



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TASK FORCE ON
REMOVING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

*Reforms Cut License Types by Two-Thirds since 2011, Reduce Red Tape and Implement Business
Friendly Technology Improvements to Streamline Interactions with City*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced recommendations from the Task Force on Removing Barriers to Employment and Entrepreneurship, which has identified actions to make it easier for businesses operating in the city. Based on the recommendations, the City is making a number of reforms to benefit small businesses across Chicago.

“Over the last five years we have worked hard to make City Hall a partner and not a problem for neighborhood businesses across Chicago,” Mayor Emanuel said. “These reforms will keep that progress going and ensure we continue to create economic opportunities for all parts of Chicago.”

During its first two months of meetings, the task force examined city processes and regulations to start a business and assessed communication tools for improved business experiences. The task force identified reforms that can be made to provide immediate benefit to Chicago's businesses:

- Further reform Chicago's business licenses to reduce unnecessary red tape and modernize regulation;
- Codify actions that reduce burdens and delays and increase transparency in administrative policy making; and
- Leverage technology to improve business experiences with the city.

In 2012, the Mayor's license reforms reduced the number of businesses license types from 117 to 49, reducing number of licenses businesses needed to obtain and saving money and time. In the latest reforms the City has identified numerous opportunities to consolidate or cut outdated licensing regulations, reducing the total number of business licenses to 40. The reduction would make the total number of business licenses in Chicago 70 percent fewer than Washington D.C. and 25 percent fewer than New York City.

The City will also modernize its regulation of home occupations by removing limits on employees that work outside the home and eliminating prohibitions from selling home-manufactured products

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at other retail locations. These changes provide greater flexibility to more than 2,200 currently licensed home-based businesses to grow their business and provide opportunities for thousands of other home-based entrepreneurs that are unable to operate under our current regulations.

Other inspection reforms will remove the need for the same city inspecting group to visit a business for both building permit and business license inspections. This will allow better coordination among separate city departments to reduce the number of unique visits to ensure compliance.

For retail food establishments, which have one of the highest rates of failure on an initial inspection, the Chicago Departments of Public Health and Business Affairs and Consumer Protection will partner to provide new tools for low-risk establishments to navigate requirements and prepare for inspections. Each unique inspection adds 7-10 days to the time it takes to open a business or renew a license – costing precious time and money. Over 2,000 businesses are set to benefit from inspection reforms, including 850 new food establishments each year.

To take advantage of 21st-century technologies that improve business experiences, the City will expand the use of email notifications for licensing to include tips and collect feedback. The Small Business Center at BACP will also implement online scheduling for business consultant appointments with text message reminders. Additionally, payments for public way use, public vehicle and special event permits will be put online.

The task force will issue a complete set of recommendations including an assessment of the value of fingerprint background checks and other priority reforms to improve the ease of doing business in Chicago this winter. These reforms come on the heels of numerous signs of growth in Chicago's economy. Earlier this week, a new report from the Illinois Department of Employment Security showed that more people are working in Chicago than any time since 2000. Chicago has also set a post-recession record for the number of tower cranes operating and reached a 15-year high in industrial occupancy rates.

The Chicago Task Force on Removing Barriers to Employment and Entrepreneurship members are:

Anthony Beale, Alderman 9th Ward
Emma Mitts, Alderman 37th Ward
Patrick O'Connor, Alderman 40th Ward
Andrea Zopp, Deputy Mayor
Maria Guerra Lapacek, Commissioner, BACP
Judy Frydland, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Buildings
Patti Scudiero, Zoning Administrator
Rebekah Scheinfeld, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Transportation
Soo Choi, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Human Resources
Mona Noriega, Commissioner, Chicago Commission on Human Relations
Cate Costa, Director of Entrepreneurship, Chicago Urban League
Melinda Kelly, Executive Director, Chatham Business Organization
Anthony Lowery, Director, Policy and Advocacy, Safer Foundation
Ricardo Meza, Officer, Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale, P.C.
Theresa Mintle, President and CEO, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
Melissa McIntyre, Executive Director, Edison Park Chamber of Commerce

Lisa Noller, Partner, Foley & Lardner LLP
D. Lorenzo Padron, Chairman and CEO, Latin American Chamber of Commerce
Preston L. Pugh, Partner, Pugh, Jones & Johnson
Anthony L. Schumann, Partner, Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, P.A.
Tanya Triche, Vice President, General Counsel, Illinois Retail Merchants Association
Sam Toia, President and CEO, Illinois Restaurant Association
Howard Tullman, CEO, 1871

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