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**MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON AND THE CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION CELEBRATE 2024 GRADUATES OF GREENCORPS JOB TRAINING
PROGRAM**

Greencorps Chicago celebrates 30 years of opportunity and sustainability

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Brandon Johnson and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), joined by public and private sector partners, celebrated the graduation of 39 participants from Greencorps Chicago, the City's green job training program for individuals overcoming barriers to employment. This year's ceremony also marks the program's 30th anniversary, celebrating three decades of workforce development, environmental stewardship and community improvement.

Graduates of the paid nine-month program received extensive classroom and hands-on field training in ecological restoration, landscaping, tree care, carpentry, green infrastructure, environmental health and safety, along with essential job readiness skills.

"Greencorps Chicago is a powerful catalyst for transformation in our city," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "By providing workforce development for returning residents, revitalizing vacant lots in historically disinvested neighborhoods and offering summer employment to high school students, the program does more than job training—it rebuilds communities. Each graduate embodies the profound contributions of Greencorps Chicago to impacting the lives of individuals and its ripple effects in neighborhoods across our city."

Greencorps Chicago empowers residents from Chicago's underserved neighborhoods to create change in their lives and communities through training, service and career opportunities in environmental fields. The nine-month program provides a chance for returning residents and other Chicagoans with barriers to employment to earn \$18.50 an hour while receiving training and hands-on experience in a variety of environmentally



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related jobs. The outcome is healthier, safer and more engaged communities and individuals who are prepared for employment.

“For 30 years, Greencorps Chicago has provided Chicagoans facing barriers to employment with the training, support and opportunities needed to transform their lives and communities,” said **CDOT Commissioner Tom Carney**. “CDOT is proud to be the home of Greencorps Chicago and to celebrate the resilience and dedication of this year’s graduates.”

Greencorps Chicago's adult program works with over 30 public and private sector partners to recruit participants, support job readiness and provide professional certifications. The program has produced nearly 700 graduates in its 30 years of existence and in the last five years has succeeded in placing an average of 75 percent of them in jobs. Industry partners host internships for the trainees, helping them acquire additional experience that can lead to permanent jobs.

In the classroom, trainees learn about horticulture, ecology, green infrastructure, tree care, pesticide use and other topics. They then apply those skills through field training that takes place while working on projects at the Chicago Park District, the Forest Preserves of Cook County, City-owned vacant lots, City Colleges of Chicago campuses and other project partners.

Work completed by Greencorps Chicago trainees this year includes:

- Improving over 250 vacant lots on the south and west sides by cleaning and building gardens in our communities most affected by violence.
- Improving over 25 acres of natural habitat in the Forest Preserves of Cook County.
- Planting nearly 2,000 trees and 75,000 bulbs.
- Maintaining trails at Chicago parks across the city and maintaining landscaping at some of the City Colleges of Chicago.

Greencorps trainees are offered a range of professional certifications including First Aid/CPR, OSHA Hazardous Waste Operator, OSHA 10-Hour Safety, Chicago Wilderness Prescription Burn Class, the Illinois Pesticide operator license and others.

Throughout their time with Greencorps, trainees are supported with wrap-around social services, mentoring and professional coaching, increasing their ability to secure full time employment upon completion of the training.



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Trainees also have access to a placement coordinator that works with graduates to identify the best job matches and post placement follow-up. Greencorps graduates have gone on to work at the Chicago Park District, ecological restoration companies, the Cook County Forest Preserves and many other businesses and organizations.

Greencorps also has a summer program for youth and young adults that introduces Chicago public high school students to skills and service projects in sustainability fields including bicycling, horticulture, ecological restoration and tree care. This year, the Greencorps Chicago Youth Program had 161 participants from eight Chicago Public Schools high schools on the south and west sides.

To learn more about Greencorps Chicago visit greencorpschicago.org.

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