

[Date]

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Your City, State, Zip]

[Your Email]

[Your Phone]

The Honorable Rahm Emanuel
Mayor of Chicago
121 N LaSalle Street
Chicago City Hall 4th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

Superintendent Garry McCarthy
Chicago Police Department
3510 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60653

Re: Chicago Police Department Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)

Dear Mayor Emmanuel and Superintendent McCarthy:

On any given day, Cook County Jail holds more citizens with serious mental illness than all the state psychiatric hospitals in Illinois combined. As you know, jail is incredibly costly. I am writing to urge you to support and advocate for Chicago's CIT program, as it works to stem the tide of mentally ill individuals flooding into our correctional facilities.

CIT is a 40-hour education program which empowers officers to effectively respond to mental health crises. Encountering someone with a mental illness is a daily occurrence for most of our officers. Through officer education on the symptoms of mental illness and crisis de-escalation techniques, CIT in Chicago has been shown to decrease the use of force against citizens who may be agitated or resistant, has increased officer ability to direct people to mental health services, and leaves officers feeling better prepared to respond to mental health crises.

Chicago's CIT program is an asset to the city, benefiting police officers, persons with mental illnesses, their families, and our community. Given the deep funding cuts that have been experienced by Chicago's mental health service delivery system in 2011, Chicago police officers are being increasingly called upon to respond to mental health crisis situations. We must ensure that officers and the department are appropriately prepared to protect the safety and well-being of all Chicago citizens, while keeping themselves safe, too.

The Chicago's CIT program is a shining example of great work within the Chicago Police Department. However, redeployments and staff cuts have disproportionately diminished the core training staff of Chicago's CIT program and it is **urgent that additional staff and resources be allocated to enable the program to adequately train officers** to serve the citizens of our city. Additionally, it is essential that all **OEMC call takers be trained** to dispatch CIT trained officers in the case of a mental health crisis. As a resident of Chicago and as your constituent, I request that CIT remain an active component of our police department, and entreat your support for the ongoing work of the CIT program.

Most Sincerely,

[INSERT YOUR NAME & SIGNATURE]