



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER TO PROTECT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES DURING COVID-19

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today signed an executive order explicitly ensuring that all benefits, opportunities, and services provided or administered by the City of Chicago are accessible to all residents, regardless of birth country or current citizenship status.

“This order is more than just an official decree, it is a statement of our values as a city and as Americans,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Since COVID-19 first reached our city’s doorstep, we have been working around the clock to ensure all our residents are secure and supported, including our immigrant and refugee communities, who are among the most vulnerable to the impact of this pandemic. Here in Chicago, saying ‘we are all in this together’ means that during this crisis, no one gets left out and no one gets left behind.”

The City of Chicago faces a severe and unprecedented threat to its residents in COVID-19. While this disease is presenting challenges of historic proportions to the lives of residents, this order will ensure that all Chicagoans have fair and equal access to benefits, opportunities, and services provided by the City, including anything provided as disaster relief to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Not all of Chicago's residents qualify for federal stimulus checks, state unemployment insurance or other economic assistance due to their documentation status,” said 22nd Ward Alderman Michael D. Rodriguez. “These Chicagoans are vital community members who work in various industries and help our great city to thrive every day. These Chicagoans are our family members, co-workers, neighbors and friends. I applaud the Mayor for standing with undocumented individuals and families to ensure their eligibility for any economic assistance offered by the City of Chicago during this global pandemic.”

To address the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic poses to Chicago's communities, including its immigrant community, the City of Chicago has implemented numerous programs to aid all residents during this extraordinarily challenging time, including:

- Establishing the COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grant program, which provides disaster relief aid for the housing costs faced by individuals and families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Offering online Enrichment Learning Resources through Chicago Public Schools for all students at all levels, so that each student, regardless of immigration status, can continue to pursue a top-notch education; and



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- Starting a \$100 million Chicago Small Business Resiliency Fund to provide small businesses with disaster relief cash flow during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is available to any entrepreneur, including immigrant business owners.

“Most individuals in our immigrant community labor in industries pummeled by the COVID-19 crisis, such as restaurants and hotels. Although many of these workers collectively pay billions of dollars in taxes, they are excluded from the federal aid package signed by Congress. We must meet this moment together; no one should be excluded. I thank Mayor Lightfoot for ensuring that everyone in Chicago has somewhere to turn to for support,” said 12th Ward Alderman George Cardenas.

Since taking office, Mayor Lightfoot has made intentional efforts to protect the immigrant community and is committed to continuing that support. She has:

- Visited multiple immigrant and refugee communities throughout Chicago during the summer and fall months when the federal government was threatening raids to personally share “Know Your Rights” information with businesses and community members;
- Invested an additional \$250,000 into Chicago's Legal Protection Fund, increasing its funding by nearly 20%;
- Passed the Accountability on Communication and Transparency (ACT) Ordinance, which officially terminates ICE's access to Chicago Police Department databases related to civil immigration enforcement activities and reaffirms the City's commitment not to cooperate with or facilitate any ICE effort to target Chicago's immigrant families;
- Committed \$2.7 million to the 2020 census, with a focus on hard-to-count communities, which includes immigrants; and
- Hosted the administration's first citizenship ceremony at City Hall.

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