

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Kamaria Morris,  
Assistant Director, Communications & PR  
**Phone:** 312.893.7109  
**Email:** [press@erikson.edu](mailto:press@erikson.edu)

## Erikson partners with Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton to offer Illinois leaders childhood trauma-focused session

*23 Illinois leaders will convene January 22-24 to amplify the state's justice reform efforts with a focus on childhood trauma through the McCormick Foundation Executive Fellows Program*



**Chicago, January 15, 2020** — As the new year begins, Erikson Institute partners with **Illinois Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton** as she amplifies efforts on justice reform through the state’s **Justice, Equity and Opportunity (JEO) Initiative**. Erikson will work with the lieutenant governor to provide a customized childhood trauma-focused program for 23 cross-sector leaders working directly with the JEO Initiative.

This leadership opportunity is a result of Lt. Governor Stratton’s experience as a 2017 fellow in the McCormick Foundation Executive Fellows (MFEF) program housed under Erikson’s Early Childhood Leadership Academy. The program, funded by the [Robert R. McCormick Foundation](#), provides influential leaders with dynamic, collective learning experiences that enhance their capacity to influence policy and advocate for systems alignment—leading to racial equity and positive outcomes

for young children and families. Erikson staff will tailor the program to focus on the long-lasting effects of childhood trauma and benefits of early childhood investment as it relates to the JEO Initiative's work. The sessions will take place January 22-24, 2020 at Erikson.

"As part of our Justice, Equity and Opportunity Initiative, we spent the past year visiting jails and prisons across Illinois and talking to men and women who are incarcerated, many of them parents separated from their littlest ones," **Lt. Governor Stratton** said. "Incarceration can be a life-altering experience, not only for those behind bars, but also for the children whose relationship with their moms and dads will be dramatically and traumatically changed. We must do better by them."

The objective of the JEO Initiative is to centralize the state's justice reform efforts and promote economic opportunities for communities impacted by a broken criminal justice system. This work includes prioritizing trauma-related and early childhood research and programs, addressing the needs of children with parents who are incarcerated, applying trauma-informed approaches to criminal justice responses and processes, as well as providing training to law enforcement.

"The McCormick Foundation is deeply committed to advancing systems and policy change in early childhood and is delighted to partner with Erikson and Lt. Governor Stratton to shed light on the opportunities for the early childhood and justice systems to better support young children affected by justice involvement," said **Cornelia Grumman**, education director of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, which funds this special session.

The childhood trauma-focused session is grounded in the latest research from national experts, and will help identify early childhood policy opportunities that improve the lives of children whose parents or primary caregivers are incarcerated, as well as aid in justice reform efforts. This cohort of leaders from government, legislative, nonprofit and law enforcement sectors will enhance their knowledge on:

- Using a trauma and racial equity-informed lens for policy and program development;
- The critical importance of secure attachment in relation to child development and a child's ability to learn and form relationships later in life; and
- The science of early brain development and the impact on adult outcomes later in life.

These learning objectives will boost the JEO Initiative's efforts to coordinate across early childhood and justice systems, address the constructs of white privilege and racism embedded in institutions and systems, and make equitable decisions on policies, practices, programs, and resource allocation.

### **Cohort for the McCormick Foundation Executive Fellows Program, Special Session: Childhood Trauma**

- **Keith Calloway**, Confidential Assistant to the Executive Director, Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board
- **Commander Patricia Casey**, Youth Division, Chicago Police Department
- **Representative Fred Crespo**, Illinois State House of Representatives, 44th District
- **Edith Crigler**, Member, Illinois Prisoner Review Board
- **Mackenzie Eisen**, Education Analyst, Office of the Governor of Illinois
- **Ricardo Estrada**, President and CEO, Metropolitan Family Services
- **Commissioner Bridget Gainer**, Cook County Board of Commissioners, 10<sup>th</sup> District
- **Sheriff Ron Hain**, Kane County Sheriff's Office
- **Representative Sonya Harper**, Illinois State House of Representatives, 6th District
- **Sydney Holman**, House Liaison, Office of the Governor of Illinois
- **Bobby Mannis**, Policy Director, Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Illinois
- **Christopher Merrett**, Member, Governor's Rural Affairs Council
- **Senator Julie Morrison**, Illinois State Senate, 29th District
- **Heidi Mueller**, Director, Department of Juvenile Justice
- **Representative Lindsay Parkhurst**, Illinois State House of Representatives, 79th District
- **Colette Payne**, Policy Associate, Cabrini Green Legal Aid
- **Dartesia Pitts**, General Counsel, Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Illinois
- **Dr. Vidhya Prakash**, Member, Illinois Council on Women and Girls
- **Quinn Rallins**, Director, Justice, Equity and Opportunity (JEO) Initiative
- **Dr. Teresa Ramos**, Vice President of Public Policy & Advocacy, Illinois Action for Children
- **Kathryn Saltmarsh**, Executive Director, Sentencing Policy Advisory Council
- **Jason Stamps**, Director, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
- **State's Attorney Daniel Wright**, Sangamon County State's Attorney's Office

*Erikson Institute educates, inspires, and promotes leadership to serve the needs of children and families. We have the premier graduate school dedicated to child development. We provide direct services to our community's children and families. We are leaders in influencing early childhood policy. We work tirelessly every day so that all children can achieve optimal educational, social, emotional, and physical well-being. At Erikson Institute, we know that investing in the early years of children will last a lifetime.*

*Erikson's Early Childhood Leadership Academy (ECLA) programs reach a broad range of leaders within the field of early childhood as well as those working outside the field who influence sectors that impact children and families. To date, 131 individuals have successfully completed ECLA programs designed to provide content knowledge and connect leaders to a*

*growing network of early childhood advocates who can identify opportunities to leverage investments, improve the quality of services and programs, and influence meaningful change for children and families in their communities.*

###

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Kamaria Morris, Assistant Director, Communications & PR at 312-893-7109 or [kmorris@erikson.edu](mailto:kmorris@erikson.edu).