

CHICAGO NEWS

Roseland now home to first-of-its-kind community law office

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CHICAGO — Chicago's Roseland neighborhood is now home to a first-of-its-kind community law office designed to help people with re-entry services.

The new office was opened as part of an initiative from Cook County and the Cook County Public Defender's Office to provide wrap-around support for people looking to take the next step in their lives.

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A ribbon cutting was held on Tuesday morning for the official opening of the Freedom Defense Center of Roseland, located near the intersection of East 114th Place and South Michigan Avenue on the South Side.

Members of Cook County's Public Defender's Office say through partnerships with four local organizations, the law office will not only be able to provide support with re-entry services but also support with housing, health care and violence prevention.

Officials said they hope the new office will be able to provide services to a part of the community that is often left in the dark.

"Unfortunately, there are some communities in our county that are disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system. This is one of them and we're hoping we can do something about that trajectory in so many young people's lives," Cook County Board President Prckwinkle said.

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"As you look around, Roseland is an area that sort of, you know, it is a legal desert, it's a resources desert in so many ways. So when you look at it geographically, it is one of the furthest southern Chicago neighborhoods, but when you have to go get access to attorneys that are far away and this is one way we can help direct that and impact that," Emmanuel Andre, the Deputy of Policy and Strategic Litigation at the Cook County Public Defender's Office.

Funding for the law office is coming from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Officials said the goal is to get off the ground and prove how successful the concept can be to further expand community law offices in Cook County and secure additional funding.

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