

State And County Announce \$250 Million Commitment To Help Close Budget Gap In Asylum Seeker Response

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CHICAGO — Governor JB Pritzker and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle announced their commitment to a joint funding plan to ensure shelter, wraparound services and healthcare remain available for asylum seekers sent to Chicago from the Texas border. Following a long-term planning exercise, State, County and City teams concluded that an additional estimated \$321 million is needed to maintain shelter

and services this calendar year, on top of previously committed funding. The Governor and President are pledging a combined investment of over \$250 million to help close this gap.

In November, the State of Illinois committed an additional \$160 million to the asylum seeker response to invest in three critical areas: welcome, shelter, and independence. That commitment was in addition to the \$478 million the State has spent since the start of the response. As part of the joint funding plan, the State is pledging an additional \$182 million, which will be part of the Governor's upcoming Fiscal Year 2025 budget proposal to the General Assembly.

“With thousands of asylum seekers continuing to come to Chicago in desperate need of support and with Congress continuing to refuse to act—it is clear the state, county, and city will have to do more to keep people safe,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “I’m thankful to President Preckwinkle for working with us to help close this budget gap and maintain critical services in the year ahead.”

Cook County has already committed more than \$100 million in its current FY24 budget for new arrival related costs, primarily for healthcare, and the President will work with Cook County commissioners to commit up to \$70 million more for this joint funding plan.

“As critical funding for this ongoing humanitarian crisis stalls in Congress, Cook County stands committed to the well-being of the region,” said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. “We cannot wait for additional resources and Cook County is proud to stand alongside Governor Pritzker in this joint funding plan, ensuring that shelter capacity, healthcare and wraparound services remain accessible to those in need.”

The County, through its Health and Hospital system, has been the primary health care provider for new arrivals and have served more than 25,000 patients and provided for nearly 70,000 visits across the health system. Cook County Health (CCH) provides comprehensive medical exams and care – including physical exams, testing, lab services, standard vaccinations, complete school physicals and pediatric vaccines, as well as behavioral health screenings and counseling, care coordination and prescription medications - and provides follow up care as needed.

This joint funding plan will maintain shelter capacity as well as the continuation of wraparound and healthcare services. More than 35,000 asylum seekers have been inhumanely dropped off in the City of Chicago and surrounding suburbs over the last year and a half.