



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT LAUNCHES NEW COMPREHENSIVE FINES AND FEES PROGRAM FOR MOTORISTS FACING ECONOMIC HARDSHIP ALONG WITH REFORMS FOR ALL CHICAGOANS**

*On April 14, motorists can enroll in the Clear Path Relief (CPR) Pilot program, which offers drivers in debt a chance at compliance and economic opportunity. In addition, all residents will be able to take advantage of a "fix-it" defense for expired sticker violations.*

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced a first-of-its-kind initiative to help alleviate financial hardships for Chicago motorists mired in debt. The Clear Path Relief (CPR) Pilot program and the Fix-It Defense for compliance tickets mark the third round of relief efforts initiated by Mayor Lightfoot since 2019, in an ongoing series of significant reforms taking on regressive fines and fees.

The policies further pave a viable roadway to economic stability for residents with outstanding fines and reduce the reliance of fees that disproportionately impact low-income communities on the City's budget. Chicago is among the first cities in the nation to consider the financial capabilities of its residents when assessing fines and fees.

"Each year, tens of thousands of City residents are placed into greater economic hardship as a result of accumulated delinquent parking debt because they lack the resources to pay fines and fees," said Mayor Lightfoot. "With these ongoing set of reforms, we hope to give Chicago motorists additional options to clear the slate and make payments appropriate for their income level."

**CLEAR PATH RELIEF**

The Clear Path Relief (CPR) Pilot program will benefit residents and families with accumulated delinquent ticket debt and financial penalties. CPR provides eligible low-income motorists with support for specific vehicle-related debt -- compliance, red light, speeding, and parking violations (excluding expired meter tickets.)

To qualify, applicants must have existing vehicle-related debt. Additionally, they must reside in a household currently enrolled in the Utility Billing Relief program



(UBR) or earn a household income of less than, or equal to, 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. (As an example, a family of four can earn no more than \$82,250 per year.) Benefits include the forgiveness of debt, a discount on new violations, and extended time to pay fines:

- Motorists who pay off the original fine amount (no penalties or interest) for eligible tickets issued within the last three (3) years can have all older eligible debt waived;
- Any new eligible tickets issued within 365 days from the enrollment date, and paid on time, will be reduced by 50%;
- New unpaid eligible tickets will not be assessed penalties until after December 31, 2023.

Expired meter ticket debt cannot be reduced or eliminated through this program. To successfully complete this program, and have older non-meter debt waived, participants must complete their payment plan and pay their meter tickets in full or enroll them in a payment plan. CPR applications will be accepted through December 31, 2023.

### **FIX-IT DEFENSE**

The Fix-It Defense is available to all motorists, regardless of income. The program benefits any motorist with an expired city sticker violation, and/or an expired license plate violation, and can be used once per violation for the lifetime of a license plate. Claimants requesting to have a ticket dismissed must purchase and display the appropriate sticker, contest the ticket (online, by mail, or in-person), and submit proof of compliance (purchase and display of the sticker on the vehicle.) Tickets issued for the same violation within 30 days prior to the compliance date will also be dismissed. The Fix-It Defense is available until the Clear Path Relief program ends on December 31, 2023.

The Clear Path Relief and Fix-It Defense programs add another layer to the Mayor's long-term effort to implement evidence-based policies and investments to address entrenched poverty and economic hardship. There is automatic eligibility for the 10,733 residents already enrolled in the City's Utility Billing Relief (UBR) program, which was rolled out in July 2020. For the 10,733 residents currently enrolled in the City's Utility Billing Relief (UBR) program that launched in July 2020, there is a streamlined application process that doesn't require additional income verification.

“Building upon the success of our Utility Billing Relief program, which helps low-income City of Chicago residents manage water and sewer bills in a similar way, we're excited to launch this third tranche of fines and fees reforms,” said Reshma Soni, Comptroller, City of Chicago. “We've never done anything like this before and this program will help additional motorists who need financial relief the most.”



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The City has launched efforts to encourage broad participation in the program. It has identified the top six (6) aldermanic wards with the most UBR participants and traffic debt and partnered with several community organizations to assist in helping to register qualified motorists. Informational palm cards have been distributed at payment centers, and there will be supplemental notices on tickets being issued by parking enforcement officers.

The Clear Path Relief program and Fix-It Defense arrive two years after Mayor Lightfoot launched the *Solutions Toward Ending Poverty (STEP) Summit*, where hundreds of Chicagoans gathered with the Mayor to address one of the City's greatest challenges - entrenched poverty and economic hardship.

For more information about the Clear Path Relief program and Fix-It Defense, please call (312) 744-7275, Monday – Friday 7am-7pm, except holidays; or visit [www.chicago.gov/cpr](http://www.chicago.gov/cpr).

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