



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Ada S. McKinley Community Services Launches Innovative Program to Hire Parents of Head Start Students as Chicago's COVID Contact Tracers**

**(Chicago, September 23, 2020)** [Ada S. McKinley Community Services](#) today announces an innovative program to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Chicago by hiring the parents of children enrolled in its Head Start programs as COVID Contact Tracers.

The 101-year old nonprofit was recently named by Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot to the City's COVID Contact Tracing Corps, and is among other Community Based Organizations selected to hire people who will work to stem the COVID-19 transmission in Chicago.

Jamal Malone, CEO of Ada S. McKinley Community Services, says within the next week, the nonprofit will hire 15 parents of children enrolled in its federally funded Head Start early learning program to support the Chicago Department of Public Health's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These mothers and fathers of Head Start children will be trained on how to gather information through interviewing and identifying potential contacts of confirmed positive cases. Malone calls it a win-win for the City's efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 throughout Chicagoland.

"Our unique approach, which differs from other Community Based Organizations, is that we are employing the parents of our Head Start children. This allows those parents to gain employment while working from home and tending to the needs of their children during the pandemic.

"As a nonprofit founded during the Spanish Flu Pandemic [101 years ago](#), it's no coincidence that Ada S. McKinley Community Services has taken a creative approach to helping the City address this critical public health threat, while also lifting up the families we serve," said Malone.

The newly hired Covid Contact Tracers will receive ongoing professional development and "Earn and Learn" opportunities designed with input from public health experts and private sector institutions. Through the Earn and Learn program, participants can gain credentials and permanent jobs in allied health and adjacent occupations.

Ada S. McKinley Community Services was chosen to participate through a competitive process conducted by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership. The agency thanks Mayor Lori Lightfoot for enlisting our organization to help stem the spread of COVID-19, especially in communities with the greatest risk and suffering disproportionately from the ravages of the pandemic.



## **About Ada S. McKinley Community Services**

Ada S. McKinley Community Services is one of Chicago's largest, most respected and impactful Human Services organizations. The nonprofit's mission is to empower, educate and employ people to change lives and strengthen communities. Serving more than 7,000 people annually at over 70 program sites in the Chicago metropolitan area, Wisconsin and Indiana, Ada S. McKinley Community Services' wide-ranging programs fall under the umbrellas of child development and youth, employment and community support, and behavioral health and clinical.

For more information and updates on how the agency continues to meet the needs of people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit [www.adasmckinley.org](http://www.adasmckinley.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

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