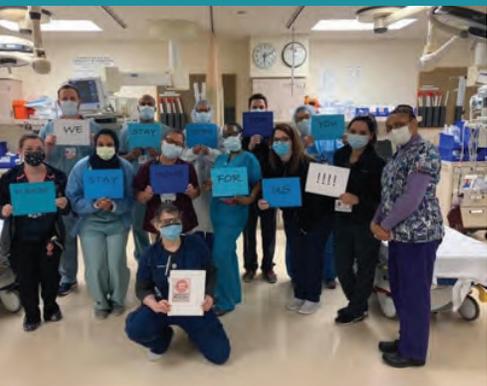


# Cook County COVID-19 Response Plan

*from*  
**Rapid Response  
to  
Equitable Recovery**



**Toni Preckwinkle**  
Cook County Board President

Published May 14, 2020

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# Message from the President

May 14, 2020

To the residents of Cook County:

On March 10, 2020, I declared a disaster in Cook County related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Since then, my administration has worked tirelessly to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our 5.2 million residents.

Today, we are releasing the **Cook County COVID-19 Response Plan: From Rapid Response to Equitable Recovery**. It documents our initial response to the crisis and outlines our priorities for the next several months.

In the critical first weeks and months of COVID-19, Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health have done an outstanding job caring for the sick and protecting the public's health in our communities, respectively. I am especially proud of our commitment to treat all patients, regardless of their ability to pay or immigration status.

The Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security (EMRS) responded to the pandemic by activating an Emergency Operations Center. EMRS provides critical support to healthcare workers, first responders and our communities. They have quickly secured and delivered over two million units of personal protective equipment throughout Cook County and are providing support and real-time information to 135 municipalities across Cook County.

We also supported our various criminal justice agencies in executing a plan to release people from the Cook County Jail who had been detained for non-violent offenses and were awaiting their day in court. In accordance with public health guidance, this work aims to safely reduce the concentration of people within the Jail in order to reduce the spread of the virus among the staff and the remaining detainees.

As we shift from response to recovery, we must recommit ourselves to ensuring residents' race and zip codes do not determine their ability to meaningfully recover from the physical and financial burdens of COVID-19. This pandemic has laid bare our society's inequities, and highlighted the life and death impacts these inequities can have.

We know this pandemic is not over. We will update this Plan as circumstances change, and new information becomes available. The Plan identifies our current priorities, but we are prepared to adapt to emerging challenges.

I am grateful to every nurse, bus driver and grocery store worker who has continued to show up to their essential jobs. I am grateful to every teacher who has adapted their skills to a virtual classroom while making sure their students feel loved and supported. I am grateful to every resident who has celebrated holidays via video chat rather than over dinner. We know the sacrifices our residents have made to keep themselves and their neighbors safe. We will honor this sacrifice by continuing to do all we can to support our residents, businesses and civic institutions.

Sincerely,



Toni Preckwinkle  
Cook County Board President

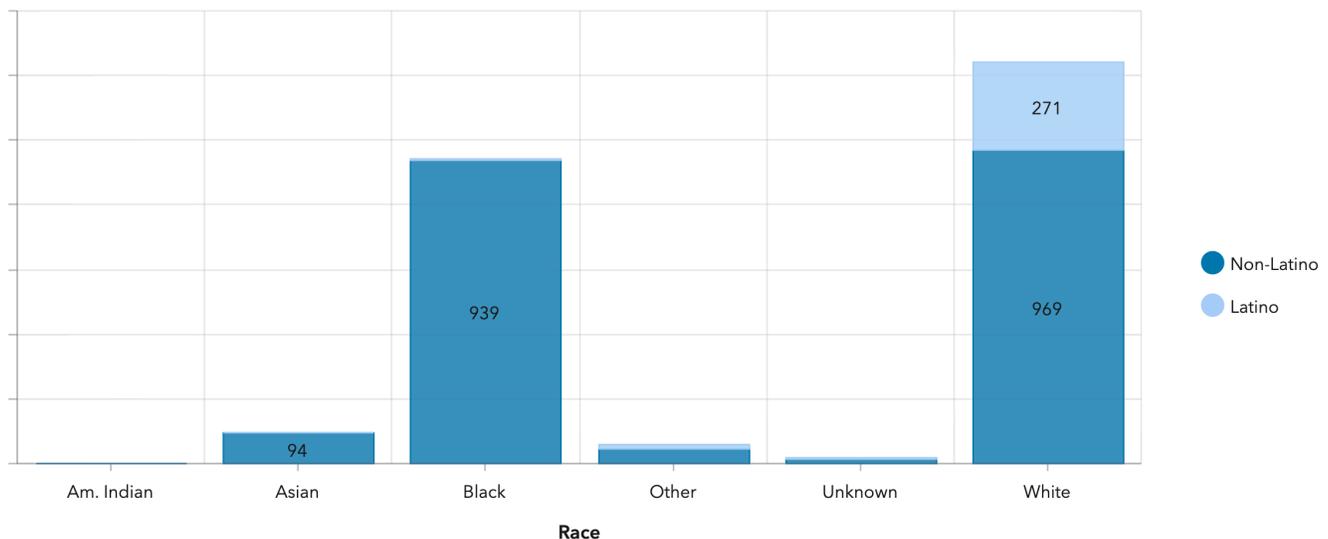
# Introduction: Confronting COVID-19

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and the [Offices Under the President](#) (OUP)—the six bureaus and 34 departments that report directly to the President—began preparing for and responding to the global outbreak of a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in early 2020, well before President Preckwinkle officially [declared a disaster](#) for Cook County on March 10, 2020. As the virus has upended residents’ lives and disrupted our economy, it has become Cook County government’s central focus. In addition to continuing to provide the public services that our residents routinely rely upon, OUP is providing added support to residents, communities and businesses struggling with the short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19.

As of May 11, 2020, Cook County had experienced 53,381 confirmed COVID-19 positive cases and 2,361 COVID-19-related deaths.<sup>1</sup> Across the country, a disproportionate number of people who have been diagnosed with or died from the disease have been people of color, highlighting the ways in which existing inequalities have contributed to the disease’s spread and toll.

In Cook County, our Black and Latinx residents have been disproportionately impacted. We must structure our response to acknowledge the pain our Black and Latinx communities are feeling and the conditions that contributed to this disproportionate spread.

## COVID-19-related Deaths in Cook County by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Cook County Medical Examiner’s Office Data as of May 10, 2020.<sup>2</sup>

Given the initial testing shortage throughout the United States, continued barriers to getting tested and the high rate of people who may not experience symptoms, these numbers likely undercount the true number of Cook County residents who have been infected with or died from COVID-19.

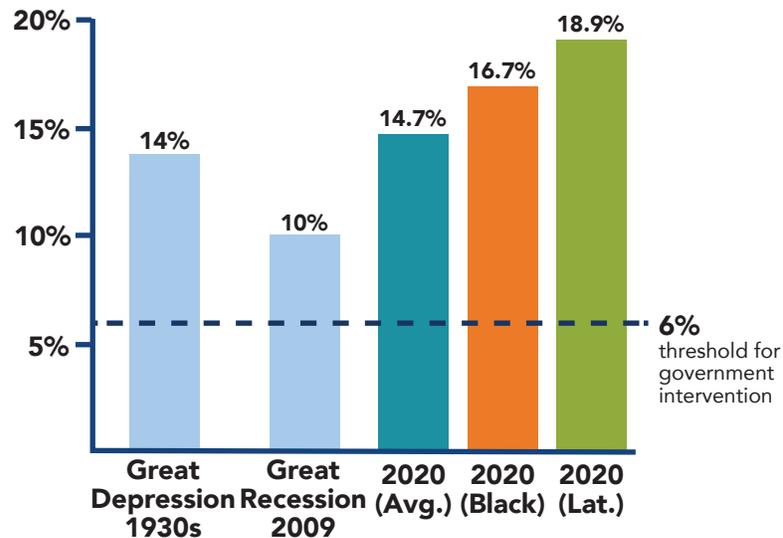
# Introduction: Confronting COVID-19

In addition to the public health crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19, Cook County now faces an economic crisis. Nationwide, over 33 million people have filed unemployment claims in response to COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> On May 8, the U.S. Department of Labor announced that the overall unemployment rate is 14.7 percent, the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression. The economic crisis has also disproportionately impacted Black and Latinx residents, with unemployment reaching 16.7 percent among Black workers and 18.9 percent among Latinx workers.<sup>4</sup> As the pandemic wears on, OUP is committed to equitably addressing the economic impact on our residents and communities.

To ensure a comprehensive and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, President Preckwinkle's administration has created this **Cook County COVID-19 Response Plan: From Rapid Response to Equitable Recovery**. This Plan combines our ongoing public health and healthcare priorities with parallel agendas that respond to the longer-term economic and social impacts of the virus. It outlines the administration's current actions and proposed strategies for protecting residents, serving vulnerable populations and supporting businesses and municipalities through the duration of the pandemic and recovery.

Given the widespread impacts of COVID-19, OUP has adopted a two-phased approach for addressing this crisis:

## Comparison in Unemployment Rates



Source: *New York Times* analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data.<sup>4</sup>

The **Rapid Response** phase details actions OUP took beginning in January 2020 to the present to prepare for the pandemic and respond to the most immediate challenges it presented.

Efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic will continue through its duration, even as we look to support the recovery of our residents, businesses and municipalities.

The **Equitable Recovery** phase details actions OUP will take beginning in May 2020 to build on our initial response and address the significant economic impacts residents, municipalities, businesses and civic institutions face. Due to the uncertain nature of the pandemic and its economic impacts, we expect the recovery phase to last at least 18 to 24 months.

# Introduction: Confronting COVID-19

## Rapid Response

January 2020 > April 2020

Cook County prepared for the pandemic and responded to the most immediate challenges it presented.

Efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic will continue through its duration, even as we look to support the recovery of our residents, businesses and municipalities.

## Equitable Recovery

May 2020 > May 2022

Cook County will build on our initial response and address the significant economic impacts residents, municipalities, businesses and civic institutions face.

In order to be truly equitable, the recovery must work for all residents, regardless of race, age, gender, immigration status or economic circumstances. This recovery period is a time for us to closely examine and intentionally address the systemic inequities that have drastically worsened the impacts of this crisis on particular populations, specifically Black and Latinx communities. To this end, our equitable recovery phase will leverage a racial equity lens to shape our work.

Our COVID-19 rapid response and equitable recovery work is guided by the mission, vision and values established in our [Cook County Policy Roadmap: Five-Year Strategic Plan for Offices Under the President](#).

### Mission

To serve as a good steward of public resources by building equitable and sustainable communities for all residents.

### Vision

To be a leader in building vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities where people want to live, learn, work and play.

## Values

### Equity

Promoting equity, specifically racial equity, has been a central principle of OUP under the leadership of President Preckwinkle. We have seen a disproportionate rate of coronavirus cases and deaths among our Black and Latinx residents. The severe impact of the disease on these communities is directly related to the dangerous combination of chronic health conditions caused by a historic lack of access to health care and services, population density driven by systemic segregation and economic inequality. Cook County has an essential duty to use its resources and leadership to address these disparities and provide all residents equitable services, regardless of race, ethnicity, immigration status or zip code.

### Engagement

Consistently and meaningfully engaging with residents, community groups and partners ensures OUP understands the challenges and concerns central to residents' daily lives. Our rapid response and equitable recovery

# Introduction: Confronting COVID-19

phases have and will continue to include broad, inclusive and accessible opportunities for resident engagement, through virtual town halls, online feedback portals and business concierge services.

## Excellence

Residents expect Cook County and its elected officials to be good stewards of County resources. We aim to be an excellent provider of the vital services residents rely on by being transparent, accountable and effective. This Plan and its future iterations will be executed with the highest possible standards of performance and accountability for results.

In addition to our mission, vision and values, given the exceptional needs presented by COVID-19 OUP has also adopted a set of principles to prioritize our work. OUP is committed to moving forward initiatives that:

- ▶ Provide support in areas where Cook County has the authority and resources to have the greatest impact.
- ▶ Prioritize support for Cook County's most vulnerable populations by using a racial equity lens.
- ▶ Maintain continuity of essential public services for residents and businesses throughout Cook County.
- ▶ Coordinate efforts with other units of government and strategically leverage shared resources.
- ▶ Focus on suburban Cook County, which has substantial needs but limited resources.

## Guiding Principles



# Rapid Response

January 2020 ▶ April 2020

# Rapid Response

At the direction of President Preckwinkle and in partnership with the Cook County Board of Commissioners, other County elected officials and their teams and Cook County agencies, the [Offices Under the President \(OUP\)](#)—the six bureaus and 34 departments that report directly to President Preckwinkle—have worked tirelessly since January 2020 to respond to the immediate needs created by the spread of COVID-19. [Cook County Health](#) rapidly adapted health care operations, the [Cook County Department of Public Health](#) expedited public health services, Cook County criminal justice agencies accelerated decarceration efforts and OUP supported these efforts, maintained essential government services and much more. We are proud of all that our employees have done, and recognize there is much more to do as we begin the recovery phase of our efforts.

During the rapid response phase of our work, Cook County government:

- ▶ **Initiated outbreak investigations through the Cook County Department of Public Health in suburban Cook County to identify COVID-19 cases and trace their close contacts to initially contain the spread of the disease.<sup>i</sup>**
- ▶ **Provided infection control guidance, including use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and patient transfer procedures, to hospitals, long-term care**

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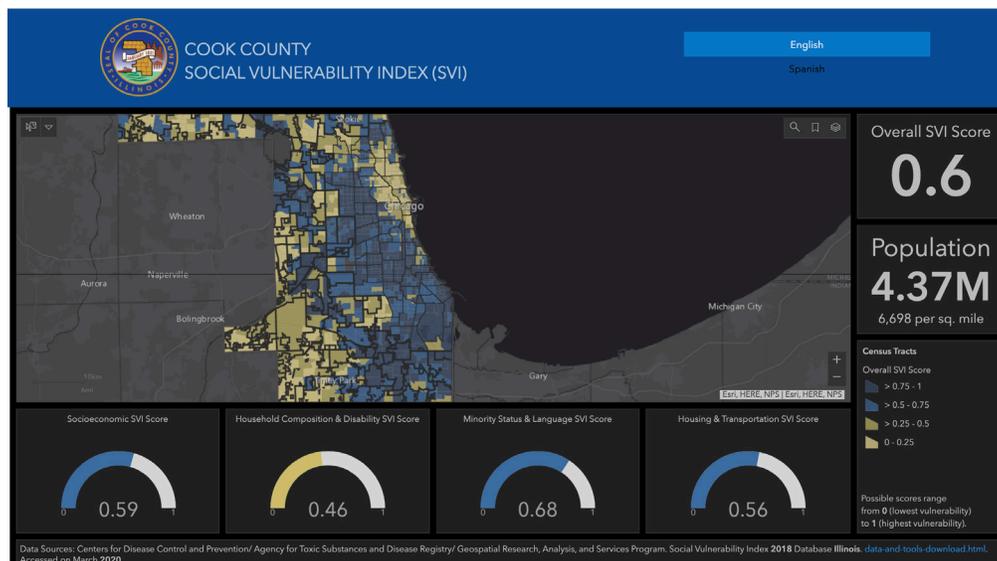
<sup>i</sup>The Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) serves most of suburban Cook County, excluding Evanston, Oak Park, Skokie and Stickney Township, which have their own state-certified health departments. Given the large volume of cases, CCDPH currently prioritizes its efforts on controlling infection in long-term care and other congregate facilities. CCDPH continues to conduct case investigations of hospitalized COVID-19 cases, COVID-19 deaths and cases in people over 65 years old.

**facilities and other congregate settings in suburban Cook County through the Cook County Department of Public Health.**

- ▶ **Began treating COVID-19 suspected and positive cases at Cook County Health, regardless of an individual’s ability to pay or insurance status:** 53 percent of the COVID-19 positive patients Cook County Health cared for from March 1 through April 25 were uninsured or self-pay patients.
- ▶ **Deployed additional staffing to Cermak Health Services, the Cook County Health facility that provides health services to people detained at the Cook County Jail, to support confirmed and suspected COVID-19 patients.**
- ▶ **Began testing patients and staff for COVID-19 through Cook County Health:** From March 1 through April 25, Cook County Health tested 3,248 patients, with 1,078 of these tests taking place at Cermak. Cook County Health also began employee testing at the Stroger and Provident Hospital campuses in late March. All [COVID-19 testing sites](#) are free for every resident in Illinois, regardless of insurance or immigration status. Additionally, the federal government has announced that testing, prevention and treatment for COVID-19 will not be used against immigrants in a public charge test.
- ▶ **Transitioned primary care patients to telehealth in order to continue serving existing patients in the safest manner possible:** From March 1 through April 25, Cook County Health’s community health centers conducted 7,323 telephone visits in lieu of in-person visits.

# Rapid Response

- ▶ Promoted and increased use of Cook County Health’s mail-order pharmacy and conducted wellness checks and home visits to supply medication, food, clothing and other necessary items and assistance to patients.
- ▶ Continued to provide case management services through tele-visits for clients of the Cook County Department of Public Health’s home visiting program for high-risk infants, lead-exposed children and people with diagnosed sexually transmitted diseases.
- ▶ Led incident coordination for Cook County by managing Emergency Operations Center activation to include over 200 personnel from 40 bureaus, departments, partner agencies at the local, state and federal level and non-governmental entities.
- ▶ Increased transparency on COVID-19 infections and deaths and made data publicly available: This data is disaggregated by ethnicity, race, age, gender and municipality to show how the virus is spreading among different populations and empower Cook County to address disparate health impacts among Black and Latinx residents.
  - ▶ The Cook County Department of Public Health made data on suburban Cook County COVID-19 infections and deaths publicly available [on their website](#).
  - ▶ The Medical Examiner’s Office released a multi-lingual [interactive dashboard and map](#) on COVID-19 deaths in Cook County.
  - ▶ The Bureau of Technology’s GIS team developed the multi-lingual [Cook County Social Vulnerability Index](#) tool to identify and map communities’ vulnerability to human suffering and financial loss in the event of a disaster based on factors identified by the CDC.



Screenshot of the Cook County Social Vulnerability Index Dashboard, accessible in English and Spanish at [maps.cookcountyil.gov/svi](https://maps.cookcountyil.gov/svi)

# Rapid Response

- ▶ **Provided timely information on COVID-19 to partners and the public:**
  - ▶ The Cook County Department of Public Health established a multi-lingual COVID-19 Hotline at (708) 633-3319 and an email address at [ccdph.covid19@cookcountyhhs.org](mailto:ccdph.covid19@cookcountyhhs.org) to field questions from the public about COVID-19.
  - ▶ The Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security set up ALERTCOOK, a text alert system, to share updates on Cook County’s work and respond to public inquiries: As of May 11, 2020, over 36,000 users have enrolled.
  - ▶ The Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security activated a Joint Information Center to coordinate the accurate and timely release of information to media and residents.
- ▶ **Secured and distributed personal protective equipment (PPE) to municipalities and first responders, health and medical entities, the Cook County Jail and other congregate settings like long-term care facilities throughout suburban Cook County:** Led by the Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security, in partnership with the Cook County Department of Public Health, as of May 11, 2020 Cook County has distributed approximately 2 million pieces of PPE including:
- ▶ **Maintained ongoing and consistent communication with Cook County municipalities to provide regular guidance and address their needs:**
  - ▶ The Office of the President convened weekly briefings for suburban mayors and managers to update them on Cook County’s response and provide a forum to discuss strategies and needs.
  - ▶ The Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security conducted regular municipal lifeline impact surveys and fulfilled or completed 1,423 resource requests from municipalities, including requests for personal protective equipment (PPE) and additional staff support.
  - ▶ The Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security provided technical assistance to support municipalities in maximizing Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursement.
  - ▶ The Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security engaged in daily coordination activities with City of Chicago and State of Illinois Emergency Operations Centers.
  - ▶ The Office of the President convened regular briefings for Illinois state legislators to ensure coordination between levels of government.

**468,880**



N95 masks

**432,225**



Surgical masks

**1,019,800**



Plastic gloves

**21,119**



Face shields

# Rapid Response

- ▶ **Contacted 120 manufacturers to urge firms to respond to the need for critical supplies and compiled explicit needs on [Cook County Critical Supplier Resource Page](#).**
- ▶ **Identified ten local small business enterprises specializing in medical devices and made hundreds of thousands of gowns, masks, face shields, gloves and hand sanitizer available.**
- ▶ **Coordinated access to over 700 rooms for alternate housing through the Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security and the Cook County Department of Public Health:**  
Target populations include medically stable COVID-19 positive patients who are discharged from the hospital and need somewhere to isolate and recover and healthcare professionals and first responders who need respite housing to isolate and limit potential spread.
- ▶ **Increased funding to homeless shelters by redeploying \$154,000 to increase funding to six suburban emergency shelter agencies:** This funding supported shelters as they face a higher demand for services given the stay-at-home order and move individuals to more costly hotel and apartment settings to prevent virus transmission.
- ▶ **Opened surge center to expand capacity for the Medical Examiner's Office, with space for 2,000 decedents:** The surge center is designed to ease overcrowding at hospital morgues by providing space to safely and respectfully store decedents, giving loved ones additional time to make final arrangements. The Medical Examiner's Office partnered with the Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security and other agencies to facilitate timely transport to the surge center.
- ▶ **Advocated for the safe release of individuals from the Cook County Jail to help lower the Jail population to enable social distancing and improve conditions to protect the health of staff and detainees:** Through coordination with all criminal justice stakeholders, Cook County Jail has seen a 27 percent reduction in population since February 2020.
- ▶ **Secured resources, including transitional housing, to support individuals in reentry:** To aid this effort, the Justice Advisory Council is coordinating two types of housing for people exiting the Cook County Jail or returning to Cook County from the Illinois Department of Corrections who do not have a residence:

South Suburban PADS of Chicago Heights received emergency funding from Cook County:

"We acted with urgency to protect the health and wellbeing of our shelter guests, volunteers and staff. We have closed our church-based shelters and moved 70 people into hotels where they can better self-isolate and protect themselves. We are thankful for the support of Cook County for all that they are doing on behalf of vulnerable residents."

Doug Kenshol, *Executive Director*  
South Suburban Pads

# Rapid Response

(1) quarantine and isolation housing for people who are COVID-19 positive and (2) congregate housing for people who are in need of shelter and are not COVID-19 positive.

- ▶ **Provided \$500 in direct cash assistance to 50 people being released from the Cook County Jail:** With funding provided by the Chicago Community Trust/United Way COVID-19 FUND, the Justice Advisory Council provided emergency funds to help people being released afford basic needs during the stay-at-home order.
- ▶ **Installed additional technology to increase the availability of video visitations once in-person visitations were put on hold at the Cook County Jail.**
- ▶ **Enabled virtual court appearances for emergency hearings including bond court and domestic violence court:** The Bureau of Technology supported the Office of the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County's work by installing Wi-Fi access points for bond court to allow for virtual appearances to reduce possible COVID-19 exposure for County staff, detainees and the public.
- ▶ **Closed all Cook County buildings and facilities to the public in accordance with the statewide stay-at-home order,** except for those used by the Circuit Court of Cook County, the Cook County Sheriff and Cook County Health.
- ▶ **Realized \$60,000 in energy savings during first month of stay-at-home order and began redeploying savings to improve health and safety in public buildings:** These energy savings are a result of our buildings operating below typical capacity and were realized

between March 17, 2020 to April 15, 2020. We expect to realize additional energy savings as we continue to operate our buildings below typical capacity. To improve air quality in public buildings in preparation for reopening, the Bureau of Asset Management has redeployed these savings to replace all HVAC filters and introduce more outside air in our facilities, in alignment with CDC guidelines.

- ▶ **Supported Cook County employees transitioning to telework in order to continue providing vital services to residents.**
- ▶ **Increased outreach to Cook County employees about health services available to them through their employee benefits program, including mental health supports:** The Department of Risk Management provided weekly email updates for all benefits plan changes and coordinated crisis management incident response services for our hospital and healthcare workers with similar initiatives offered to other frontline employees within the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center and Cook County Jail.
- ▶ **Offered webinars to Cook County employees and residents on energy efficiency in their homes:** The energy cost savings achieved can be critical for families who are struggling financially and may have increased energy costs as a result of COVID-19.

# Rapid Response

- ▶ **Continued collecting and reporting air quality data as part of the federal and state regional air monitoring network:** While collecting and reporting data on air pollution requires in person work, the Department of Environment and Sustainability deemed this an essential function given the compounding impacts of poor air quality on an individual's health that COVID-19 has highlighted. This reporting ensures Cook County partners, health agencies and residents have updated information about daily air pollution levels.
- ▶ **Transitioned Cook County Board of Commissioners meetings to a virtual platform so that Cook County operations could continue seamlessly:** Cook County used a publicly accessible platform to ensure residents could still view the Board meeting live and accepted written public comment prior to the meeting.
- ▶ **Began engaging residents virtually and soliciting community input on Cook County's COVID-19 responses:**
  - ▶ Hosted three Facebook Live conversations;
  - ▶ Hosted our first Virtual Town Hall; and
  - ▶ Adapted Census 2020 outreach strategy to ensure a complete count of Cook County residents.
- ▶ **Waived \$45 million worth of various County fines, fees and deferred tax collections to help businesses facing financial challenges.**

- ▶ **Surveyed 250 small businesses about their most pressing needs and in response created the Cook County Community Recovery Initiative to assist small businesses and 1099 contract workers, in partnership with the American Business Immigration Coalition (ABIC), the Illinois Restaurant Association and the National Partnership for New Americans.**
  - ▶ Offered five webinars to over 2,330 participants to inform small businesses, non-profits and independent contractors on how to access the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). To support all businesses in accessing these vital funds, the Bureau of Economic Development and ABIC hosted a webinar in Spanish.
  - ▶ Directly assisted 179 businesses in suburban Cook County in receiving \$3.1 million in PPP funding.

## Cook County **Community Recovery Initiative**



Rapid relief loans, technical assistance and outreach for small businesses and gig workers.

**179** businesses assisted  
**4,623** employees impacted  
**\$3.1M** PPP loans received  
**\$39K** average loan size

# Equitable Recovery

May 2020 ► May 2022

# Equitable Recovery

As the [Offices Under the President](#) (OUP) migrates our attention to the longer term challenges of responding to the social and economic effects of COVID-19, as well as maintaining the public health and healthcare services necessary to mitigate additional spread, we continue to rely on the mission, vision, values and six policy priorities set forth in our [Policy Roadmap](#). Using these structures as our guiding framework OUP,

as well as our partners across Cook County government, has identified its initial role in responding to the challenges Cook County residents and municipalities face. The work to drive equitable recovery begins with the publication of this Plan and will continue to grow as new resident and municipality needs emerge. We are firmly committed to responding to the evolving nature of COVID-19 now, and in the future.



## COOK COUNTY HEROES



*Cook County honors the essential workers and first responders who have kept the region going throughout this public health crisis.*

# Healthy Communities

Health and Wellness



## Policy Roadmap Goal

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

## Key Agencies

Cook County Health (CCH)  
Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH)  
Department of Risk Management

The health and wellness of Cook County communities is always a top priority for Cook County government. The [Offices Under the President](#) (OUP), [Cook County Health](#) (CCH) and the [Cook County Department of Public Health](#) (CCDPH) are committed to reducing health inequities, improving access to high-quality health care, and improving the health and wellbeing of our workforce. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this work is more urgent now than ever.

CCH provides access to vital, high-quality, affordable health services and a welcoming, accessible healthcare system to more than 300,000 residents annually, regardless of their financial circumstances or immigration status. Despite operating only two of the 68 hospitals in Cook County, CCH continues to serve as a safety net for many residents and provides more than 50 percent of all charity care in the County. Because of [CountyCare](#), the Medicaid managed care plan that Cook County established in 2012, over one million Cook County residents have much needed access to health care during the COVID-19 crisis. As of March 1, 2020, CountyCare's membership represents 31.6 percent of total Medicaid enrollment in Cook County.

In addition to health insurance and access to health services, a person's overall health can be greatly impacted by social and economic conditions such as access to safe housing, quality employment opportunities, healthy food and safe recreational space. CCDPH, the state-certified local health department for most of suburban Cook County, focuses on addressing these social determinants of health and provides public health guidance and infection control.

Socioeconomic inequities create health inequities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these inequities have led to an increased case and death rate among communities of color, specifically Cook County's Black and Latinx residents. Transitioning from rapid response to equitable recovery will require a robust public health operation, continued commitment to providing high quality health care services to all residents and targeted strategies to address the social determinants of health that have created disproportionate health impacts in Black and Latinx communities.

# Healthy Communities

Cook County is committed to:

- ▶ **Increasing testing, which will be critical to safely transitioning from response to recovery:** CCDPH will work with the Illinois Department of Public Health, CCH and other healthcare entities like federally qualified health centers to expand availability of and access to testing for patients and community residents. All [COVID-19 testing sites](#) are free for every resident in Illinois, regardless of insurance or immigration status. Additionally, the federal government has announced that testing, prevention and treatment for COVID-19 will not be used against immigrants in a public charge test.
- ▶ **Providing infection control guidance to organizations serving vulnerable populations:** CCDPH continues to provide guidance to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 in hospitals, long-term care facilities and other congregate settings such as homeless shelters. CCH is also currently leveraging its expertise, guidance and staffing to lead operations of a COVID-positive homeless shelter on Chicago's South Side. Until there is a widely available vaccination against COVID-19, CCDPH and CCH are committed to continuing to provide this guidance and other supports where needed.
- ▶ **Developing and implementing a contact tracing program:** CCDPH will develop and implement a contact tracing program for its suburban jurisdiction that will help mitigate the spread of disease. Contact tracers interview people who have been infected and the people they have recently had contact with to recommend appropriate and safe isolation and quarantine practices and support people in connecting to the services they need in order to isolate or quarantine safely. For contact tracing to work, residents must feel comfortable providing their information to public health workers. Recognizing the concerns many populations have with providing sensitive information to the government, CCDPH is committed to building a contact tracing program that centers on communities and enlists community members to do this vital work.
- ▶ **Developing a centralized system to increase residents' access to information about available resources:** COVID-19 has highlighted the need for Cook County to develop a centralized system for residents to be able to quickly and easily search and find community-based social services and health-related resources like housing and food. In the coming months, CCH and CCDPH will explore opportunities to partner with the [Bureau of Economic Development](#) in re-initiating efforts to develop a centralized system, such as 2-1-1, in partnership with suburban municipalities.

# Healthy Communities

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- ▶ **Advocating for and protecting worker safety by investigating and remedying workplace violations:** Workplaces can either mitigate or increase the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases depending on the safety protocols they enact and the benefits they provide their workforce. This particularly impacts low-wage workers who are often people of color. Cook County will advocate for increased protections for workers, so that worker rights and wellbeing are at the forefront of conversations about how businesses and workplaces can safely reopen and remain open. In addition to continuing to provide guidance to workplaces, CCDPH will also continue investigating and remedying workplace violations in collaboration with the Illinois Attorney General's Office.
- ▶ **Supporting Cook County employees' physical, mental and financial health:** Just like our residents, many Cook County employees are experiencing increased stress and uncertainty as they care for children who are out of school and support loved ones who have been impacted. We have seen an increase in the use of our employee assistance program services for crisis management. The [Department of Risk Management](#) will continue education and outreach to ensure employees have the information to stay healthy and manage their long-term health, including access to expanded telehealth options.

# Vital Communities

## Economic Development



### Policy Roadmap Goal

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

### Key Agencies

Bureau of Economic Development (BED)  
Bureau of Finance (BOF)  
Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (CCWP)  
Cook County Land Bank Authority (CCLBA)  
Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC)

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a grave economic crisis. Residents are being laid off or losing income, and many people are struggling to feed and house their families. Social services are strained, given the increased demand for resources like homeless shelters and food pantries. Businesses are struggling to pay their employees and cover operating costs.

With unemployment continuing to rise, the needs of residents and businesses continue to grow. While many residents received a stimulus check from the federal government under the CARES Act, the amount does not cover the typical monthly expenses of a family living in Cook County.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the federal legislation excluded many vulnerable residents who were ineligible to receive these payments without a Social Security Number and a permanent home address.

Communities of color are already suffering the harshest impacts of COVID-19, with higher levels of illness and job loss.<sup>6</sup> This is due in part to the fact that essential workers are disproportionately Black/Latinx, female, foreign-born and working poor.<sup>7</sup>

Federal support does not provide sufficient resources to meet businesses' needs. Funds allocated in the initial round of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), for example,

were depleted in just four days. Most of the money benefited larger businesses that had established relationships with banks. Smaller, minority-owned businesses were largely left behind.

We know that regions—not cities, counties or villages alone—are the true engines of the economy. As we plan for recovery, we will continue to champion a regional approach to economic development that embraces our shared labor markets, supply chains and transportation systems. Cook County, alongside our collar county partners, boasts a strong and diverse economy that focuses on inclusive growth and key economic sectors, including manufacturing, transportation, distribution and logistics, business services and healthcare. Our recovery will ensure that our whole remains greater than the sum of our parts.

Cook County's approach to the design and implementation of all COVID-19 economic relief programs embodies equity with resources targeted to residents, businesses and social services in communities with the greatest need. We will also collaborate with stakeholders to develop new programs that will help restore the economic wellbeing of residents and businesses.

# Vital Communities

Cook County is committed to:

- ▶ **Developing a plan to assist renters and homeowners:** As families struggle to pay their rent or mortgage, the [Bureau of Economic Development](#) (BED) will examine potential sources of financial support including emergency rent and mortgage relief and utility assistance. In addition, the County will deploy its federal funding to areas with the highest need, including support for the homeless and other social service agencies that are providing critical services to residents.
- ▶ **Developing a plan to monitor and respond to eviction threats and mortgage foreclosures, in close partnership with other stakeholders:** While the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County [issued a moratorium](#) on carrying out evictions and mortgage foreclosures, landlords and banks are still able to begin proceedings. Since the moratorium began on March 14, 2020, landlords have initiated over 720 eviction proceedings according to the [Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing](#), and this number will undoubtedly increase. While homeowners may have been able to take advantage of short-term mortgage forbearance, this may not be enough to help them weather this crisis. BED and the [Justice Advisory Council](#) will coordinate with other public officials to respond to the needs of families that are evicted or foreclosed on as a result of the economic damage caused by COVID-19.
- ▶ **Supporting residents of the Housing Authority of Cook County:** In addition to maintaining regular services for over 40,000 low-income residents, the [Housing Authority of Cook County](#) (HACC) is committed to supporting residents' essential needs throughout the recovery. After identifying food insecurity as a critical area of need, HACC worked quickly to compile a [comprehensive directory of affordable meals](#) being provided by suburban school districts and other free or affordable food providers. HACC is also providing personalized assistance to connect suburban Cook County residents to food assistance in their area, and partnering with the [Greater Chicago Food Depository](#), Catholic Charities and [Top Box Foods](#) to deliver fresh groceries and PPE to HACC's residential sites on a monthly basis.
- ▶ **Supporting Cook County residents seeking employment:** The [Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership](#) (the Partnership) is supporting suburban jobseekers during the stay-at-home order with web-based orientations, tutorials, digital literacy courses and one-on-one career counseling sessions. Importantly, it is also connecting jobseekers to employers who are hiring during the pandemic. The Partnership is also providing guidance to employers on hiring, layoff aversion and available resources to support employee training. Additionally, in collaboration with the State of Illinois, the Partnership is engaged in efforts to secure national emergency funding to support the thousands of people who will need rapid re-employment in the aftermath of this crisis.

# Vital Communities

- ▶ **Assisting small businesses, non-profit organizations and independent contractors in accessing relief resources through the [Cook County Community Recovery Initiative](#):** BED will continue to partner with national, state and local economic development service organizations, as well as community development financial institutions, to provide outreach, workshops, webinars and direct technical assistance to small businesses. This work is open to residents and businesses regardless of immigration status, and resources will be made available in English, Spanish, Polish and Mandarin.
- ▶ **Launching a \$10 million [Cook County Community Recovery Loan Fund](#) to support small businesses and 1099 contract workers:** BED has designed a zero-interest loan program to meet the needs of small businesses. To support the businesses that were left behind in the federal stimulus package, this program will serve suburban Cook County businesses with less than 25 employees and less than \$3 million in annual revenue, or independent contractors with less than \$100,000 in annual income who earn at least 50 percent of their income from contracting work.
- ▶ **Developing a longer-term small business assistance program:** BED will build a stronger small business ecosystem that supports recovery and builds resiliency. The program will address the magnified challenges faced by suburban small businesses, with a focus on underserved communities. The [Southland Development Authority](#) and its recently developed COVID-19 specific [Southland Equitable Recovery Stimulus Program](#) will serve as a model.
- ▶ **Evaluating the impact of COVID-19 on key industry sectors and identifying strategies to meet needs:** Recognizing COVID-19's impacts on manufacturing, transportation, distribution and logistics, healthcare, IT and construction, BED and the Partnership will:
  - ▶ Organize webinars to address sector-specific needs regarding supply chains, employee safety, talent development and the integration of new technologies into operations;
  - ▶ Assist businesses in utilizing apprenticeships to attract and retain employees;
  - ▶ Continue to provide support to employer collaboratives like the Calumet Manufacturing Industry Sector Partnership; and
  - ▶ Develop programs to support and advance the growth of the medical device sector in Cook County.
- ▶ **Leading regional economic recovery planning:** Cook County will continue to approach economic recovery with a regional lens that extends beyond County boundaries and is guided by the fact that regions with the least inequality perform the best. President Preckwinkle will co-chair the Regional Coordination working group of the City of Chicago's COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce alongside DuPage County Board Chairman Daniel Cronin, Village of Hillside Mayor Joseph Tamburino and City of Chicago 36th Ward Alderman Gilbert Villegas.

Within days of the announcement...

**6000+** businesses expressed interest in the fund.  
**76%** of those have less than 5 employees.  
**87%** reported more than  
**50%** of their revenue lost due to COVID-19.

# Safe and Thriving Communities



## Criminal Justice

### Policy Roadmap Goal

Create safe communities and an equitable and fair justice system for all residents.

### Key Agencies

Cook County Public Defender's Office (PD)  
Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security (EMRS)  
Justice Advisory Council (JAC)

Under President Preckwinkle's administration, Cook County government has adopted broad criminal justice reforms and strategies to prevent the unnecessary detention of people who pose little risk of future violence or flight risk as determined by the judiciary. These strategies ultimately contributed to a decrease in the divisional population in Cook County Jail from 10,139 people in September 2013 to 5,374 people in December 2019. While this work has always been vital to creating a more fair and just legal system, it has become lifesaving in the age of COVID-19. The decarceration efforts the [Offices Under the President](#) (OUP) and our criminal justice system partners have undertaken over the past 10 years have ensured that the spread of COVID-19 within Cook County Jail has affected far fewer people than it would have even a year ago.

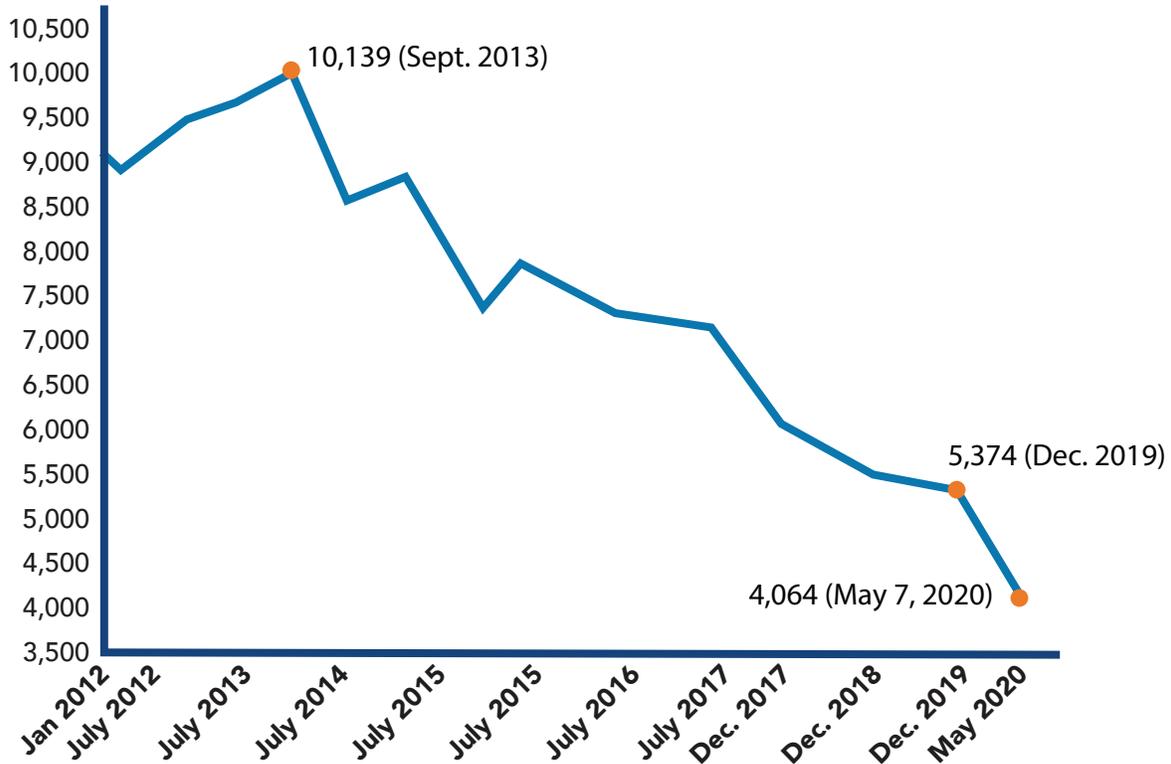
While we are proud of our past work, we remain committed to continuing to safely lower the population of people detained in Cook County Jail to protect the health and safety of the detainees and staff. As of May 11, 2020 541 detainees have tested positive for COVID-19. Furthermore, 399 total Sheriff's staff have tested positive for COVID-19. The loss of 7 people detained in the Jail and 3 employees is tragic, and we are working tirelessly to contain and combat COVID-19 at the Jail and across Cook County.<sup>8</sup>

In the era of COVID-19, decarceration has become more than a priority; it has become a public health imperative. A smaller Jail population makes it easier to practice social distancing, which helps reduce the risk of transmission among staff and people detained at Cook County Jail. In partnership with all Cook County criminal justice agencies, the [Justice Advisory Council](#) (JAC) quickly worked to create a comprehensive plan to facilitate expedited releases from the Cook County Jail in light of COVID-19. As of May 11, 2020, Cook County Jail has seen a 27 percent reduction in population since February 2020. Crucially, this plan ensures that people leaving the Jail are screened for COVID-19-related symptoms, receive educational materials on Illinois' stay-at-home order and how to protect themselves and others and have access to the housing and supportive services they need, including Medicaid and [CountyCare—Cook County Health's](#) (CCH) Medicaid managed care plan—to make sure they are able to access healthcare once they leave the Jail.

For people who remain detained, [Cermak Health Services](#), the CCH facility that provides health services to people detained at the Cook County Jail, has been and remains in charge of combatting the virus within the walls of the Jail and connecting patients to outside CCH facilities as needed.

# Safe and Thriving Communities

## Cook County Jail Population Reduction (January 2012 - May 2020)



Source: Cook County Sheriff's data

Additionally, the [Cook County Sheriff's Office](#) has committed to increasing social distancing practices and the availability of safety and sanitation supplies to help in Cermak's efforts to contain and combat the virus.

In addition to these critical criminal justice efforts, keeping our communities safe also requires engaging in emergency management and regional security planning and preparedness to ensure Cook County government and our municipalities can respond in times of crisis. While the widespread impacts of COVID-19 were unprecedented, Cook County government's swift and effective response was enabled by its ongoing preparation for any crisis.

In addition to emergency management, our public safety work will continue to include violence reduction efforts. During COVID-19, incidents of domestic violence are increasing.<sup>9</sup> Seasonal increases in gun violence are expected over the summer months. Immigrant communities fear displacement and separation due to the federal government's ongoing increased civil immigration enforcement. In this time of heightened uncertainty and surveillance, we will prioritize initiatives that protect our residents.

# Safe and Thriving Communities

Cook County is committed to:

► **Providing housing to returning residents:**

OUP has been providing housing and other resources to people being released from Cook County Jail and people being released from the Illinois Department of Corrections who are returning to suburban Cook County. This resource is available regardless of an individual's immigration status. In response to COVID-19, OUP has supported three types of housing alternatives:

- Quarantine and isolation housing for people who are COVID-19 positive;
- Congregate housing for those who need shelter and are non-COVID-19 positive; and
- Housing for people who can be released on electronic monitoring but do not have a place to stay.

► **Convening public safety stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of a smaller Jail and create a plan to push forward additional reforms:**

The divisional population in the Cook County Jail is at its lowest level in over 30 years. Cook County government must now work to ensure this progress is sustained and institutionalized. OUP is committed to continuing to facilitate the safe release of people from Cook County Jail. Furthermore, we will continue advocating for bail reform, the elimination of cash bond and additional reforms that promote equity in the criminal justice system.

JAC is coordinating referral efforts with our partners at [Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities](#) and [Safer Foundation](#) to serve as screeners and points of contact to help connect people with available housing resources. JAC has expanded the capacity to house returning residents by working with additional housing providers, including [Henry's Sober Living](#), New Beginnings and Claudia's & Eddie's Place.

- **Funding violence prevention, restorative justice and recidivism reduction:** JAC lifted funding restrictions on its grantees to allow the use of unspent grant funds on COVID-19 response work. Funding community-based organizations working in these areas is more important than ever during COVID-19. JAC is committed to continuing to provide its annual grants and has [extended the deadline](#) from April 2020 to July 2020 to give organizations additional time to apply.
- **Mitigating and containing COVID-19 now and until we have a widely available vaccine:** The Department of [Emergency Management and Regional Security](#) (EMRS) will continue responding to this crisis, support recovery efforts that are agile and responsive to fluctuations in cases and protective measures and maintain our ability to respond to other crises that may happen concurrently, such as severe weather events.

# Sustainable Communities

*Environmental Sustainability*



## **Policy Roadmap Goal**

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

## **Key Agencies**

Department of Environment and Sustainability (DES)  
Department of Planning and Development (DPD)  
Department of Transportation and Highways (DOTH)  
Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC)

Communities that experience disproportionate exposure to environmental harm, often communities of color, are more susceptible to chronic respiratory and heart disease than other communities. This has left residents of these communities at risk of more severe and fatal outcomes when exposed to COVID-19. A recent study by Harvard University indicates that COVID-19 is deadlier for communities that have experienced long-term exposure to poor air quality.<sup>10</sup> Given existing environmental inequities, COVID-19 has proven to be particularly dangerous for communities of color.

Considering the linkage between poor air quality and more severe COVID-19-related health outcomes, particularly in communities of color, Cook County has an obligation to provide ongoing environmental oversight in suburban Cook County.

Furthermore, Cook County must view COVID-19's disproportionate impacts on environmental justice communities as a warning for the impacts these communities are already beginning to face as a result of climate change.

## ***What are Environmental Justice Communities?***

Environmental Justice Communities are low-income communities and communities of color who experience disproportionate exposure to environmental harm.

# Sustainable Communities

Cook County is committed to:

- ▶ **Overseeing and upholding Cook County environmental regulations so that environmental conditions that could exacerbate the effects of COVID-19 do not persist:** As environmental regulations on the federal level have loosened for businesses and polluters, the [Department of Environment and Sustainability](#) (DES) has continued to uphold regulatory operations to maintain oversight of suburban Cook County. DES will continue our work to counteract these actions by the federal government and will conduct supplemental inspections to prevent the exacerbation of respiratory conditions and to ensure compliance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ **Adopting an equitable environmental justice policy that coordinates Cook County's administration of programs, maintenance of assets and allocation of resources:** DES will convene OUP stakeholders to begin drafting this policy and build interdepartmental coordination regarding environmental concerns in overburdened communities. This is more important than ever as we respond to the compounding effects of environmental inequities and COVID-19 and prepare for similar effects resulting from climate change.
- ▶ **Pursuing initiatives to fight climate change and mitigate its disproportionate impact on low-income and minority communities:** Just like COVID-19, climate change most heavily impacts lower income, minority and vulnerable populations. DES will continue developing and supporting initiatives to mitigate climate change, including:
  - ▶ Leading by example and releasing a plan to make Cook County facilities carbon neutral by 2050.
  - ▶ Sponsoring a virtual conference on the climate crisis and equity for Cook County communities.
  - ▶ Reducing the price of solar energy for Cook County residents through [Solarize Chicagoland](#), a group buy program.
  - ▶ Helping businesses finance energy and water efficiency and clean energy investments through the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program.
- ▶ **Continuing to provide access to nature while protecting public health and safety:** The [Forest Preserves of Cook County](#) is one of the oldest and largest forest preserve districts in the United States, with nearly 70,000 acres and an estimated 62 million visits each year. The Forest Preserves of Cook County are committed to maintaining public access to the trails and parks, and will only close areas that pose a public health risk due to overcrowding, failure to adhere to public health guidelines or to protect sensitive ecosystems.



### **Policy Roadmap Goal**

Provide an innovative infrastructure that will change how we live, work and connect.

### **Key Agencies**

Bureau of Asset Management (BAM)  
Bureau of Technology (BOT)  
Department of Transportation and Highways (DOTH)

Public infrastructure is a fundamental function of Cook County government and represents the backbone of how we provide seamless services to residents. Specifically, Cook County is responsible for all facilities needed to conduct County business, invests in the County's transportation systems and supports the technological infrastructure residents rely on. Despite the day-to-day importance of these functions, many people only think about public infrastructure when a disaster, such as COVID-19, compromises operations.

As a result of COVID-19, many of Cook County's essential infrastructure functions necessarily slowed or came to a halt to prevent further spread of the virus. Most County buildings have been closed to the public. Highway traffic has been substantially reduced and transit trips have declined by as much as 80 percent systemwide.<sup>11</sup> The virus has substantially increased the demand for internet services and equipment for people in school, those working from home and everyone who is relying on a new way to access goods and services. This increased demand has illuminated stark equity gaps in access, particularly as it relates to broadband and supporting technology.

As we look towards equitable recovery, there is a clear opportunity for the [Offices Under the President](#) (OUP) to improve upon its existing infrastructure practices so that they are more robust, inclusive and sustainable.

# Smart Communities

Cook County is committed to:

► **Expanding fiber optics infrastructure, so that all communities have access to broadband:** In Cook County, approximately 1 of every 5 households does not have broadband access.<sup>12</sup> As COVID-19 has forced many of us to transition to e-learning, telehealth and remote work opportunities, lack of access has been devastating for some residents. The [Bureau of Technology](#) is pursuing funding sources for broadband infrastructure improvement. If funded, the project will provide infrastructure for high-speed internet access in the Southland to improve internet access and enable residents to access e-learning, telehealth and remote work opportunities.

► **Expediting the work of the Council on Digital Equity:** The Office of the President created the Council on Digital Equity to ensure a County-wide commitment to increasing digital equity, from connectivity to affordability to proficiency. Given the urgent need for digital access for all during COVID-19, OUP is committed to expediting this work by:

- Partnering with businesses, public agencies and internet service providers on the “Always on Always Open: Share the Wi-Fi” initiative: This initiative encourages and supports partners in creating zones so that Wi-Fi remains available for residents to access during the pandemic and through the recovery.
- Collaborating with partners to create an Education Equity Fund for the Southland to purchase computers and provide high speed internet for the most impacted communities.

## Pew National Survey Results (August 2019)

**79%** of White Respondents

**66%** of Black Respondents

**61%** of Latinx Respondents

reported having access to high-speed internet at home.

- **Reopening Cook County buildings to employees and the public:** The safety of our residents and employees is of utmost importance as we think about the practicalities of reopening public buildings. When it is safe, OUP will reopen gradually, scaling our return to in-person work beginning with employees whose jobs most require them to be in the office. We will strategically coordinate open entrances to control the flow of traffic, evaluate options for thermal scanning upon entry and implement them where appropriate, install plexiglass shields in public-facing offices and stock buildings with the necessary cleaning and disinfectant supplies.
- **Sharing best practices with all Cook County municipalities:** Our [Bureau of Asset Management](#) is developing manuals and guidance on reopening public buildings which will be disseminated to all Cook County municipalities.

# Smart Communities

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- ▶ **Developing policies and guidelines that will ensure the safety of passengers and the efficiency of transportation:** In collaboration with partners throughout Cook County, all transportation systems must reimagine what the future of travel looks like. New policies will address protocols to ensure the safety of travelers, such as seating passengers in every other seat to promote social distancing. They will also consider active transportation options, including bike lanes and pedestrian paths, to create additional options for safe travel. Beyond passenger travel, the transportation, distribution and logistics industry will need to respond to increased demands for home delivery.
- ▶ **Supporting regional transportation partners in ensuring continued and effective service for residents:** The [Department of Transportation and Highways](#) will collaborate with transportation partners throughout the region to ensure that residents have access to safe and reliable transportation as the economy reopens and employees return to work. This coordinated effort will be especially important for populations that are dependent on transit or alternatives such as taxis or car service companies. Cook County and the region's public transit partners have already initiated a comprehensive review of the level, cost and convenience of transit service in the South Side of Chicago and south Cook County. A preliminary plan has been developed to improve service and reduce costs for this area of Cook County, which is home to many of our essential workers.

# Open Communities

Good Government



## Policy Roadmap Goal

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

## Key Agencies

Bureau of Finance (BOF)  
Bureau of Human Resources (BHR)  
Bureau of Technology (BOT)  
Office of the President (OOP)  
Office of Research, Operations and Innovation (ROI)

Cook County is dedicated to remaining a steward of good government through accessibility, accountability, transparency and the continuous improvement of County services. In times of crisis, good government practices are more important than ever. Residents of all abilities need to be well-informed about County actions and have meaningful ways to provide feedback in their native languages. Residents need to have the confidence that their governments are acting effectively.

Cook County's transition to remote work environments has challenged us to consider how we provide services and ways we can improve our processes. COVID-19 has proven that the [Offices Under the President](#) (OUP) can adapt quickly and continue providing services to our residents under all circumstances. Offices across Cook County government have demonstrated that essential services can be delivered virtually: Residents can now [apply for marriage licenses](#) remotely and [death certificates can now be issued](#) through a virtual portal. We have moved the majority of our [procurement processes online](#). These improvements demand the question—what else can we adapt for the benefit of County employees and residents? Our equitable recovery work will thus be focused on identifying and institutionalizing these operational improvements in the service of good government.

# Open Communities

Cook County is committed to:

- ▶ **Reimagining the County's ability to serve residents virtually:** In a COVID-19 world, many of Cook County's essential functions for residents, such as applying for marriage licenses and receiving death certificates, successfully pivoted to virtual experiences. As Cook County prepares to reopen its public buildings, we will reevaluate how we can improve resident access to government services through a greater use of technology.
- ▶ **Comprehensively reviewing all opportunities for self-service and virtual operations:** Design and implement practices that will minimize the need for residents to come to County buildings in-person. These changes will support social distancing practices in the near term and reduce costs for residents and the County in the long term.
- ▶ **Continuing to transition to eProcurement when possible in order to streamline operations with vendors.**
- ▶ **Adopting a language access policy to ensure that all residents can engage with and access Cook County government.**
- ▶ **Establishing the Cook County Community Advisory Council:** Composed of community leaders and advocates, the Community Advisory Council will evaluate OUP's efforts according to the **COVID-19 Response Plan** and provide feedback from their communities on its effectiveness, highlight any existing gaps in service and potential areas for partnership. The Council will also serve as an important conduit back out to their communities to let residents

know what Cook County is doing and what resources we can provide.

- ▶ **Conducting resident and municipal surveys to understand how Cook County government can support residents and municipalities during the pandemic response and equitable recovery.**
- ▶ **Collaborating with OUP's Racial Equity Leadership Council to ensure the COVID-19 recovery is truly equitable.**
- ▶ **Standardizing the collection and display of race and ethnicity data:** OUP is committed to disaggregating data by ethnicity, race, age, gender and municipality to empower Cook County to address disparate impacts. Addressing the standardization of data will help ensure the Latinx community is properly counted.
- ▶ **Developing a strategy for comprehensively engaging municipalities, particularly related to their COVID-19 needs:** Cook County has always worked alongside municipal governments, who play a critical role in providing services and assistance to residents. As we work towards building vibrant, equitable and sustainable communities across the County, we will closely collaborate with municipalities to deliver support to all Cook County residents.

# Looking Ahead

# Looking Ahead

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The Offices Under the President (OUP) has outlined the above actions and priorities we have and are taking to meet our residents' needs. For the most part, these interventions are focused on the short- to medium-term solutions OUP can take now to support our residents, businesses and municipalities. As the public health and economic crises evolve, OUP will continue to develop our plan for long-term recovery in partnership with residents, State of Illinois and City of Chicago partners, key industry leaders and all our stakeholders.

OUP is committed to incorporating feedback from residents and partners as we continue responding to COVID-19. To share your thoughts:

- ▶ Attend a Virtual Town Hall
- ▶ Fill out this [feedback form](#)

To learn more about OUP's COVID-19 response efforts and other work:

- ▶ Sign up for President Preckwinkle's [monthly newsletter](#)
- ▶ Text AlertCook to 888-777 to opt-in to receive the latest COVID-19 alerts and information.
- ▶ Follow us on social media and NextDoor



**/CookCountyGov**



**@CookCountyGov**



**/CookCountyGovernment**

- ▶ Visit [www.cookcountyil.gov](http://www.cookcountyil.gov)

# Appendix

## Executive Summary *and* Endnotes

# Cook County COVID-19 Response Plan

To ensure a comprehensive and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, President Preckwinkle's administration has created this **Cook County COVID-19 Response Plan: From Rapid Response to Equitable Recovery.**

This Plan combines our ongoing public health and healthcare priorities with parallel agendas that respond to the longer-term economic and social impacts of the virus.

It outlines the administration's current actions and proposed strategies for protecting residents, serving vulnerable populations and supporting businesses and municipalities through the duration of the pandemic and recovery.

## Rapid Response

January 2020 > April 2020

Cook County prepared for the pandemic and responded to the most immediate challenges it presented.

Efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic will continue through its duration, even as we look to support the recovery of our residents, businesses and municipalities.

## Equitable Recovery

May 2020 > May 2022

Cook County will build on our initial response and address the significant economic impacts residents, municipalities, businesses and civic institutions face.

## Guiding Principles

- ▶ Provide support in areas where Cook County has the authority and resources to have the greatest impact.
- ▶ Prioritize support for Cook County's most vulnerable populations by using a racial equity lens.
- ▶ Maintain continuity of essential public services for residents and businesses throughout Cook County.
- ▶ Coordinate efforts with other units of government and strategically leverage shared resources.
- ▶ Focus on suburban Cook County, which has substantial needs but limited resources.

**Provide support**  
where Cook County can have greatest impact

**Maintain continuity**  
of essential public services

**Focus on suburban Cook County** which has great need but limited resources

**Prioritize support**  
for most vulnerable populations with a racial equity lens

**Coordinate efforts**  
and leverage shared resources

Visit [www.cookcountyiil.gov](http://www.cookcountyiil.gov) for more information.



# Rapid Response

January 2020 ▶ April 2020

Cook County prepared for the pandemic and responded to the most immediate challenges it presented.

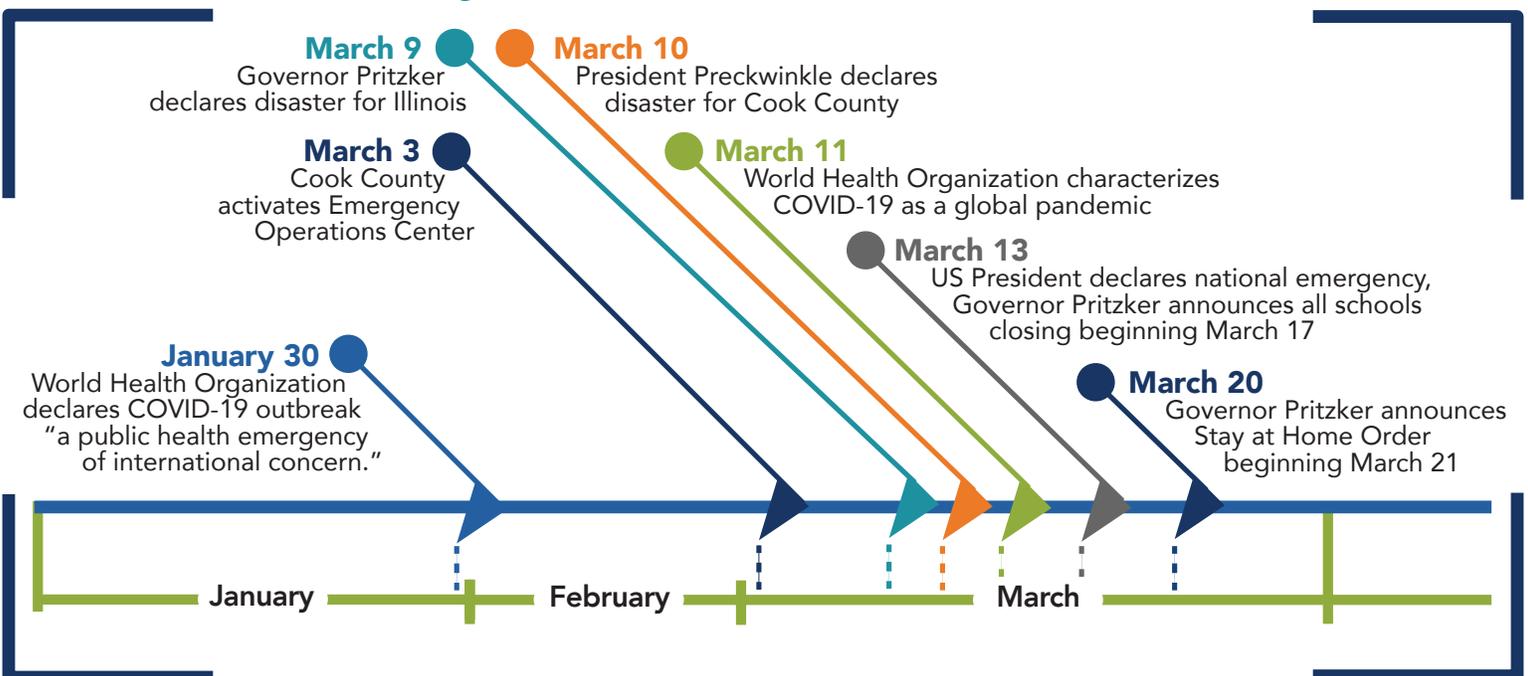
At the direction of President Preckwinkle and in partnership with the Cook County Board of Commissioners, other County elected officials and their teams and Cook County agencies, the Offices Under the President—the six bureaus and 34 departments that report directly to President Preckwinkle—have worked tirelessly since January 2020 to respond to the immediate needs created by the spread of COVID-19.

We are proud of all that our employees have done, and recognize there is much more to do as we begin the recovery phase of our efforts.

**\$45M** waived in various County fines, fees and deferred tax collections to help businesses facing financial challenges due to COVID-19.

**27%** reduction in population at the Cook County Jail since February 2020.

## Timeline of Major Events



# Rapid Response

January 2020 > April 2020

- ▶ Cook County Health rapidly adapted health care operations
- ▶ Cook County Department of Public Health expedited public health services
- ▶ Cook County criminal justice agencies accelerated decarceration efforts
- ▶ Cook County surveyed 250 small businesses about their most pressing needs and in response created the Cook County Community Recovery Initiative
- ▶ OUP supported these efforts, maintained essential government services and much more

## Cook County Community Recovery Initiative



Rapid relief loans, technical assistance and outreach for small businesses and gig workers.

**179** businesses assisted  
**4,623** employees impacted  
**\$3.1M** PPP loans received  
**\$39K** average loan size

Cook County secured and distributed approximately two million units of personal protective equipment (PPE) to municipalities and first responders, health and medical entities, the Cook County Jail and other congregate settings like long-term care facilities throughout suburban Cook County.

**468,880**  
**432,225**  
**1,019,800**  
**21,119**



N95 masks



Surgical masks



Plastic gloves



Face shields

Text "alertcook" to 888-777

Get the latest COVID-19 updates

www.cookcountyil.gov

- ▶ The Cook County Department of Public Health established a multi-lingual COVID-19 Hotline at (708) 633-3319 and an email address at [ccdph.covid19@cookcountyhhs.org](mailto:ccdph.covid19@cookcountyhhs.org) to field questions from the public about COVID-19.
- ▶ The Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security set up ALERTCOOK, a text alert system, to share updates on Cook County's work and respond to public inquiries. As of May 11, 2020, over 36,000 users have enrolled.

# Equitable Recovery

May 2020 ▶ May 2022

Cook County will build on our initial response and address the significant economic impacts residents, municipalities, businesses and civic institutions face.

As the Offices Under the President (OUP) migrates our attention to the longer term challenges of responding to the social and economic effects of COVID-19, as well as maintaining the public health and healthcare services necessary to mitigate additional spread, we continue to rely on the mission, vision, values, and six policy priorities set forth in our Policy Roadmap.

Using these structures as our guiding framework, OUP, as well as our partners across Cook County government, has identified its initial role in responding to the challenges Cook County residents and municipalities face. The work to drive equitable recovery begins with the publication of this plan and will continue to grow as new resident and municipality needs emerge. We are firmly committed to responding to the evolving nature of COVID-19 now, and in the future.

## Healthy Communities

Health and Wellness



### Cook County commits to:

- ▶ Increasing testing, which will be critical to safely transitioning from response to recovery.
- ▶ Developing and implementing a contact tracing program.
- ▶ Providing infection control guidance to organizations serving vulnerable populations.
- ▶ Developing a centralized system to increase residents' access to information about available resources.
- ▶ Advocating for and protecting worker safety by investigating and remediating workplace violations.
- ▶ Supporting Cook County employees' physical, mental and financial health.

## Vital Communities

Economic Development



### Cook County commits to:

- ▶ Leading regional economic recovery planning.
- ▶ Developing a plan to assist renters and homeowners.
- ▶ Developing a plan to monitor and respond to eviction threats and mortgage foreclosures.
- ▶ Supporting residents of the Housing Authority of Cook County.
- ▶ Supporting residents seeking employment.
- ▶ Developing a longer-term small business program.
- ▶ Assisting small businesses, non-profits and independent contractors in accessing relief resources through the Cook County Community Recovery Initiative.
- ▶ Launching a \$10 million fund to support suburban small businesses and 1099 contract workers.
- ▶ Evaluating the impact of COVID-19 on key industry sectors and identifying strategies to meet needs.

# Equitable Recovery

May 2020 > May 2022

## Safe & Thriving Communities

*Criminal Justice*



### Cook County commits to:

- ▶ Providing housing to residents being released from detention facilities.
- ▶ Convening public safety stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of a smaller Jail and create a plan to push forward additional reforms.
- ▶ Funding violence prevention, restorative justice and recidivism reduction.
- ▶ Mitigating and containing COVID-19 through emergency management now and until we have a widely available vaccine.

## Sustainable Communities

*Environmental Sustainability*



### Cook County commits to:

- ▶ Pursuing initiatives to fight climate change and mitigate its disproportionate impact on low-income and minority communities.
- ▶ Continuing to provide access to nature while protecting public health and safety.
- ▶ Overseeing and upholding Cook County environmental regulations so that environmental conditions that could exacerbate the effects of COVID-19 do not persist.
- ▶ Adopting an equitable environmental justice policy that coordinates Cook County's administration of programs, maintenance of assets and allocation of resources.

## Smart Communities

*Public Infrastructure*



### Cook County commits to:

- ▶ Expanding fiber optics infrastructure, so that all communities have access to broadband.
- ▶ Expediting the work of the Council on Digital Equity.
- ▶ Reopening Cook County buildings to employees and the public.
- ▶ Sharing best practices with all Cook County municipalities.
- ▶ Developing policies and guidelines that will ensure the safety of passengers and the efficiency of transportation.
- ▶ Supporting regional transportation partners in ensuring continued and effective service for residents.

## Open Communities

*Good Government*



### Cook County commits to:

- ▶ Reimagining the County's ability to serve residents virtually.
- ▶ Adopting a language access policy to ensure that all residents can engage with and access services.
- ▶ Establishing the Cook County Community Advisory Council.
- ▶ Conducting surveys to understand how County government can support residents and municipalities during the response and equitable recovery.
- ▶ Collaborating with OUP's Racial Equity Leadership Council to ensure the recovery is truly equitable.
- ▶ Standardizing the collection and display of race and ethnicity data.
- ▶ Developing a strategy for comprehensively engaging municipalities, particularly related to their COVID-19 needs.

# Endnotes

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- 1 <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/covid19-statistics>
- 2 <https://maps.cookcountyil.gov/medexamcovid19/>
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