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Inspector General Announces First Budget Options Report for the City of Chicago

With a renewed focus on the mandate in its founding ordinance to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the operations of City government, the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (IGO) released its first report of Budget Options for the City today.

Modeled after reports created by the Congressional Budget Office and the Independent Budget Office in New York City, this document details the City's more than \$1 billion annual structural deficit and lists 24 possible options to decrease City spending or increase City revenue. When taken together, the IGO estimates the total savings and increased revenues of these options to be approximately \$244 million. For each option, the report presents a brief overview and the estimated savings or increased revenue the option would generate. The report also provides brief discussions of how proponents and opponents might argue each option. Some of the options have been publicly discussed for some time, while others are new.

"It is no secret to Chicagoans that the City is already well into a prolonged period of fiscal difficulty," said Inspector General Joseph Ferguson. "This report sets out today's challenging budgetary environment and provides residents and policymakers with possible options in order to start the discussion of how to return the City to a sustainable fiscal foundation."

The list of options is not meant to be an exhaustive one, and the inclusion of any option in this report is not, and should not be, construed as an endorsement by the IGO. It is the first report in what the IGO plans to be an ongoing series analyzing areas the City might consider confronting its fiscal challenges. The IGO will also be issuing periodic updates and corrections to this year's report.

Some options included in the first report are:

- Eliminating subsidized water and sewer usage for non-profit organizations to save \$15,200,000.
- Reducing staffing for Fire engines and trucks to four in order to save \$63,100,000.
- Eliminating the subsidy for World Business Chicago to save an estimated \$1,400,000
- Eliminating the regular use of traffic control aides in the Loop to save an estimated \$4,350,000

The IGO is charged by ordinance with promoting economy, efficiency, effectiveness and integrity in the operations of the City government. To help meet its mission, the IGO encourages City residents to send in budget reduction ideas for IGO consideration and analysis. These suggestions may be included in the IGO's next Budget Options report. Please send suggestions, ideas, comments, questions, corrections, and criticisms to: budgetoptions@chicagoinspectorgeneral.org.

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