

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**3rd Annual Juneteenth Illinois Celebration to Be Held June 16 & 17**

*Scholarship Reception with Mayor Johnson and All-day Panels and Activities Celebrating Black Liberation and Equity in Education, Wealth, Criminal Justice, and Health Care*

CHICAGO (June 7, 2023) – A celebration and community recognition event is planned for Friday and Saturday, June 16 & 17, as a part of “Juneteenth Illinois,” an initiative commemorating the official June 19 date. This year marks the 3rd annual celebration of the day by the county since it became an official holiday in December of 2020. Cook County Commissioner Dennis Deer (2nd District) and Barbara Deer (Juneteenth IL Executive Director) are heading up the effort this year. Juneteenth Illinois is a collaboration between The Office of Cook County Commissioner Deer, Cook County Commissioner Bill Lowry (3rd District), Cook County Commissioner Stanley Moore (4th District), Congressman Danny Davis (7th District), Rep. Lakesia Collins (9th District), Alderwoman Monique Scott (24th Ward), Alderman Walter Burnett (27th Ward), and the Cook County Juneteenth Joint Planning Committee. The day-long panel activities will be held at Malcolm X College June 17, located at 1900 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago.

Mayor Brandon Johnson will speak at the Juneteenth Scholarship Reception being held on the evening of June 16. $10,000 in scholarships will be awarded to students. The scholarships will be awarded to ten newly selected students with additional monies given to returning students. In addition, each scholarship recipient receives year-round professional mentorship, additional stipends and group activities during college breaks. The evening’s program includes a showcase of youth leadership in the arts with African dance, a drumline, soulful music, the annual “Divine 9 roll call”, and great food. The sold-out event will be held at 540 West Madison rooftop.

On June 17, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle will offer the welcome and opening remarks to the celebration alongside Executive Director Barbara Deer.

Juneteenth IL runs all day and will provide a varied slate of programming including panel discussions, resource fair, blood drive and entertainment. Entertainers include Kells the Artist, Bobbi Ponder, Sean Black, D’Moment and others.

All access to Juneteenth Illinois 2023 panels and activities is FREE to the public, although pre-registration is strongly encouraged for this popular event.

“Last year’s celebratory event was a major success and educated many Chicagoans about the work being done in this city around justice and the people doing it,” said Commissioner Dennis Deer. “We plan to continue that tradition this year, building community and awareness.”

Here is the schedule for June 17 at Malcolm X College:

 **Saturday, June 17, 2023**

8:00-10:00am **Panel #1** **Health Breakfast and Panel:** *Health & Wellness - Equity in Healthcare*

10:15-11:15am **Panel #2: Justice Panel:** *Understanding the Safe-T Act*

11:30am-12:30pm **Panel #3: Economic Development Panel:** *Black Entrepreneurship*

1:00-2:00pm **Panel #4: Education Panel:** *Investing in Educational Institutions & Global Opportunities*

3:00-4:00pm **Family Entertainment**

Additionally, as a part of Juneteenth Illinois 2023, the [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 Illinoisians are celebrating Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day. “It is a clearinghouse for all things Juneteenth in Illinois,” said Deer. “The site showcases a myriad of commemorations of Juneteenth throughout the state under a single hub.”

Ongoing updates are added to the website regularly. Organizations and businesses are encouraged to submit their information to be included in the resources and/or events page.

To add an event, simply complete the website’s online form.

Additional Juneteenth Illinois 2023 sponsors include: PepsiCo, Aetna, Gift of Hope, Chase Bank, Malcolm X College, Chicago Federation of Labor, Superior Ambulance, Habilitative Systems, Inc., Wyn-Win Communications, New Covenant Community Development Corporation, 1 Real Freedom, Chicago Family Partnership, Omega Psi Phi PMM Chapter, North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council, Hire 360, 540 West Madison, Steans Family Foundation, Beyond Catering, Prestige Health, and Evolent Health.

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

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**About Juneteenth:**

Enslaved people were emancipated in 1865, 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 African Americans have celebrated the end of slavery and the hope of freedom for 157 years. Illinois became the 47th state to make Juneteenth a paid state holiday; followed by Cook County. Currently, 50 states and the District of Columbia celebrate the holiday in some manner. In Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Oregon, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, New York, Virginia, Washington, and Illinois, Juneteenth is an official paid holiday for state employees.