



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES \$12.5 MILLION IN TRANSPORTATION COST RELIEF

Chicago Moves will provide financial assistance for transportation expenses for 150,000 Chicagoans through \$150 physical prepaid gas cards for up to 50,000 drivers and \$50 prepaid transit cards for up to 100,000 riders.

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced Chicago Moves, a financial assistance program aimed at providing financial relief for Chicago residents struggling with transportation expenses, making Chicago the first and largest major city in the country to do so. Chicago Moves aims to help combat spiking costs of gas and rising inflation by providing \$12.5 million in relief funding for disadvantaged Chicagoans. The program will be comprised of \$7.5 million earmarked for \$150 physical prepaid cards eligible for redemption at local Chicago gas stations as well as \$5 million earmarked for \$50 prepaid cards eligible for use on public transit.

"The last two years have been exceedingly difficult for many of our residents, in particular our most vulnerable populations. Through the pandemic, we have collectively faced tragedy, and many among us have faced accompanying economic hardship. Now, as inflation steadily rises and the cost of gas continues to soar, our disadvantaged residents are carrying a significant financial burden," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Chicago Moves endeavors to provide much needed relief and ease some of this pain. By subsidizing the cost of gas and transit, this program will enable participants to save their resources for other critical expenses. Chicago is a city that moves. People have to be able to get to work, school, places of worship, medical offices, grocery stores. The goal of this program is to help make those moves easier."

"This is a huge step toward making Chicago more accessible to those having to choose between gas, a ride on the CTA, or the grocery store. Especially for essential workers who do not have the choice to work remotely, this is a way to provide many folks relief as they commute to work each day," said Chicago City Clerk Anna Valencia. "I look forward to continuing this partnership with Mayor Lightfoot and our city's leaders to help those experiencing economic hardship breathe a sigh of relief."



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Chicago Moves comes at a critical moment in recent history for Chicago and the nation. Over the past several months, domestic and international pressures have forced the cost of gas to record highs. According to [data from AAA](#) and the [Center for Neighborhood Technology](#) (CNT), Chicagoans are now paying an average of 4.5% of their annual income at the pump, compared to 3.1% of their annual income one year ago. This 1.4% increase is consistent with statewide trends, where the cost of gas has similarly risen by approximately \$1.45 per gallon over the last year as well as nationwide trends, where the cost of gas has increased by \$1.38 per gallon over the previous year. According to the same findings, Americans are now spending nearly \$70 each time they fill up their tanks.

“Our residents need to be able to get to work, to drop their kids off at school, to get around,” said Alderman Pat Dowell, 3rd Ward. “Thank you to Mayor Lightfoot for her commitment to ensuring residents, especially our most vulnerable residents, have options as they deal with the financial burden of soaring gas prices.”

“As the cost of gas continues to soar, the City has a responsibility to ensure our most vulnerable residents are not overlooked,” said Chairman of Finance Committee Alderman Waguespack, 32nd Ward. “Chicago Moves allows our residents to get where they need to go without an additional financial burden. I am pleased to stand with Mayor Lightfoot as she advocates for our residents.”

To make this program possible, the City has partnered with Fifth Third Bank and Onbe, a market-leading corporate disbursements fintech. Fifth Third and Onbe are providing the physical prepaid cards and payment processing for the program with no transaction fees, enabling the entirety of the program funding to be provided directly to residents.

“Fifth Third Bank is pleased to support the City of Chicago and those eligible for Chicago Moves. We recognize the importance of the role we play in our communities, especially in the most challenging of times,” said Mark Hoppe, Regional President of Fifth Third Bank, Chicago.

“Together with Fifth Third, we’re offering the City of Chicago a faster, more strategic way to distribute funds to residents,” said Bala Janakiraman, CEO of Onbe. “The City of Chicago can expect a seamless payments experience that ensures Chicago residents quickly receive their cards with no transaction fees. As active members of the Chicago community, we’re pleased to lend our expertise to the Chicago Moves program.”

Up to 50,000 physical prepaid cards of \$150 will be distributed to eligible residents via a lottery system. These cards will be valid for one year after receipt and may



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only be spent on the cost of fuel at gas stations located within Chicago. Applications are limited to one per household. Beginning in May, cards will be distributed in five successive monthly waves of 10,000 residents.

To be eligible for these cards, applicants must:

- Be residents of Chicago
- Be at least 18 years old
- Have a current and valid City sticker with correct mailing information for their vehicle
- Have a household income at or below 140% of the Area Median Income for Chicago ([available here](#))

“This is a responsible approach to provide working people with transportation cost relief as they commute to and from their jobs,” said Bob Reiter, President, Chicago Federation of Labor. “We support the Mayor’s effort to uplift Chicago residents working to support their families and earn a meaningful living.”

In addition to the physical prepaid cards, the City will also distribute or add value to 100,000 cards for use on public transit in the amount of \$50 each. These cards will not only help ease the burden of record-high gas prices but will help advance clean transportation by offering weeks of free public transit access to thousands of commuting Chicagoans. Of these 100,000 transit cards, 75,000 will be distributed based on geographic data, prioritizing high CTA-utilizing residents in low-income neighborhoods. An additional 25,000 transit cards will be distributed citywide.

“The CTA remains the most affordable and convenient way to get around the city, and we work hard every day to provide the essential service that so many Chicagoans rely on—especially when public transit is the only option,” said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. “Public transit is key to the city’s recovery from the pandemic, and as workers begin returning to the office and residents return to their routines, our trains and buses are ready to get them there.”

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“Surging costs are making it harder for our neighbors to make ends meet. Regardless of what global forces are at play, we are heartened by local efforts to meet the urgent financial needs of the community,” said Director of Economic Security for Illinois Harish I. Patel. “We know that the best form of support—especially when the need is urgent—is direct cash. ESIL fully supports the City of



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Chicago’s plan to provide prepaid transit and physical prepaid cards to low-income Chicagoans, alongside other policies that invest directly in families, workers, and neighborhoods.”

“This is certainly a step in the right direction. It will encourage more people to use public transportation and reduce carbon emissions,” said Benjamin de la Peña, CEO of the Chicago-based Shared-Use Mobility Center. “This shows promise that future city policy will be focused even more on shared mobility—bikes, shared cars, and ride-hailing—that can assist household budgets and help end our addiction to fossil fuels.”

Applications for Chicago Moves will open on April 27, 2022. More information will be made available pending City Council approval.

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