



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:
CONTACT: LAURIE R GLENN
PHONE: 773.704.7246
EMAIL: lrglenn@thinkincstrategy.com**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2016**

MEDIA ALERT
COOK COUNTY BOARD HEARING DELVES INTO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS
Devastating New Reports Highlight Youth Joblessness and its Correlation to Violence

WHAT: The Cook County Board’s Workforce, Housing and Community Development Committee, chaired by Commissioner Bridget Gainer will hold a hearing on the crisis of joblessness among the county’s low-income and minority youth. Triggered by the University of Illinois Chicago’s Great Cities Institute report, [*Lost: The Crisis of Jobless and Out Of School Teens and Young Adults in Chicago, Illinois and the U.S.*](#), the hearing examines new data from the Institute that pulls out statistics for Cook County comparable to those in the report. The University of Chicago Crime Lab will present its findings showing a correlation between summer youth employment and reduced violence.

Former out-of-school high school students will present testimony to the panel of federal, state and local public officials regarding the impact of youth joblessness. The leader of the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership will report on available programming and services for Cook County Youth. Community leaders will also speak.

Hearing organizers, the Alternative Schools Network, Chicago Urban League, Westside Health Authority, Chicago Area Project, Black United Fund of Illinois, Latino Policy Forum, A Safe Haven Foundation and La Casa Norte, have launched a multi-pronged drive to have public-sector funding restored for youth employment programs at the local, state and federal levels.

WHO: **Bridget Gainer, Chairman, Workforce, Housing & Community Development Committee**
Members of the Workforce, Hearing & Community Development Committee
Members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners
Cook County Board Commissioner Toni Preckwinkle (invited)

Speakers will include:

- **Young people who have struggled to find work**
- **The Reverend Michael Pflieger, The Faith Community of St. Sabina**
- **Teresa Córdova, Director, Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago**
- **Kelly Hallberg, PhD, Scientific Director, University of Chicago Crime Lab.**
- **Karin M. Norington-Reaves, CEO, Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership**
- **Quiwana Bell, Chief Operating Officer, Westside Health Authority**
- **Andrew Wells, Director, Workforce Development Center, Chicago Urban League**
- **David Whittaker, Executive Director, Chicago Area Project**
- **Andre Cosey, Case Manager, Metropolitan Family Services**
- **Rachel Bhagwat, Community Engagement Coordinator, La Casa Norte**
- **Berto Aguayo, Senior, Dominican University, Mikva Challenge**
- **Kimberly Hopson, Resource Coordinator, Youth Connection Charter School**
- **Nkrumah English, Program Office, Black United Fund of Illinois**
- **Jack Wuest, Executive Director, Alternative Schools Network**

WHEN: 11:45 a.m., Tuesday, March 22, 2016

WHERE: Cook County Board Room, 5th Floor, 118 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL

WHY: Out of school and out-of-work teens and young adults face adverse labor market consequences in their adult years, including higher incidence of unemployment, reduced earnings and a higher incidence of poverty. Jobless youth are also susceptible to influence by gangs and various behavioral and health problems. Investments in creating meaningful work for these youth will pay dividends immediately and for years to come.

###