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**MAYOR EMANUEL, UST GLOBAL, CHICAGOLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND SKILLS FOR  
CHICAGOLAND'S FUTURE LAUNCH STEP IT UP AMERICA IN CHICAGO**

*New Program Will Train and Create Jobs for 100 Minority Women in the Technology Sector; Creating Demand-Driven and Targeted Workforce Development is a Central Piece of the Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, UST Global, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and Skills for Chicagoland's Future today launched Step IT Up Chicago, a new IT training program working to recruit minority women into the IT field. The program will train 100 women in various IT tracks over the next year and partner with local corporations to place program graduates into full-time employment. The inaugural class of 33 women began the program this week.

"Creating a deep and diverse talent pool is essential to successfully developing Chicago's technology sector," said Mayor Emanuel. "Through partnerships with Chicago's business leaders and programs such as Step IT Up, we will ensure that our workforce has a direct pipeline to jobs and our own youth are being educated and trained for successful 21<sup>st</sup> century technology jobs here in Chicago."

Today's announcement builds upon Mayor Emanuel's ongoing efforts to grow and diversify Chicago's technology workforce and to building a comprehensive technology pipeline for Chicago's students. Starting with the focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) through Chicago Summer of Learning to designing programs at Chicago City Colleges to serve as digital skills centers, programs such as Step IT Up provide a final component in the transition to full-time employment, a critical step to filling the estimated 9,000 IT jobs expected to grow in the Chicago area over the next decade.

"The three pillars of a successful technology company are talent, innovation and diversity. Without diversity, we are unable to gather the best and brightest minds that bring unique perspectives to create meaningful solutions for the world's most pressing challenges," said Sajan Pillai, CEO of UST Global. "We are encouraged by the warm welcome given by the Mayor and the City of Chicago and are excited to partner together."

Step IT Up America is a national program sponsored by UST Global that serves associates degree or community college-level students and equips them with technological skills, mentorship programs and the industry knowledge necessary to prepare them for a career in the IT sector. The program comes to Chicago after successful pilots in Atlanta, Philadelphia and Detroit. UST Global is working with Albright Stonebridge Group, chaired by Madeleine Albright and Carlos Gutierrez, on plans to

expand the program to 10 cities nationwide, with the ultimate goal of providing training to over 1,000 minority women over the next year.

"Addressing the skills gap in Chicago's workforce, especially for women and minorities, is an important effort that the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce supports through this partnership with Step it Up and the City of Chicago," said Theresa E. Mintle, President and CEO, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce.

Step IT Up is working with Skills for Chicagoland's Future, a public-private partnership partially funded by the City of Chicago, to identify and recruit qualified, unemployed jobseekers for this program and others like it.

"As an innovative public-private partnership, Skills for Chicagoland's Future was thrilled to partner with UST Global and Step IT Up America by putting 35 unemployed Chicagoans into training and a job with a career ladder," said Marie Trzupsek Lynch, Skills for Chicagoland's Future president and CEO. "Step IT Up America's goal of offering this program to 1,000 women in 10 cities fits perfectly with our mission and our city, and we look forward to becoming a signature city where we put even more unemployed women back to work in newly created jobs."

Mayor Emanuel continues to make the education and training of Chicagoans in the burgeoning fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) a priority. By targeting the historically low minority participation in the technology sector, Step IT Up Chicago represents the City's continuing effort to ensure every resident of the City of Chicago is ready for the jobs of tomorrow, today. Additionally, Step IT Up Chicago's focus in STEM fields complements the City's efforts to create a demand-driven and targeted workforce development approach as laid out in the Mayor's Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs.

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