



**MEDIA ALERT  
FOR PLANNING PURPOSES**

**March 26, 2026**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Emilio Araujo  
Onward Neighborhood House  
[earaujo@onwardhouse.org](mailto:earaujo@onwardhouse.org) | (773) 242-5216

**Onward Neighborhood House to Break Ground on CARES Community Center**

*A Transformational Health and Human Services Hub for Chicago's Northwest Side*

**WHAT:**

Groundbreaking ceremony for the **Onward Neighborhood House CARES Community Center**, a new integrated, place-based hub designed to dramatically expand access to health care, food security, and wraparound human services for immigrant and low-income families in Belmont Cragin.

The Onward Neighborhood House CARES Community Center will bring primary, pediatric, and behavioral health services together with food access, education, and immigrant supports under one roof — strengthening coordination of care and reducing barriers for families navigating complex systems.

**WHEN:**

Monday, March 30, 2026  
Event begins: 9:30 a.m. CT

**WHERE:**

Future site of the Onward Neighborhood House CARES Community Center  
2644 N. Central Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60639

*Parking lot on the north side of the building is available for use during the event. Street parking is also available in the surrounding area. Additional logistics will be shared closer to the event.*

**WHY IT MATTERS:**

Belmont Cragin is one of Chicago's largest immigrant and Latino communities, yet families face persistent barriers to timely, preventive care. According to the [2025 Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment Report](#), 17% of Belmont Cragin residents are uninsured—nearly double the citywide rate — and the community has 30.4 primary care providers per 100,000 residents compared to 107.7 citywide.

The Onward Neighborhood House CARES Community Center is designed to help address these gaps by bringing multiple services together in one trusted location, strengthening access to care, coordination, and long-term health — foundations that support economic and social mobility.

**PARTICIPANTS:**

- Mario F. García, Executive Director, Onward Neighborhood House
- Elected officials and community leaders, including:
  - U.S. Representative Delia C. Ramirez, Illinois's 3rd Congressional District
  - Senator Graciela Guzmán, IL Senate District 20
  - Senator Omar Aquino, IL Senate District 2
  - Representative Eva-Dina Delgado, IL House District 3
  - Representative Will Guzzardi, IL House District 39
  - City of Chicago Chief of Staff Cristina Pacione-Zayas
  - Alderwoman Ruth Cruz, 30<sup>th</sup> Ward
- Partner organizations supporting health, behavioral health, food access, and family services
  - Reva and David Logan Foundation President, Richard Logan



- CommunityHealth CEO, Stephanie Willding
- Wright College President, Andres Oroz

#### **QUOTE FROM CONGRESSWOMAN RAMIREZ**

“Onward House shows us how, in community, we care for one another and help each other live with dignity, health, and prosperity. At a time when lifesaving services are being threatened and our diverse communities targeted, I am proud to have worked by their side to secure \$3 million in federal funding to expand Onward House's services with a new community center,” said Congresswoman Delia C. Ramirez. “The center will expand their live-saving work of providing food, shelter, and other vital assistance to our community members, whether they’ve been here for a decade or have just arrived. Today’s groundbreaking shows us what’s possible when our tax dollars are invested back in our communities.”

#### **VISUALS:**

- Ceremonial groundbreaking
- Community leaders and partners
- Renderings of the future CARES Community Center
- Onward Neighborhood House signage and branding
- Select elected officials available for interviews

---

#### **ABOUT ONWARD NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE**

**Onward Neighborhood House** is a community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to opening doors to improve lives and uplift communities through education, economic empowerment, and human services. Founded in 1893, Onward House has a long history of providing wraparound services and support to Chicago’s low-income and immigrant communities.

Throughout its history, Onward House has worked to address fragmented access to human services by building a comprehensive, community-centered safety net. The organization has continually adapted to meet participants where they are—responding to their physical location, educational background, health and nutrition needs, and professional development goals.

Today, Onward Neighborhood House operates out of three locations on the 5400 block of West Diversey Avenue in the Belmont Cragin neighborhood. Its programs include Early Childhood Education, including Special Education Services; a School Age Program; a Food Pantry; an Illinois Welcoming Center for immigrants and refugees; Adult Education; and Health Services, including a co-located health clinic operated by CommunityHealth.

For more information, visit [www.onwardhouse.org](http://www.onwardhouse.org).

**Onward Neighborhood House** es una organización comunitaria sin fines de lucro dedicada a abrir puertas para mejorar vidas y fortalecer comunidades a través de la educación, el empoderamiento económico y los servicios humanos. Fundada en 1893, Onward House cuenta con una larga trayectoria brindando servicios integrales y apoyo a comunidades inmigrantes y de bajos ingresos en Chicago.

*A lo largo de su historia, Onward House ha trabajado para abordar el acceso fragmentado a los servicios humanos mediante la creación de una red de apoyo integral y centrada en la comunidad. La organización se ha adaptado y ha crecido para atender a las personas donde se encuentran, considerando su ubicación física, nivel educativo, necesidades de salud y nutrición, así como sus objetivos de desarrollo profesional.*

*Actualmente, Onward Neighborhood House opera en tres ubicaciones en la cuadra 5400 de West Diversey Avenue, en el vecindario de Belmont Cragin. Sus programas incluyen Educación Infantil Temprana, incluidos Servicios de Educación Especial; un Programa para Niños en Edad Escolar; una Despensa de Alimentos; un Centro de Bienvenida de Illinois para inmigrantes y refugiados; Educación para Adultos; y Servicios de Salud, que incluyen una clínica de salud co-ubicada operada por CommunityHealth.*

Para más información, visite [www.onwardhouse.org](http://www.onwardhouse.org)

ENDS