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**Cook County Juneteenth Joint Coalition Launches “Juneteenth Illinois” Initiative;  
Hosts a Week-Long Celebration of Events, June 14 – 18**  
*Announces JuneteenthIllinois.com as a Hub for State-wide Activities*

CHICAGO (June 9, 2021) – Cook County’s celebration of Juneteenth 2021, kicks off officially next week as a part of “Juneteenth Illinois,” an initiative commemorating June 19, announced Cook County Commissioner Dennis Deer (2<sup>nd</sup> District), who is heading up the effort.

Juneteenth Illinois is a collaboration between Cook County, the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago and it marks the first celebration of Juneteenth by the County since it became an official holiday in December of last year. Visit [www.juneteenthIllinois.com](http://www.juneteenthIllinois.com).

“Juneteenth has become a national movement as more states have embraced the significant role this date played in solidifying the freedom of all enslaved Africans in this country,” said Commissioner Deer. “None were free, until all were freed, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the enslaved was declared by President Lincoln.”

Commissioner Deer and Commissioner Stanley Moore (4<sup>th</sup> District) led the charge and got legislation passed last year to make Juneteenth a day of remembrance and an official paid holiday in Cook County.

As a part of Juneteenth Illinois, Cook County, in collaboration with Black Culture Week, will celebrate Juneteenth with a dynamic slate of programming June 14-18, 2021. There will be a mix of virtual and live, in-person events, including activities at Malcolm X College located at 1900 W. Jackson Blvd. in Chicago.

## **Juneteenth Illinois/2**

“Juneteenth Illinois Equity” is the theme for the week-long activities including panel discussions addressing issues important to the Black community with a different topic for each day of the week, i.e., Culture, Justice, Education, Health and Wealth, presented on Monday through Friday, respectively.

On Thursday, June 17, there will be a health and resource fair with service providers sharing information, on-site COVID-19 vaccinations and testing, blood drives, and critical care demonstrations for CPR and Stop-the-Bleed gunshot injuries.

On Friday, June 18, the program includes the Black Culture Week Caravan March that departs from Malcolm X College and ends at the A. Phillip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum, 10406 S. Maryland.

Also, on Juneteenth, June 19, the Cook County Juneteenth Joint Planning Committee is supporting the March ForUs, which highlights systemic racism and injustices in the policing system. Marchers will travel from 701 S. State St. to 50 W. Washington St. Visit [www.march4us.org](http://www.march4us.org).

Additionally, as a part of Juneteenth Illinois, the new [www.JuneteenthIllinois.com](http://www.JuneteenthIllinois.com) website provides resources and events information from across the state. It serves as a unified, one-stop portal for the public to learn about how Illinoisans are celebrating Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day.

JuneteenthIllinois.com is a collaborative initiative between the state, county, local governments, communities, faith-based organizations, civic groups, the arts and corporate sponsors. “It is a clearing house for all things Juneteenth in Illinois,” said Deer. “The site showcases myriad commemorations of Juneteenth throughout the state under a single hub.”

Ongoing updates are added to the website regularly and organizations and businesses are encouraged to submit their information by June 14, 2021, to be included in the resources and/or events page. To add an event, simply complete the website’s online form.

As a part of the Juneteenth history, enslaved people were emancipated in 1863, but it took two years before word of their freedom reached slaves in the state of Texas. The news was met with resistance and murder, but the newly-freed people remained vigilant, and we have celebrated the end of slavery and the hope of freedom for 155 years.

## **Juneteenth Illinois/3**

Forty-six states have made Juneteenth a state holiday and Illinois may be next. The Illinois House of Representatives and the Illinois Senate have approved legislation so make Juneteenth a state holiday. The legislation awaits Gov. J.B. Pritzker's signature.

Juneteenth Illinois sponsors include: PepsiCo, Comcast, Aetna Better Health of Illinois, Superior Ambulance Service, Cook County Health, New Covenant Community Development Corporation, Malcolm X College, Gift of Hope, Beyond Catering Events, Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative, Wyn-Win Communications, the Black Culture Collective and the Cook County Juneteenth Joint Planning Committee.

For more information about Juneteenth Illinois, visit [www.Juneteenthillinois.com](http://www.Juneteenthillinois.com).

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