two additional courts in Avondale and Englewood.<sup>2</sup> These alternative courts empower the community to create solutions to repair harm caused by crime and conflict, while adjudicating the related case outside of a formal, conventional court setting. Community representatives work with eligible defendants, generally young adults who are facing non-violent drug-related charges, to create agreements to facilitate healing as an alternative to punishment. Both felonies and misdemeanors are heard in these alternative, dispute-resolution-style criminal courts. In FY2021, the court will implement a new felony drug diversion program for a new community court at the Leighton Courthouse.

## **FY2021 Goals**

### **Resumption of Jury Trials in the Criminal Division**

General Administrative Order (GAO) 2020-01 effective March 17, 2020, ordered the suspension of jury trials in all of its divisions out of an abundance of caution for the health and well-being of prospective jurors, judges, litigants, witnesses, court visitors and court staff. However, the court must move forward to reinstate jury trials where suspensions, out of concerns for public health, are causing harm by infringing on the rights of litigants. This is particularly the case with pending criminal matters, where defendants, who have both constitutional and statutory rights to a speedy trial, have stated they are ready for trial and have demanded a trial by jury.

On January 15, 2021, the court submitted a strategic plan to the Illinois Supreme Court to reinstate criminal jury trials. The court's plan was developed with input from its public safety partners and public health professionals from the Cook County Health and Hospitals System and will be implemented as a pilot program on an incremental basis, beginning with one trial at a time, at the George N. Leighton Criminal Court Building. The first trial will start in the weeks ahead after physical modifications to the courtrooms and jury spaces and testing. With experience from the initial trials and informed by public health data, additional courtrooms and courthouses will be added in the months ahead.

### **Early Resolution Program and Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program**

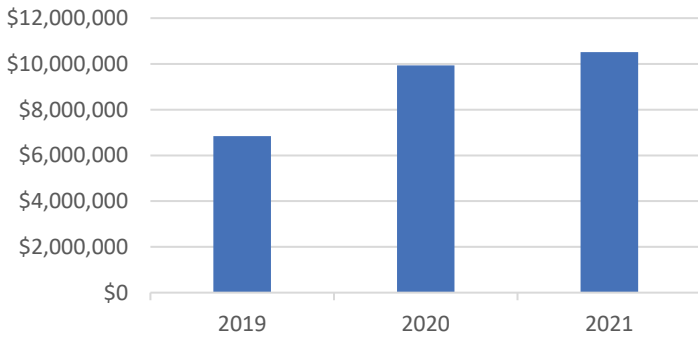
It has become apparent that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and resulting government response are causing a crisis in the housing and consumer debt market, which is expected to reverberate through the court. Mortgage foreclosures and tax deed cases in the Chancery and County Divisions are expected to significantly increase after federal, state and local government imposed moratoria are lifted.<sup>3</sup> Also, significant volumes of eviction and consumer debt cases are expected in the Municipal Department.

In response, the court has collaborated with County government and the Chicago Bar Foundation to establish programs – the Early Resolution Program (ERP) and the Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Program (MFMP) – to help tenants and borrowers who may face court actions from landlords, mortgagees and other creditors for failure to pay. The ERP specifically addresses evictions, consumer debts and tax deed sales. The ERP provides access to legal aid and mediation services to anyone involved in any of these cases who cannot afford a lawyer. The MFMP, reconstituted from a similar program developed by the County and the court during the foreclosure crisis some years ago, helps resolve the foreclosure cases through community outreach, housing counseling and free legal aid and mediation. To help fund these services, the court is now imposing a new \$150 filing fee in foreclosure cases, and the County is considering the use of HUD community development block grants (CDBG).

<sup>3</sup> Federal, state or local agencies have imposed moratoria on filing foreclosures on federally backed mortgages, on enforcing the collection of consumer debts, filing or enforcing certain evictions, and enforcing tax sales that allow sales of residential properties at which an entire property can be purchased for the amount of taxes owed, which is often under \$1,000.

# Chief Judge

Total Grant Award Amounts Available



### Grant Awards

In the last few years, the Court has received a number of grant awards from federal, state and private agencies that fund enhancements to court programs. One of the largest awards is the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The court in collaboration with its County and its other partners, has been awarded a second round of funding to safely reduce the use of local incarceration by reducing the flow of individuals into jail, shortening lengths of stay, and minimizing racial and ethnic disparities in jail populations without compromis-

ing public safety.<sup>4</sup> In FY2021, the SJC will begin a data exchange with the Loyola University Chicago to design and develop a publicly accessible data portal. The portal will be used to provide statistical data and analytical trends within and across key decision points of the criminal justice system, inform policy decision making, and enhance transparency, while supplementing the resources available for working towards the larger goals of the funding. The Court also recently received two new awards from the U.S. Department of Justice to implement a mentoring program for military veterans within one of the problem-solving courts and to improve the response of the civil and criminal justice systems to families with a history of domestic violence. Overall, the court enters the new year with 19 different grant awards, totaling \$10.5 million, the highest in the past three years.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The court received a planning grant in 2016, and \$1.925M was awarded in FY2017. In FY2020, a second phase grant of \$2.5M was awarded.

<sup>5</sup> The amount reflects the award amounts for various time periods, not necessarily the funds available for FY2021. Grant awards as of January of each year.

## Assessor

The mission of our office can be considered in three parts, with each corresponding to a legal statute:

First, our mission involves the delivery of uniform and accurate assessments, with timely and informative notices, in compliance with international standards, guided by industry best practices. We're guided in this part of our mission by Cook County Ordinance, which sets out mandates for how residential and commercial property is assessed and the State Property Tax Code, which requires property to be assessed based on Fair Market Value.

Our office also strives to create a culture of professionalism, inclusion, and accountability to the public, with engaged employees who take pride in delivery of high-quality, universal services. Here, again, we take our statutory duty from the Illinois Tax Code.

Finally, we have adopted a set of administrative policies that go beyond what the statutes require to build transparency into every part of the office, making services more effective and efficient, and earning greater trust from the public.

### Successful initiatives for FY2020

As with any office that serves the public, the Assessor's Office was challenged by the effects of COVID-19. Ensuring uninterrupted access to the services of the Assessor's Office was possible due to:

- A series of new technology launches in the first couple months of 2020
- The dedication of our staff who quickly pivoted to a remote environment
- Enacting the auto-renewal of senior exemptions

Under the leadership of Assessor Fritz Kaegi, the Assessor's Office also implemented changes to market values throughout Cook County, which were due to COVID-19's impact on real estate, and completed the scheduled reassessment of the south and west suburbs.

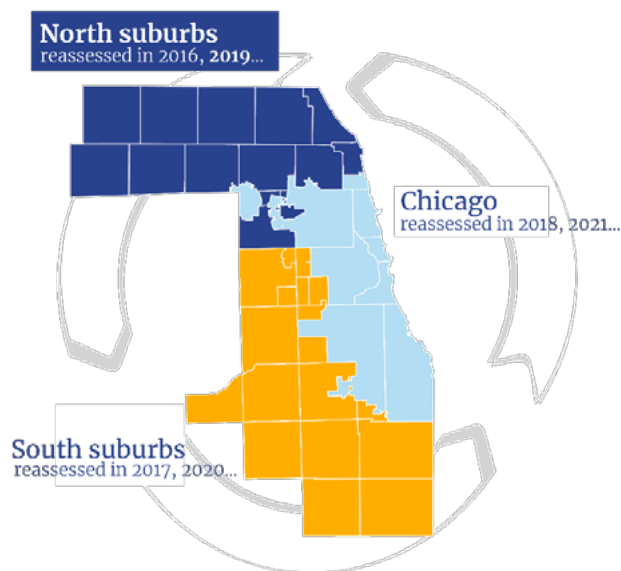
Finally, the office released a study by the International Association of Assessing Officers on past assessments and the office's first annual report, which provided a comprehensive look at community data on north suburban Cook County.

### Ensuring access to the Assessor's Office during COVID-19

As part of its ongoing technological modernization, the Assessor's Office relaunched its website in January of 2020. The new website improves both the "look and feel" of content and makes it easier to access key functionality like property detail pages and exemption information. The website also features a new section of community data with extensive assessment information and methodology.

The website also became a hub for other new innovations at the Assessor's Office. For the first time, the office made it possible to apply for and renew property tax exemptions online. The office also expanded its online appeal system, which allowed for both commercial appeals and supporting documents to be filed online for the first time. The appeal system's improvements, which were developed in collaboration with the county's Bureau

### Cook County's Triennial Reassessment Cycle



## Assessor

of Technology, led to an award for Local IT Innovation of the Year from StateScoop, an organization that brings together information technology leaders from across government, academia, and industry to exchange best practices.

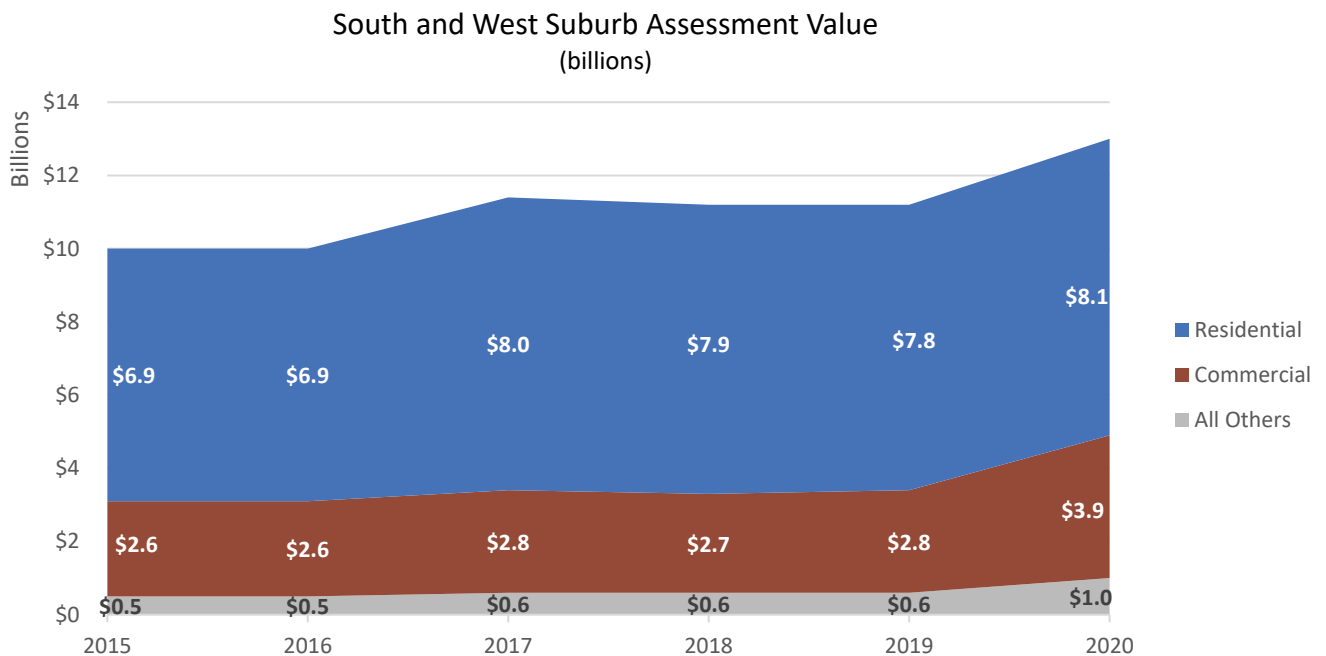
As the Assessor’s Office transitioned to a remote/work-from-home environment, several changes to office operations were required. Significant investments in information technology made it possible for employees to access office systems from home and a new remote call center technology (brought online in early 2020) allowed employees to answer customer service calls from home.

Finally, the outreach department pivoted its events to online environments with appeal and exemption seminars on Zoom and Facebook Live. To ensure all homeowners received the exemptions they qualified for, outreach was conducted in the offices of city and county officials, which allowed for social distancing.

### Reassessing the south and west suburbs

As part of the triennial reassessment of Cook County, Assessor Kaegi and his team undertook the reassessment of the south and west suburbs. In reassessing residential and commercial properties, the Assessor’s Office uses market data, housing characteristics, and commercial income and expense information to set values of 1.9 million properties in Cook County. These assessments, along with exemptions, appeals, and the levies of municipal taxing bodies are used to determine the tax rates, issued by the Cook County Clerk, and the amount of each property’s tax bill, issued by the Cook County Treasurer.

The south/west triad of Cook County grew by 16% due to the 2020 reassessment. The assessed values of residential properties increased by 3.9% while commercial assessed values increased by 40%. Increases in assessed values for certain property types do not lead to the same increases in tax bills for those property types. A full report on the reassessment of the south and west suburbs will be released in 2021.





## Assessor

### Calculating COVID-19's effects on property values

As the 2020 reassessment process was underway in the spring, several factors pointed to significant effects on the value of residential and commercial properties. To ensure Cook County property owners did not have to depend solely on the appeal process for accurate market values during a once-in-a-century pandemic, the Assessor's Office looked at a variety of real-time financial data sources and determined reductions in assessed value were warranted to reflect current property values. Based on numerous market reports and data, COVID-19's market effects were felt significantly by residential properties, offices, retail properties, hotels, theaters, and some industrial properties. Residential COVID-19 reductions ranged from 8-12% while some commercial property types received reductions ranging from 5-25%.

Considerations for adjustment included class, location/geography, and other factors. A full accounting of this process and the adjustments made to specific property types is available [here](https://cookcountyassessor.com/covid19) at [cookcountyassessor.com/covid19](https://cookcountyassessor.com/covid19).

### Increasing transparency through community data

As part of his ongoing commitment to a more open and transparent Assessor's Office, Assessor Kaegi [continued to publish reports on each reassessed township](#). These reports are data-rich reviews of the methodology and processes used in residential and commercial reassessment. In addition, the Assessor's Office [released a report](#) from the International Association of Assessing Officers about the previous administration's 2018 commercial property reassessment. The report found significant underassessment of larger commercial properties in the City of Chicago and other parts of the county. The assessments also lacked high-quality processes and smaller commercial properties were often assessed at higher rates than larger properties. The full report can be found at [cookcountyassessor.com](https://cookcountyassessor.com).

2020 also marked the first time in more than a decade that the CCAO issued an annual report about its work. [The release of the report](#), covering the north suburban reassessment, marked the first comprehensive look at how the property tax base is created in each community.

### Implemented Senior Exemption auto-renewal

The Assessor's Office managed the auto-renewal of the Senior Exemption process after a bill in the Illinois legislature removed the burden of filing annual renewal forms from the county's tens of thousands of qualified senior citizens. Through this process, seniors received the exemption they were entitled to without having to re-certify they were still over 65.

## Planned initiatives for 2021

### Reassess the City of Chicago

After reassessing the north, south, and west suburbs, the Assessor's Office will reassess the City of Chicago, which accounts for 52% of the parcels in Cook County. In essence, the office will do more than half its reassessment work in a single year. This will complete the Kaegi administration's first triennial reassessment of residential and commercial properties as it creates fairer and more accurate assessments for all.

### Implement the first phase of iasWorld's integrated property tax system

This undertaking is part of a multi-year process to move the Cook County property tax system from an outdated mainframe system to a modern property tax assessment and billing system. The Assessor's Office will be the first to adopt this system, followed by other offices in the future.

## Assessor

### **Create multilingual versions of taxpayer documents and brochures**

In the beginning of 2021, the Assessor's Office will release its property tax exemption informational brochures in five non-English languages: Spanish, Polish, Chinese, Arabic, and Tagalong. Throughout 2021, the office will continue to close equity gaps as it rolls out its various forms, documents, and handouts in the languages used most often in Cook County.

### **Manage the auto-renewal of three property tax exemptions**

As part of its response to COVID-19, the Illinois legislature approved a single-year auto-renewal of three property tax exemptions: Senior Freeze, Persons with Disabilities, and Veterans with Disabilities. Through the management of the exemption auto-renewals, the Assessor's Office will broaden its accessibility and ensure all homeowners receive the property tax savings they are entitled to without having to submit additional documentation.

## Board of Review

The Board of Review (BOR) is charged by the Illinois State Legislature to review all assessment appeals and make corrections in order to promote equity. Residents come to the BOR when they feel their property assessment is incorrect due to the overvaluation of their property by the Assessor. Our goal is twofold: to provide an accurate and fair analysis of assessment appeals and to complete our work in a timely manner so that the distribution of taxes to schools, libraries, municipalities, and other essential services is not interrupted. In addition, the BOR defends the County’s assessment decisions at the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board, which saves the County, Forest Preserve, and all taxing bodies in Cook County millions of dollars annually.

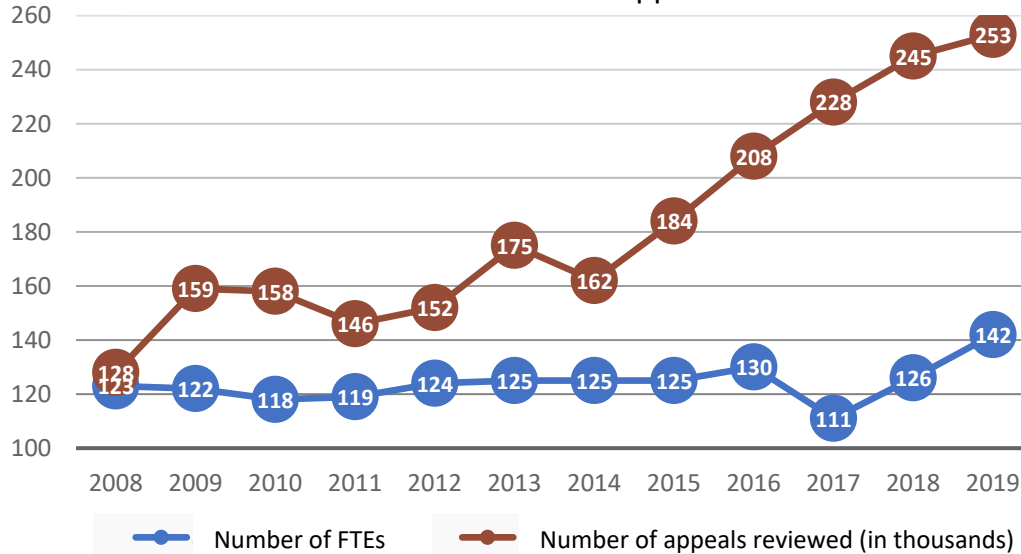
The Board of Review is made up of 3 elected Commissioners, Commissioner Larry Rogers, Jr., Commissioner Tammy Wendt, and Commissioner Michael Cabonargi, and a staff of 142 full-time employees. Each assessment appeal filed requires a majority ruling from the Commissioners to affect a change in valuation. Therefore, each Commissioner’s staff reviews and rules on every appeal before the Board.

### Board of Review Budget and Operation

Due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019 Assessment appeal year was unique in the history of the Board of Review (BOR) as it resulted in the shutdown of the County Building while we were in session. The response by our office and the implementation of the Digital Appeals Processing System (DAPS) five years ago allowed staff to work from home remotely without any interruptions to our operations or services. Taxpayers

were able to receive the assistance they required by phone or email in the safety of their own homes. The Board of Review was able to continue operating at full capacity, providing uninterrupted services due to a seamless transition. The Board of Review finished adjudicating its record 253,000 appeals a week before our originally anticipated end date of May 10. In 2019, for the fifth year in a row, the Board adjudicated a record number of appeals, (253,000), up 22% over the last North Suburban Triennial

2008-2019 FTEs vs. Appeal Volume



reassessment year. Despite the increased workload and the challenge posed by the shutdown of the county building, we are pleased to report that we concluded our work a week earlier than we did in 2018, allowing our schools, first responders, and villages to receive their funding in a timely manner.

### Use of Technology to Create Management Efficiencies

The BOR moved all hearings to virtual platforms, creating efficiencies that could resume once the Board returns to work. A large role in our ability to seamlessly transition from on-site to remote was the investment in DAPS.

The Board implemented new enhancements to the paid subscription service for high volume users. This will, over the years, increase the revenue created by the Board of Review. This funding is helping the BOR reach out to underserved neighborhoods and communities, providing all property owners with access to the appeal

## Board of Review

process. The Board of Review is committed to serving all communities in Cook County.

### **2021 Goals**

Due to the transition to remote working for the BOR caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many innovative and creative solutions and adjustments were made to the BOR Workflow and business process of the appeals session. As the BOR moves back to an on-site work environment, management will study the changes that created efficiencies in the workflow and create a business plan to incorporate those changes into the new Post-COVID-19 world. The focus will be on the remote hearing innovations and outreach to homeowners regarding the appeals process. Also, the Board of Review will continue to leverage technology to improve efficiencies focusing on integration with legacy systems.

## County Clerk

The Cook County Clerk serves as the chief election authority for the entire county, one of the largest election jurisdictions in the nation. Along with administering elections in suburban Cook County, the Clerk’s office maintains birth, marriage and death records, assists property owners in redeeming delinquent taxes, and records the activity of the Cook County Board of Commissioners.

We are continuously assessing the office for operating efficiencies, economies of scale, and internal control enhancements to properly employ our fiduciary duties, by serving the citizens of Cook County and managing taxpayer dollars. The Clerk’s Office is focused on Accuracy, Efficiency, Advocacy and Cyber Security.

### Highlights of 2020 – Vital Records Goals and Objectives for 2021

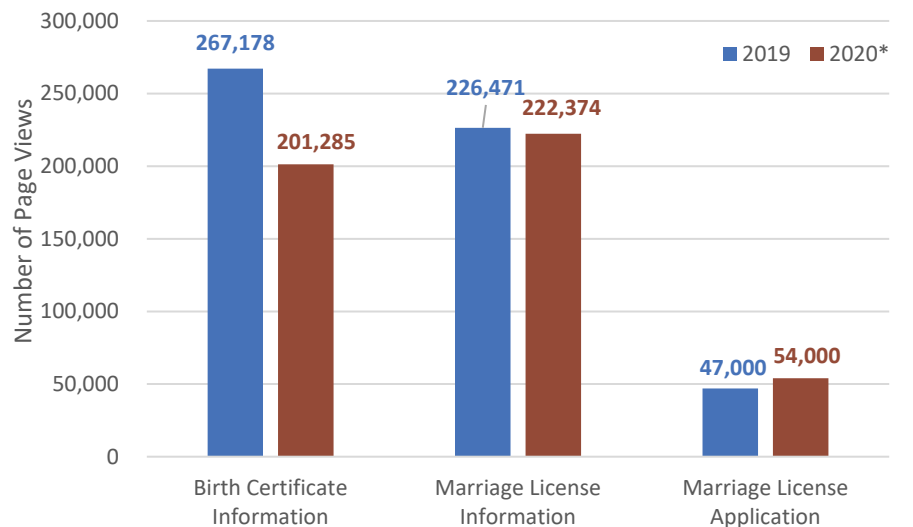
Our Vital Records Division is the official record keeper of the births, marriages, civil union and deaths that occur in Chicago and suburban Cook County. Due to COVID-19, we implemented a new process to serve customers remotely from March 2020 until our return to work in July. Upon our return to the office, Vital Records deployed a new cashiering system and document management system and provided training to all staff on the systems. Our vendors worked collaboratively and strategically with us to keep the project moving. In addition, in November of 2020, we physically relocated from the lower level of the Daly Center to 118 N. Clark Street, where we share space with our Recording Operations Division. This move creates easier access to customers, therefore improving the customer experience.

The need for Vital Records for Marriage Licenses and Death Certificates has been high throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, since some religions require burials to be conducted within a certain time period after death. As a result, we instituted numerous remote office locations and varying services to serve not only individuals, but funeral home businesses as well. One example is our Vital Records Birth & Death Registration Remote Team, which was established to register all new births and death records daily as they are submitted in the State’s Electronic Vital Records System (IVRS) by the local hospitals and funeral directors in Cook County.

Our Marriage Application/License Online Team established a new virtual process for couples to apply for a Cook County marriage license, allowing couples to submit a marriage application questionnaire online instead of visiting the Cook County Clerk’s Office in person. At our Courthouse-Remote processing locations for social distancing, we conducted Zoom Meetings with couples to process payments and authenticate respective credit card payments for transparency. Throughout fiscal year 2020, we completed a total of 1,440 Virtual Marriage/Civil Licenses via Zoom.

The weekend Funeral Directors/Burial & Cremation Permits Team registered death records after hours and on holidays, and worked with the Emergency Funeral Directors Hotline to process burial and cremation permits for ship-outs. Timely release of death certificates allowed

Vital Records Online Page Views



Timing for Online Visits (\*2019 = full year; 2020 = Q1 & Q2 only)

## County Clerk

families to have burials within their religious ceremony requirements.

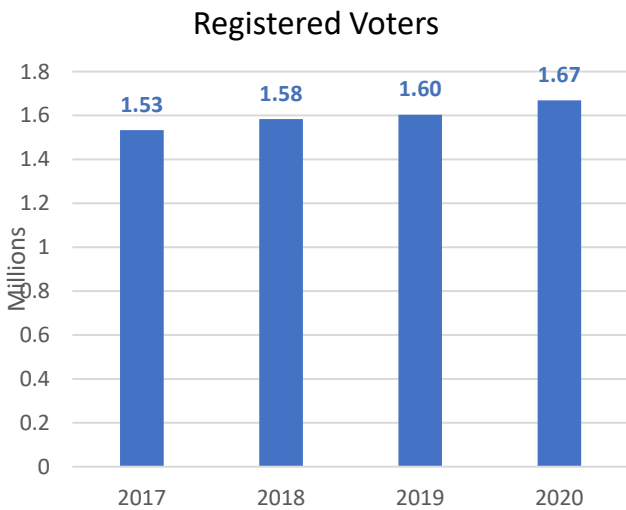
During 2020, 431,612 people visited our birth certificate web page. We processed 176,522 birth records in 2020. During 2020, 343,466 people and/or couples visited our marriage web page compared to 226,471 in 2019, which is a 52% increase between years. Over 78,000 couples visited the marriage application page to begin the process of applying for a marriage license. Our goal is to maximize usage of online services, therefore reducing any on-site wait times which greatly helps with social distancing and enhances the customer experience.

### Highlights of 2020 – Elections Goals and Objectives for 2021

The Election Division rolled out new voter equipment countywide for the 2020 Presidential Primary. All machines underwent extensive testing prior to voter usage in the election, and the new equipment provides three measures of security via paper ballot, digital image and results transmission. Our Election Division worked immensely to meet its goals and run a safe, secure and cost-efficient election.

Currently, Suburban Cook County has 1,669,040 registered voters, which continues to increase as we expand our voter community outreach. In 2018 and 2019 there were 1,583,679 and 1,603,193 voters respectively. Voter

registration has been made easier and more convenient; a county resident may now register online, in person, or download registration forms and register through the mail. Having these different methods in place has contributed to the increase in registered voters over the years.



The office worked to make the 2020 elections more inclusive by removing language barriers. We successfully secured the inclusion of Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, Urdu, and Gujarti on our ballots and election materials for the November elections. We focused on the new state legislature which required the office to mail an application for “vote by mail” to all voters who voted in the last three elections, in addition to new requests. We met the mail out deadline of August 1, 2020 resulting in 67% of the nearly 565,000 mail ballot applications being returned and 460,281 actual mail ballots,

requested either through paper applications or online, returned.

We worked diligently with County Procurement to make the Election needs a priority. We implemented a contract with the secure armor car carrier Davis Bancorp, Inc. which picked up from our drop boxes daily during the election cycle.

Our website – [cookcountyclerk.com](http://cookcountyclerk.com)—had nearly 12.5 million unique visitors and 18.4 million pageviews in 2020. This is up from 5.3 million unique visitors and 9.2 million pageviews in 2019, meaning that our prediction of a 10% increase in web traffic due to the election was far outpaced. Visitors were able to access voter and election information—including candidates, election day work opportunities, election results—and view and download voter registration statistics, turnout history, and more. We are continuously enhancing our website content to ensure visitors can be conscientious voters, in addition to implementing technology enhancements to improve the online experience.



## County Clerk

### Highlights of 2020 – Real Estate and Tax Services Goals and Objectives

The overall Real Estate and Tax Services redemption process is 80% face to face over the counter services, yet 100% paper based. Our teams developed a detailed Business Continuity plan that would ease the concern of delinquent taxpayers. We implemented several new processes and procedures, each highlighted on our website, and instituted a remote call center which averaged over 500 calls/week during the Executive Order to work from home.

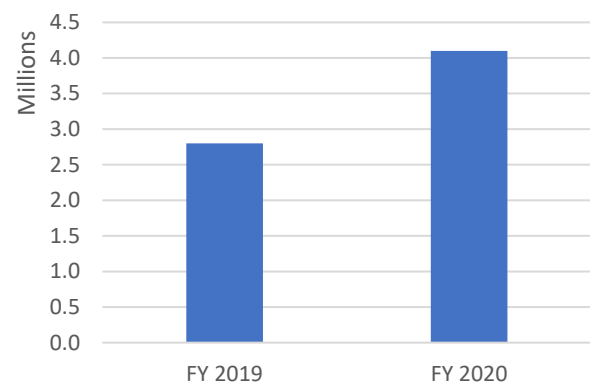
To further streamline the process, our technical team is working to develop a web-portal for customers to submit their requests and pay electronically for desired documents, and we have instituted an in-office drop box so our customers can be in and out within 15 minutes.

Our Tax Delinquent Search page has had nearly 4.1 million-page views in 2020, a 23% change over 2019. The page allows users to research property online.

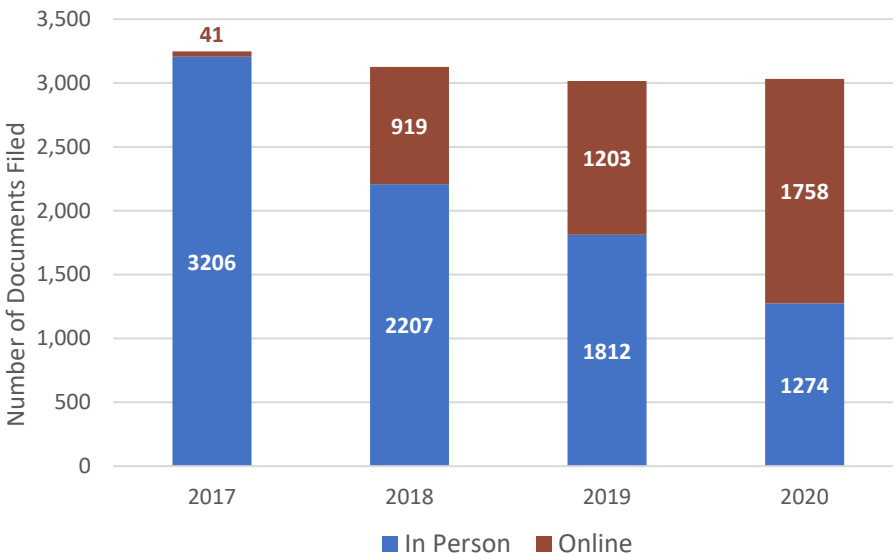
A key function in our Tax Services Division is the collection and processing of Tax Levies in order to calculate respective municipality tax allocations. The current technology to receive such levies online is invaluable. Our online District Portal continues to provide efficiencies for the taxing districts, saving them time, money and effort by eliminating the need to travel to our location to file their taxing documents and improving the customer experience. Districts receive immediate confirmation that documents were submitted in a timely manner.

In December 2019 (by far the busiest month for levy filings) 55.3% of levy documents were filed via the online Portal from more than 1,400 taxing agencies. During Fiscal Year 2020, a total 1,758 documents were filed via the online District Portal (58% of the total for levies, budgets, and financial reports, up from 44% filed electronically in FY2019). This creates an efficiency that saves the Clerk's staff time and effort from scanning and makes filing easily accessible without manually handling paperwork.

Cook County Clerk Delinquent Tax Search Page Views



Taxing District Document Filing Method by Fiscal Year



This creates an efficiency that saves the Clerk's staff time and effort from scanning and makes filing easily accessible without manually handling paperwork.

The District Portal has been heavily leveraged during the office closure due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic. The Tax Extension staff was able to work totally remotely and meet the 2020 tax cycle processing deadline. This proves that the investment in electronic methods to receive and deliver information outweighed the cost, especially in uncertain times.

## County Clerk

Usage of the Clerk's District Portal increased approximately 46% in Fiscal Year 2020 compared to Fiscal Year 2019. Enhancements and adaptations to the District Portal are currently being planned to enable more remote filing and better workflow for Clerk staff. Email has been utilized to continue to accept taxing district filings during office closures.

### Recorder of Deeds 2020 Achievements

In December of 2020, The County Clerk absorbed the duties and functions of the Cook County Recorder of Deeds Office. The Recorder's Office was responsible for accurately recording, storing and maintaining land records and other official documents in perpetuity for public and private use. These functions help facilitate home ownership and mortgage lending. The Cook County Recorder of Deeds Office also had a Property Fraud unit to assist individuals that are victims of fraudulent recordings and a Veterans' Service Office that assists military Veterans and their families with the recordation and retrieval of their military discharge papers. The Recorder of Deeds also promoted its programs to Cook County residents through robust community outreach efforts and an enhanced on-line presence. All of these functions were absorbed by the County Clerk in December of 2020.

Like every other office, COVID-19 created some tremendous challenges for the Recorder of Deeds Office in 2020. Due to the pandemic, the office was closed to the public beginning on March 20, 2020. This closure caused a significant backlog in documents waiting to be recorded and indexed at the Recorder of Deeds office. However, despite this challenge, the Recorder of Deeds used technology to allow for remote e-recording of documents. In the end, the office had recorded over 551,000 documents during FY2020. The Recorder of Deeds Office also continued to move forward with its digitization of its historical records, although this process was slowed by the pandemic.

### FY2021 Goals

The focus for the office for FY2021 continues to be no revenue slippage by ensuring accuracy of our transactions, creation of an efficient customer experience, improving voter accuracy, and maximizing cybersecurity monitoring.

During FY2021 the Clerk's Office will continue to be focused on the Assumption of Duties of the Recording Operations, our new Division, by unifying the website, completing training of new staff, and replacing and implementing required technology to update servers and other needed equipment.

In Real Estate and Tax Services we will enhance the current Online District Portal for receipt of taxing districts levy and bond information. The pandemic proved that a portal is also required for electronic transmission of data for our taxbuyers and taxpayers for tax redemption purposes. We will be developing and implementing a taxbuyer and taxpayer portal by Fall 2021. In addition, we will be deploying a new cashiering and accounting general ledger system reducing revenue slippage and enhanced reporting

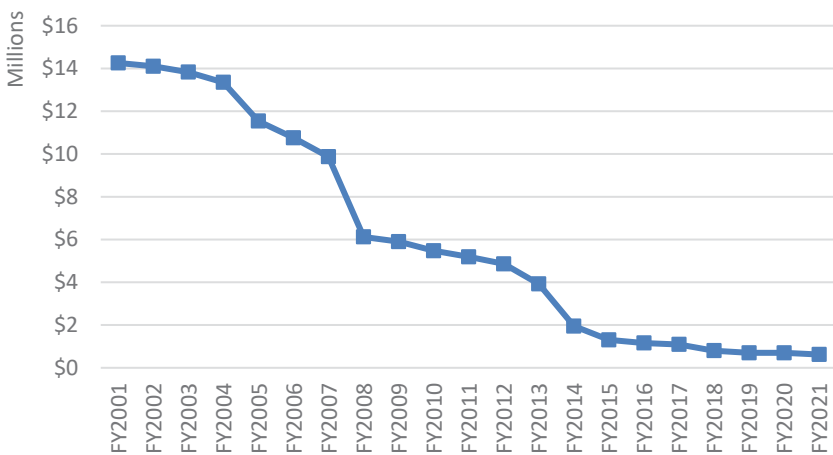
With only the Spring elections before us, our Elections Division will be revising all expiring contracts to ensure that we are providing exceptional election services to residents with reasonable pricing for services needed for a successful election. In addition, we will be implementing an automated tracking system for all election equipment for inventory purposes. Our election infrastructure measures are effective and we will continue to monitor legislation and make all necessary enhancement for the future.

Our Information Technology team will continue obtaining cybersecurity training to ensure that our systems are well protected and there are no breaches of data.

## Treasurer

The Cook County Treasurer’s Office (CCTO) oversees the second-largest property tax collection and distribution system in the United States. Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas is responsible for collecting, safeguarding, investing and distributing property tax funds. This includes printing and mailing bills based on the data provided by other county and state agencies on assessments, exemptions and tax rates; **collecting \$14 billion each year in taxes** from the owners of more than 1.8 million parcels of property; and distributing the tax funds to approximately **2,200 local government agencies** that have the jurisdiction to collect taxes. The agencies include school districts, villages, cities, townships, park and forest preserve systems, libraries, public health and safety agencies, election authorities, economic-development agencies and bonds to pay for public-works projects.

Treasurer's Office Budget Requests

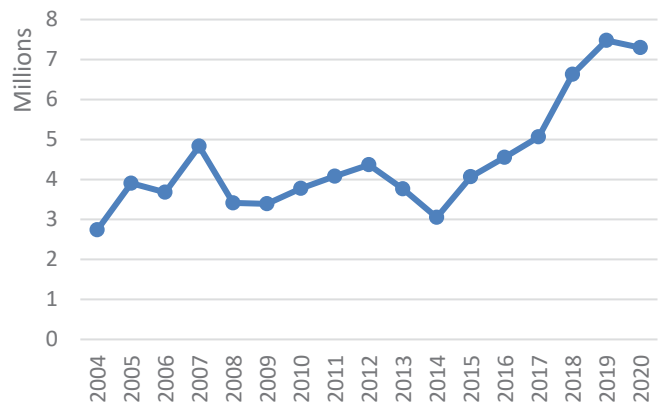


The Treasurer’s Office had 250 employees in FY1998 but, through automation efforts over the last 20 years, now operates with less than 70 filled positions. This reduction will save \$42.0 million in FY2021 alone and is one of the reasons the Treasurer’s Office is able to fund 94% of its budget with commercial user fees, only utilizing taxpayer dollars for 6% of spending. The decreasing amount of taxpayer dollars requested by the Treasurer’s Office annually since 2001 is shown at left. The goal of the office is to be entirely self-funded, and independent of any taxpayer-funded sources.

## 2020 Accomplishments

The CCTO has made community outreach a major focus over the past several years and will continue to do so in the future. In recent years, the office has focused on improving the webpage to provide taxpayers with an easy way to submit payments online, check payment status, download electronic tax bills, search for refunds, check property tax exemptions, contact the Treasurer’s Office, and more. In fiscal year 2020, the website was visited **nearly 7.3 million times**. The website is also mobile accessible, and since December of 2017, the website has almost 4.3 million visits from mobile users.

Website Visits

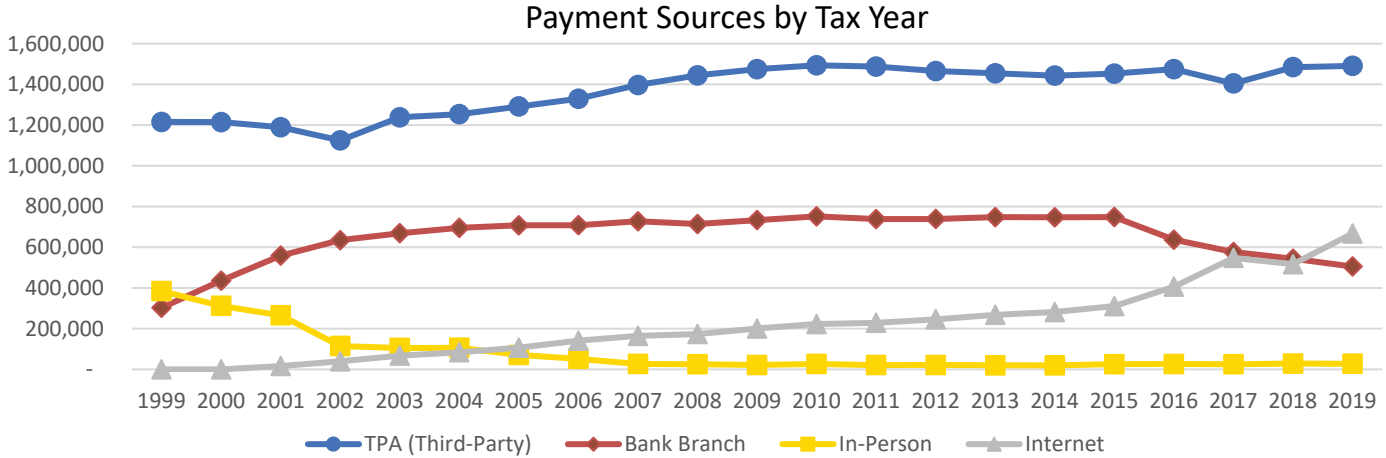


In October 2020, additional website enhancements were introduced to display 20 years of historical property tax data by PIN, increasing transparency and providing taxpayers a detailed view of how their property taxes have changed over time.

**Black Houses Matter:** This year the Cook County Treasurer’s Office also started “Black Houses Matter,” an intensive effort to prevent properties with delinquent taxes in predominantly African American areas from being sold at the Tax Sale.

## Treasurer

**Community Outreach:** In addition, the Treasurer’s Office Outreach Program continues to collaborate and expand on its efforts to work with elected officials and civic leaders in various communities, including aldermen, the Rainbow/ PUSH Coalition, groups representing Chinatown and the Hispanic community, and other ethnic groups and elected officials. Through both webpage and outreach efforts, the Treasurer’s Office is helping taxpayers to claim a possible \$75 million in duplicate and overpayment refunds and \$34 million in possible missing senior exemptions.



**Automatic Refunds:** The CCTO automatically issued refunds to bank or credit card accounts for nearly 116,565 taxpayers, totaling **\$65.1 million**, which eliminated the need for taxpayers to fill out a paper refund application. Through the Stop Taxpayer Over Payment System (STOPS), \$500 million in duplicate payments have been stopped and returned by the Treasurer’s Office since 2010

**Deferral of Penalties:** The Cook County Treasurer worked with the Cook County Board of Commissioners to pass an ordinance deferring Tax Year 2019 2nd Installment late fees from August 3rd to October 1st. The two-month delay of late fees gave tens of thousands of homeowners and business people breathing room during a time when a world-wide pandemic had devastating effects on the local economy.

**Release of “The Pappas Study”:** The Pappas Study is a painstaking examination of tax bills on Cook County’s 1.7 million parcels of property that shows the increase of total taxes over the past 20 years and allows taxpayers to see the increases in bills on their homes, businesses and land. It showed that while the cost of living has risen just 36 percent over 20 years, total taxes billed in all of Cook County increased 99 percent, from \$7.85 billion to \$15.58 billion.

**Increased Payment Channels:** In 1998, there were two ways to pay property taxes: mailing to the Treasurer’s Office, and in person at one of six offices belonging to the Treasurer. Today, there are nine methods: mailing to a lockbox, in person at Chase, community banks, or the Treasurer’s Office, through ACH or wire payments by Third Party Agents, and online, through credit card, or subsequent taxes by tax buyers. Over the last several years, even bank branch in-person payments have declined substantially, as taxpayers utilize online and third-party options to streamline their experience.

## Treasurer

### Looking Ahead

In the next few years, the Treasurer's Office will introduce additional enhancements and efficiencies for commercial payers who utilize the Treasurer's customized bulk payment channels. The initiatives are aimed at providing commercial payers, specifically mortgage companies, title companies, and banks, access to electronic data and statistics to better serve their individual taxpaying customers, and thereby reduce errors and duplicate payments.

In addition, the Treasurer's Office supports the President's initiative to replace the MIS Mainframe with an Integrated Property Tax System to be used by all of the property tax offices. This IPTS would eliminate the antiquated MIS Mainframe and its limited functionality, combine all data for each parcel into one unified system, and can be updated real-time instead of in nightly batch jobs.

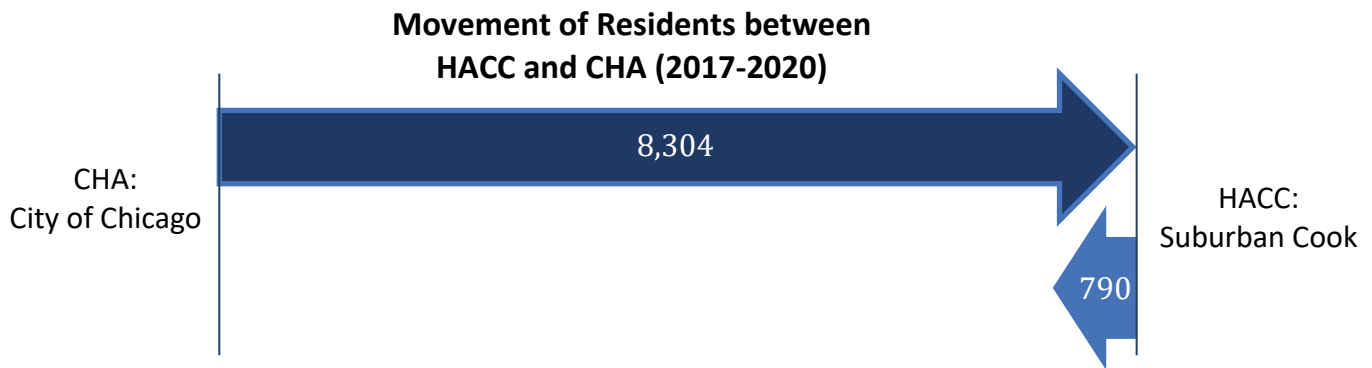


The CCTO also supports legislative efforts. In 2021, with the help of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, the Treasurer's Office aims to modify the Taxing District Debt Disclosure Ordinance (DDO) requiring 444 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts spread across 96 municipalities to submit detailed information regarding how TIF dollars have been spent historically and to whom. Although TIF Districts account for \$1.3 billion of in property tax revenue last year – or 8.4% of the entire \$15.6 billion billed, crucial information about how the money is spent is unavailable to taxpayers. This modification to DDO changes that and will bring increased transparency to taxpayer on how their property tax dollars are spent.

## Housing Authority of Cook County

For nearly 75 years, the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) has worked to fulfill its mission by providing affordable housing and economic opportunity to low-income residents across suburban Cook County, managing 19 affordable housing sites, providing rental assistance to thousands of families in all areas of Cook County, and launching supportive service programs for Cook County residents. In 2020, HACC continued to expand its portfolio of affordable housing options and connect residents with the resources they need to live their best lives, as well as ensuring that the over 15,000 low-income families who rely on HACC remain stably housed throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

HACC has experienced the challenges of 2020 atop a backdrop of rapidly changing socioeconomic conditions in the Cook County suburbs. The “suburbanization of poverty”, a national trend describing the displacement of low-income households from urban neighborhoods to suburban ones due in large part to high housing costs, is a major driver of HACC’s organizational planning strategy. Even as recently as 2000, only a third of Cook County’s low-income residents lived in the suburbs, but that total has since risen to 50%. The influx of low-income families into suburban areas has made providing much-needed social services to Cook County residents more difficult, because suburban areas have historically been designed for higher-income residents and thus lack the necessary physical and social infrastructure.



Through these seismic geographical shifts, as well as through the COVID-19 crisis, HACC remains committed to its mission: providing safe and decent housing to Cook County’s most vulnerable citizens. In 2020, HACC provided over \$152 million in housing assistance to more than 15,000 low-income households, over \$850,000 more in assistance than last year.

While HACC administers several types of assistance programs, the majority of residents participate in the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, previously known as Section 8. Housing Choice Voucher families receive a subsidy to support rent payments for a unit on the private housing market. This year, HACC assisted over 13,000 families using vouchers. HACC also opened the HCV waiting list in October 2020 for the first time in almost 20 years, opening up the opportunity to receive housing assistance to 10,000 new families. In addition to expanding the pool of potential HCV recipients, HACC has continued to expand the supply of affordable housing in the County, finalizing a deal for veterans housing in Chicago Heights and breaking ground on affordable projects in Maywood and Mount Prospect that will house families through project-based vouchers.

As part of its dedication to housing the County’s most vulnerable residents, HACC serves many special populations as part of the HCV program. In 2021, over 400 veterans and their families found stable housing through HACC’s Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program. Veterans in this program, who are at increased risk of homelessness and require supportive services to live independently, receive two forms of support: a voucher for use on the private market or in special properties at the VA Hospital; and supportive services such



## Housing Authority of Cook County

as case management and substance abuse counseling. An additional 700 individuals received housing and supportive services as part of the Colbert Consent Decree program, which provides the means for individuals living in nursing facilities to make the transition into living in a community setting. HACC operates similar programs for young people exiting the foster care system and individuals reentering their communities from incarceration.

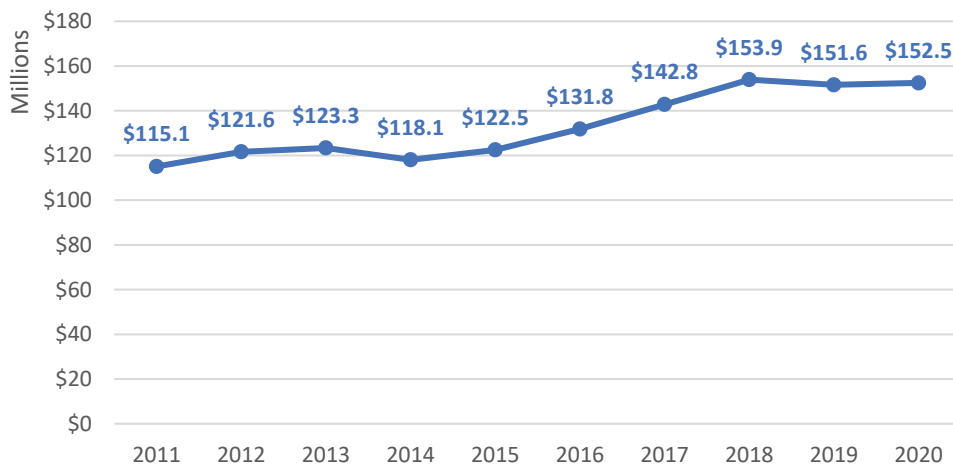
The economic damage and disruption to everyday life wrought by COVID-19 have required innovation on the part of HACC staff to address residents’ short-term and long-term needs. Throughout the course of the pandemic, HACC has delivered over 3,000 boxes of nutritious produce, grocery staples, and protective personal equipment (PPE) to seniors and families living in public housing. Using CARES Act funding, HACC’s human services team also reached out to families with school-age children, offering ten months of no-cost broadband Internet access to help children learning remotely during the 2020-21 school year. HACC also purchased and distributed 900 Chromebooks to facilitate remote learning.

While taking steps to address the COVID-19 crisis, HACC has maintained its established initiatives to increase economic opportunity. HACC’s Community Choice Program helped 58 families move to high-opportunity communities with high-performing schools and job opportunities, and the Family Self-Sufficiency program saw 12 families reach their financial and educational goals. HACC has also continued to engage its youth residents, maintaining participation in programs such as youth mentoring with Youth Guidance and counseling for community college students with One Million Degrees. HACC and Friends of the Forest Preserves were even able to continue summertime programming for high schoolers; the Forest Preserve Experience, which has served nearly 350 students over the past four years, provided 96 teens with a five-week paid opportunity to learn about conservation practices and job readiness in an at-home format.

Looking forward to 2021, HACC will continue to prioritize helping Cook County residents remain housed and healthy through the COVID-19 pandemic, with rent payment adjustments for residents who have lost their jobs and with vaccinations for senior housing slated for early 2021. Increasing the supply of affordable housing is another top priority, as construction on the Chicago Heights project will begin in the upcoming year, and HACC will continue to identify new opportunities for project development.

HACC remains committed to its vision of housing stability and support for all of Cook County. When affordable housing and supportive services come together, communities can flourish, and all of Cook County benefits.

Housing Assistance Payments



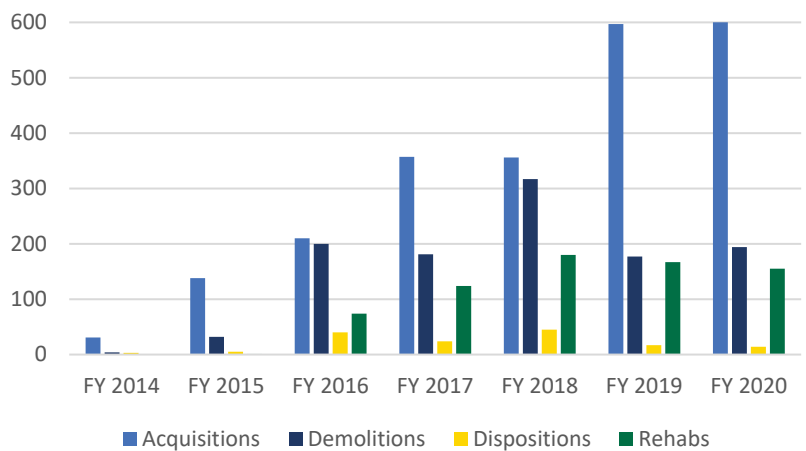
## Land Bank

The Cook County Land Bank Authority (CCLBA) works to reduce and return vacant land and abandoned buildings back into reliable and sustainable community assets. CCLBA was formed by ordinance of Cook County in 2013 to address the large inventory of vacant residential, industrial and commercial property within the area. The Land Bank’s mission is to acquire, hold, and transfer interest in real estate property throughout Cook County to promote redevelopment and reuse of vacant, abandoned, foreclosed or tax-delinquent properties; support targeted efforts to stabilize neighborhoods; and stimulate residential, commercial and industrial development.

### 2020 Achievements

CCLBA acquired 613 properties in fiscal year 2020, which represents 27% of all acquisitions by the Land Bank since its’ inception. In addition, 194 properties were sold to private buyers in 2020, which closely aligns with CCLBA’s goals for this year. In the same time period, 155 rehabs were successfully completed, representing 22% of all finished rehabs. CCLBA completed 14 demolitions this year, which were primarily from grant-funded programs such as the Abandoned Properties Program (APP), and flood buyout programs administered by Cook County Planning & Economic Development (CCPED).

Land Bank Annual Activity



The CCLBA has acquired 2,302 properties since inception 6 years ago, and of these 31% or 1,103 have been sold, 705 have been successfully rehabbed, and 672 are now reoccupied and back to a productive and sustainable use. In documenting the final end-use for these reoccupied properties, the Cook County Land Bank is seeing that 86% of all reoccupied properties have been sold/acquired for homeownership, while the remaining 14% are rental properties. This last statistic is tremendously exciting as CCLBA continues to surpass our 75% homeownership goal on an annual basis, even in communities where CCLBA was told homeownership was not a viable real estate strategy.

Over  
**\$14.5 Million**  
 returned to the Cook  
 County tax rolls

Finally, the community wealth number, which represents actual dollars that are brought into the communities where these properties are rehabbed, has continued to climb to \$93.9 million. Combining that with the \$14.5 million that have been redeemed through the Tax Certificate Program and the nearly \$35.8 million in delinquent taxes that have been reset, the Cook County Land Bank Authority has made over **\$144 million dollars in impact** throughout Cook County since its’ first acquired property in 2014.

### Fiscal Year 2021 Goals

For FY 2021, the Cook County Land Bank is looking to acquire 800 properties, sell 250 properties, and generate \$40 million dollars of community wealth. In addition, the CCLBA is looking to demolish 40 homes, and have 300 properties rehabbed & ready for occupancy.

## Forest Preserves

The Forest Preserves of Cook County is one of the oldest and largest urban conservation districts in the nation, managing, conserving and protecting nearly 70,000 acres of public land that provide five million residents with opportunities to enjoy nature and a home to thousands of plants and animals. Established more than 100 years ago, the Forest Preserves has a mission to safeguard the land in its care and make everyone feel welcome in the forest preserves. The Forest Preserves is guided by the Next Century Conservation Plan and its four priority areas: Nature, People, Economy and Leadership.

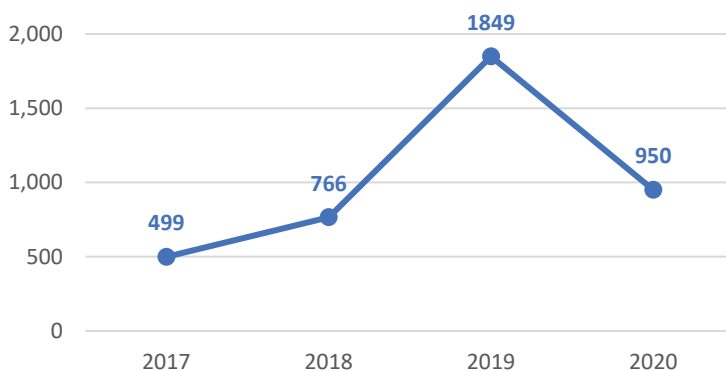
During 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Forest Preserves remained open as an important resource to the public, even as record demand, changing circumstances and limited resources created challenges. Public health guidelines required some facilities to be closed and events cancelled, but the Forest Preserves was able to adapt, offering virtual and outdoor programming and keeping most sites and more than 350 miles of trails open while protecting visitors, employees and nature. In 2020, the Forest Preserves received an unprecedented number of visitors, particularly during the spring, when state shelter-in-place orders increased demand for access to nature and outdoor recreation. The number of typical trail users doubled during this period, demonstrating the importance of this critical public resource.

While some goals set in 2020 were unattainable due to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Forest Preserves continued to advance the goals of its Next Century Conservation Plan.

### Nature:

The increase in visitors in 2020 put a strain on some natural areas, with more people hiking off trail and poaching. In addition, ecological restoration was impacted as field operations were shut down for a period which included the cancellation of the Spring 2020 prescribed burn season. In 2020 there were **16,099 acres** of land in

Number of New Acres Restored 2017-2020



the Forest Preserves' care under restoration or active management compared to **15,298 acres** in 2019, a 5% increase, with the prescribed burn program for Fall 2020 treating **5,752.95 acres**. Restoration work by Conservation Corps and volunteer stewards was severely curtailed during the pandemic, but both were still able to operate with adaptations and on a much smaller scale. The Conservation Corps also provided **73,257 intern service hours** in 2020, and there were **1,034 workdays by volunteer stewards** and **18,100 stewardship hours** towards restoring native habitats and maintaining trails.

The Forest Preserves is also working to address issues associated with climate change by implementing its Sustainability and Climate Resiliency Plan. Efforts to lower its carbon footprint in 2020 include ongoing conversion to a fuel-efficient fleet, implementing a dark skies initiative, and increasing public recycling.

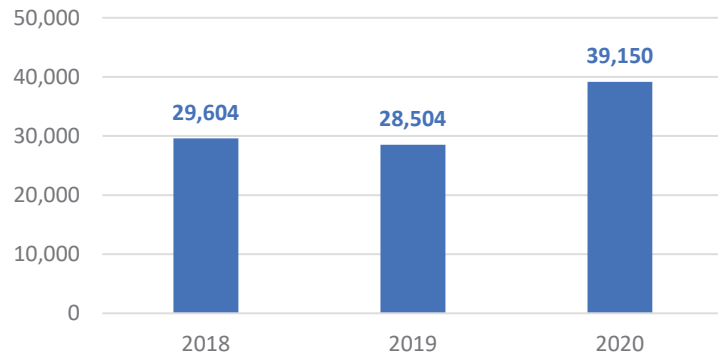
### People:

Even through the state-wide shutdowns, the Forest Preserves remained open and welcomed visitors. In 2020, there was a 26% decrease in the number of programs offered compared to 2019 but the **2,314 impromptu programs and scheduled public programs** that were available to the public outdoors and virtually in 2020 served a total of **53,988 participants**, a 60% increase over 2019. In addition, there was a total of **255,604 visitors** to the Forest Preserves' six nature centers' grounds, despite these locations being closed for a period during the

## Forest Preserves

initial stay-at-home state order. The Forest Preserves' five campgrounds were closed from March until early June, but have been able remain open since then, welcoming **27,886 campers**. While state directives required campgrounds to limit capacity to 25%-50%, decreasing the number of campers as compared to the prior year, when re-opened they were fully booked, bringing the total to more than **273,000 campers** since the campgrounds opened in 2014. The Forest Preserves actively seeks new partnership opportunities and continued to expand its outreach efforts to connect more people to nature. In 2020, even with restrictions, the Forest Preserves introduced **67 new community groups** to the Preserves and worked with **106 returning community groups**.

Number of Attendees at Scheduled Public Programs\*



\*Total does not include impromptu programs, only scheduled public programs

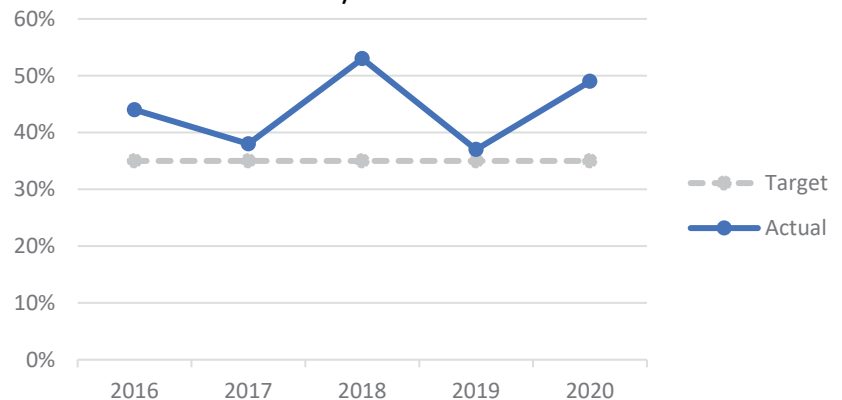
### Economics:

The Forest Preserves works to demonstrate the value of protected lands and promote the importance of this public resource. Key messaging in 2020 focused on keeping the public notified of changes in operations due to COVID-19 to maintain the health and safety of visitors and staff. There were marked increases in visits to the website, with **1,867,982 website hits**, a 45% increase over 2019, and **2,512,858 impressions** and **206,034 engagements on social media** (combined totals for Facebook and Twitter)—a 40% and 87% increase respectively, compared to 2019. The Forest Preserves also continues to provide ecosystem services with an estimated value of **\$469 million in annual regional benefit via flood control**, water recharge and purification and carbon storage.

### Leadership:

Under the leadership of President Toni Preckwinkle and General Superintendent Arnold Randall, the Forest Preserves has recommitted to active, effective stewardship of the preserves and has fundamentally rebuilt administration and operating systems. This commitment extends to promoting an infrastructure and culture that is based on equity and inclusion. Leadership has empowered a Racial, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee to address structural issues internally, and this summer the Conservation and Policy Council's position paper, "Moving Towards Racial Equity," was formally approved. The paper includes specific recommendations that apply a racial equity lens to future programs, policies and operations at the Forest Preserves. A further example of this work includes the establishment of a minority and women-owned business (M/WBE) ordinance and contract compliance program. In 2020 **48% of awarded contracts achieved M/WBE business participation** and **49% of contract payments were made to M/WBE businesses**, exceeding 2019 numbers by 17% and 32% respectively.

Percent of Contracts Awarded to M/WBE Businesses



## Forest Preserves

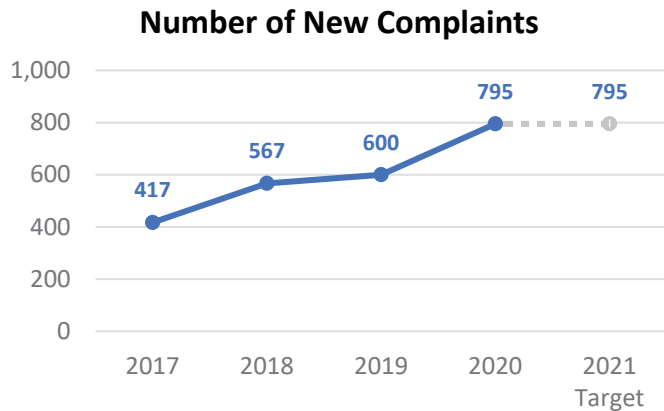
### 2021 Goals:

In 2021 the Forest Preserves will continue to adapt to the challenges presented by the continued COVID-19 pandemic. The Forest Preserves will continue to work to restore and increase public open spaces; provide opportunities for all people to explore nature; expand and deepen partnerships in communities and in the conservation field; create more efficient and transparent operations and processes for continued strong conservation leadership now and in the future; and promote the important benefits that the Forest Preserves provides, including ecosystem services, economic enrichment, climate mitigation, and the continued and improved health and well-being of residents.

## Office of the Independent Inspector General

The Office of the Independent Inspector General (OIIG) was created by ordinance in 2007 to detect and deter corruption, fraud, waste, mismanagement, unlawful political discrimination and misconduct in the operations of Cook County Government.

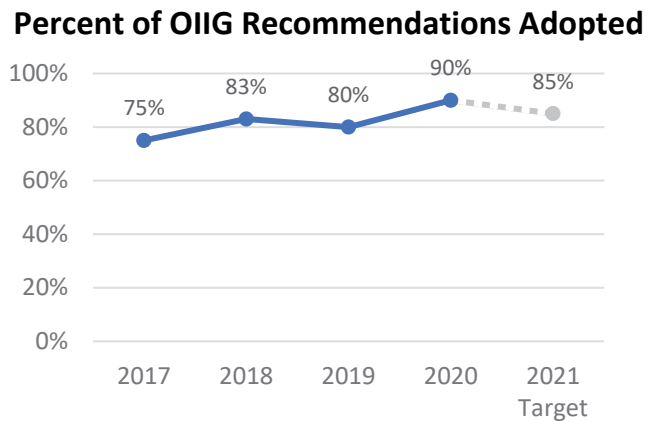
During 2020, the OIIG adapted quickly to address limitations imposed upon the standard operating practices of the office. A significant increase in the use of technology enabled the office to maintain continuity of operations. The OIIG implemented protocols to allow for witness interviews online, remote supervisor oversight of OIIG activities, electronic management of case files and case activity through the OIIG case management system.



Additionally, like many other offices, the OIIG has integrated Microsoft Teams into daily activities and has operated effectively during the quarantine period by conducting daily conferences between supervisors and investigators. Complaining witnesses have also been afforded the opportunity to submit a complaint via Teams rather than meeting with an investigator in-person or by submitting a written complaint online. These options will remain open after the pandemic, to allow for more equitable and open access to investigator services. The OIIG has retired its outdated desktop computers from service in place of laptops with

VPN service, to allow direct access to numerous information systems while working on or off-site. The OIIG received a total of 795 complaints from government employees, those who do business with Cook County and residents of the county, among others, which resulted in the issuance of a total of 52 summary investigative reports. In 2019, the OIIG received 700 complaints and released a total of 43 summary reports. The summary investigative reports are the culmination of the individual complaint investigations, which typically include witness and subject interviews and document and records reviews.

At the conclusion of the investigative process, findings are made which either do or do not sustain the complaint allegations. A summary investigative report is issued based on the impact of the complaint allegations on Cook County Government. Investigations that identify deficiencies in policy or procedures or systemic problems may include recommendations that address such shortcomings and promote efficiency and effectiveness in government. Once an investigation is completed and a summary investigative report is issued to the agency or department head, that agency or department has 45 days to provide a response to the Inspector General’s recommendations. If the agency or department chooses not to follow the OIIG’s recommendations, the agency or department head must provide a detailed explanation supporting their decision. The respective governmental agency’s failure to follow a recommendation will be noted in the OIIG’s Quarterly Report. Since 2017, approximately 80% of the Inspector General’s recommendations have been adopted, and adoption rates continue to rise.





## Office of the Independent Inspector General

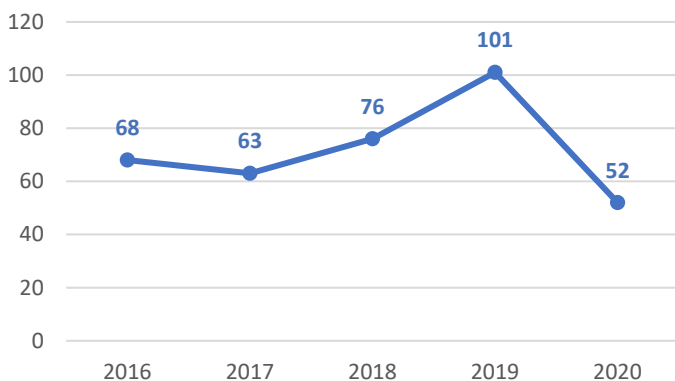
### Looking Forward

The numbers of complaints and case openings in 2020 continued to trend upward from past years, and it is anticipated that this prevailing tendency will continue in 2021. We anticipate hiring additional staff this year to fill open positions as permitted by our FY2021 budget which will help address the increase in cases. In addition to the Offices under the President and independently elected Cook County officials, the OIIG will continue its oversight responsibilities of the operations of Cook County Health (CCH), the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

## Public Administrator

The Office of the Public Administrator of Cook County (OPA) oversees the administration of estates for deceased Cook County residents who have no available family to administer their estate, did not leave a will, or named an executor incapable, unavailable, or disqualified to serve. The duties of the Public Administrator's Office include securing decedents' residences and the valuables within them, settling final bills or claims of the decedent, and finding and protecting any additional assets the decedent may have owned. These duties are set forth in the Probate Act at 755 ILCS 5/13-4. Once appointed to act as an administrator, the Public Administrator administers estates under the supervision of the Probate Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Estates Opened Per Year



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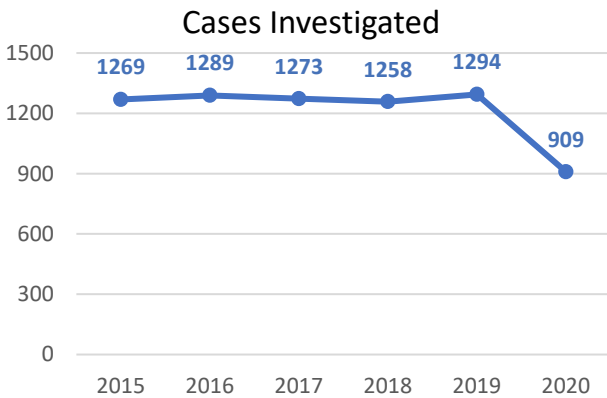
## Public Administrator

### OUTCOMES

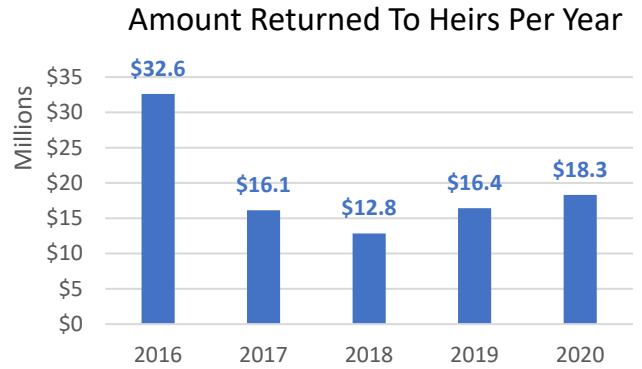
The OPA works closely with other Cook County and State agencies to ensure decedents’ estates are not subject to waste or loss. That effort begins with our investigators, who investigate on average 1,204 cases each year to safeguard decedents’ property and inquire as to a decedent’s next of kin. In 2020, the OPA opened new estates for 52 individuals and continued the probate of nearly 400 others, which involves determining a decedent’s heirship, filing with the Probate Court to act as an estate’s administrator, and collecting a decedent’s assets for liquidation and distribution to heirs where possible.

Like many Cook County departments, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the OPA’s operations in 2020.

The OPA has adapted its procedures to continue to provide timely, efficient service to Cook County while



maintaining safe conditions for our staff and the public. The OPA has implemented a hybrid remote/in-office schedule to maintain social distance for staff. We have fully adopted the Circuit Court and Clerk’s virtual systems so that our estates continue to progress through probate. Partnering with the County, the OPA has ensured that our investigators are supplied with PPE to conduct proper investigations in the field. Despite these challenges, the OPA exceeded its 2020 budget target and returned over \$18 million to heirs and beneficiaries via the OPA’s estate administration. The OPA has returned nearly \$96 million to heirs over from 2016 to 2019.



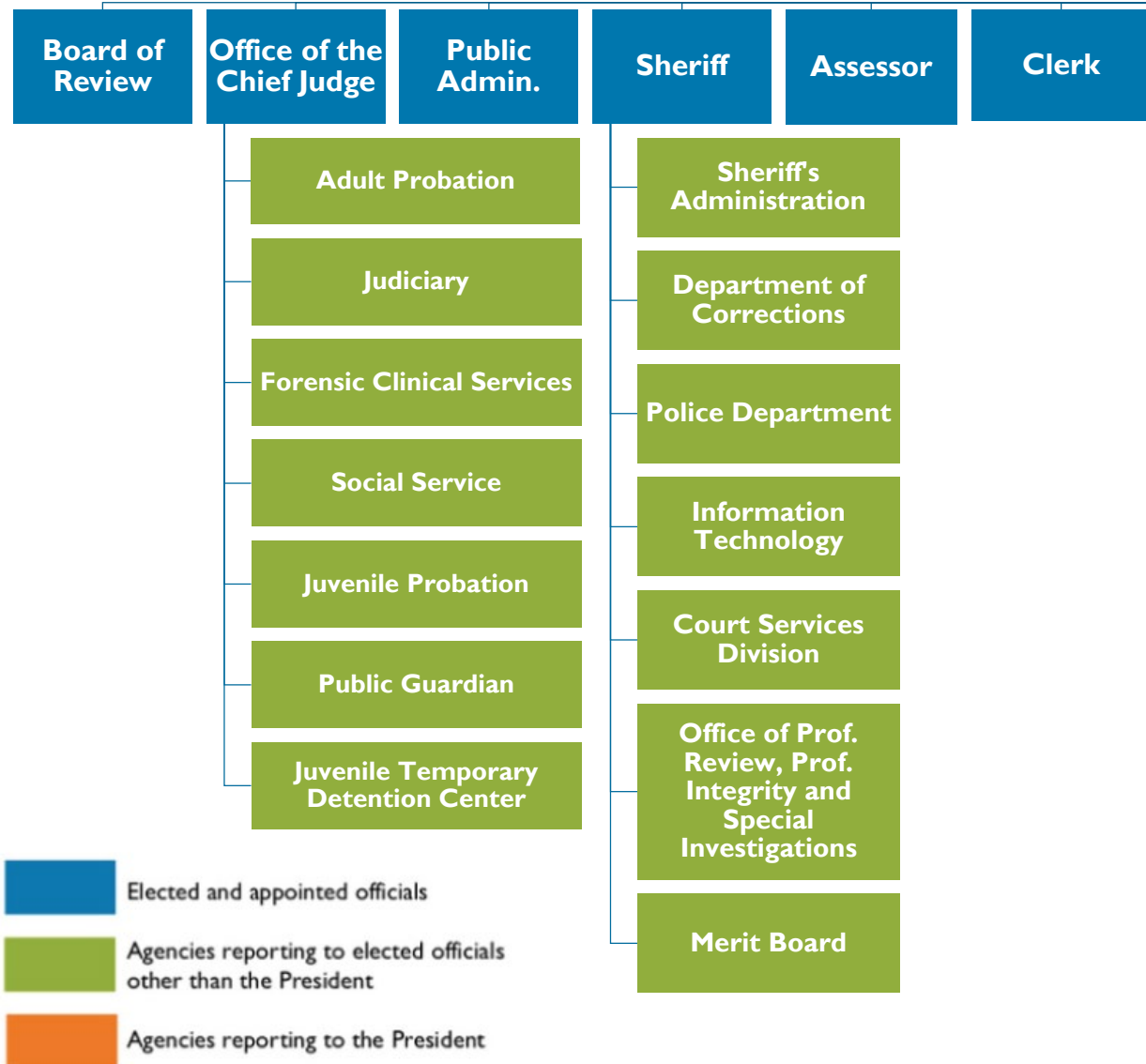
### 2021 INITIATIVES AND GOALS

The Office is consistently revising policies to be as efficient and environmentally friendly as possible. The OPA has introduced updated case management software that will reduce printing and paper waste as well as postage costs and the environmental impact associated.

The OPA will continue its initiative to determine whether unclaimed property remains with the State Treasurer for estates administered by the Office in the previous 20-year period. At the close of 2020, the Office had recovered \$2,405,722 in unclaimed property for OPA Estates. In 2021, the Office has identified an additional \$3,710,089, and is in the process of probating those assets in order to return them to heirs and beneficiaries where possible.

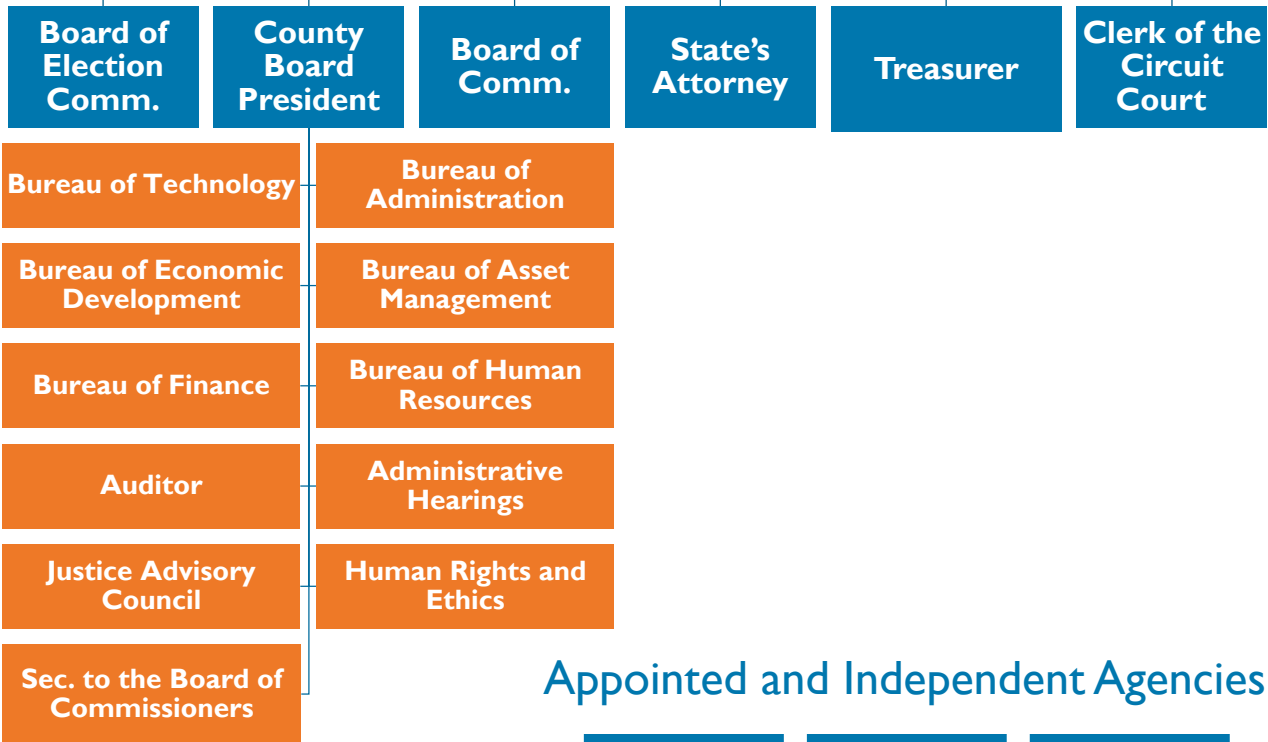
# 2021 Cook County

Residents of



# Organizational Chart

## of Cook County



## Appointed and Independent Agencies



