



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 13, 2023

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES EXECUTIVE ORDER ON PAY EQUITY AUDIT
FOR CITY WORKERS AND OTHER WORKPLACE EQUITY EFFORTS DURING
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

The new Executive Order requires a bi-annual gender and racial pay equity audit of the City of Chicago workforce, complementing efforts like a nation-leading Gender Based Violence and workplace harassment training and expanded parental leave for all City employees starting in 2023

CHICAGO — Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, with Department of Human Resources (DHR) Commissioner Christopher Owen, Director of the Office of Budget Management (OBM) Susie Park, and Department of Assets and Information (AIS) Commissioner Sandra Blakemore, signed an Executive Order requiring DHR, OBM, and AIS to conduct a bi-annual comprehensive pay equity audit of the City of Chicago workforce, focused on identifying both racial and gender pay discrepancies. This action aims to bring to light the stubborn pay inequities that persist in our labor market — both in Chicago and nationwide — and demonstrate the City's commitment to closing these gaps.

"I am deeply proud of the ways in which my administration has centered equity, particularly around gender and race," **said Mayor Lightfoot**. "These announcements, which will address gender and racial pay gaps, underscore my commitment to making the City of Chicago a leader in creating safer and more equitable workplaces. I call on partners in the private sector, as well as my colleagues at our Sister Agencies, to join me in not only taking an intentional look at their own workforces, but pursuing policies that create better, more inclusive workplaces for all employees."

Mayor Lightfoot also announced that the City of Chicago is launching a first-of-its-kind training for citywide municipal City staff on addressing gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace. This mandatory training will be conducted in partnership with Futures Without Violence's (FUTURES') *Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center*. Launching in March with a day and a half training for all Commissioners, this effort will make Chicago one of the largest public sector workforces in the country to be trained through this comprehensive curriculum.



“As one of the largest employers in Chicago, it is critical that we lead by example, take action to ensure that our policies and employer practices are equitable, and provide a workplace where employees feel safe from harassment,” **said Chris Owen, Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources.** “The bi-annual pay equity audit and citywide GBV and Harassment Prevention training will help us in our efforts, and I’m proud to help ensure that the City of Chicago continues to center workplace equity.”

Joined by partners from the Mayor’s Women’s Advisory Council, GBV [Strategic Plan](#) Implementation Task Force, advocates for gender equity, and Labor, the Mayor also highlighted the following actions the City has taken under her leadership, in partnership with advocates, Labor, and City Council, to create workplaces where women and all workers can thrive:

- Expanded to 12 weeks of paid parental leave for City employees including both the birth and non-birthing parent, as well as those fostering, adopting, or giving birth through surrogacy (details below).
- Strengthened citywide [Sexual Harassment](#) laws.
- Passed the ChiBizStrong Ordinance which strengthened protections against wage theft, raised the minimum wage for domestic workers, and required a written contract for all domestic workers.
- [Reformed the City of Chicago’s internal background check policy](#) to support employment access for returning residents who seek 2,500+ annual City of Chicago government roles.
- Launched the [Your Home is Someone’s Workplace campaign](#) for education and awareness of worker rights for domestic workers.
- Launched a one-time [cash assistance program](#) for domestic workers to help alleviate the financial burden that they endured during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Passed the *Bodily Autonomy for All* ordinance to prevent workplace retaliation and discrimination against individuals for receiving reproductive healthcare or gender affirming care.
- Raised the Minimum Wage, implemented the Fair Workweek Ordinance and staffed the Office of Labor Standards to enhance worker’s rights education and enforcement.
- Opened the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) Career Center, housed at 2102 W. Ogden Avenue, to assist people with disabilities in gaining access to meaningful and sustainable job and career opportunities.
- Launched an [Employee Diversity Dashboard](#) on the City’s workforce diversity data to serve as a tool to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the City’s departments.



- Published a data and recommendations report “[Addressing the Economic Barriers COVID-19 Exacerbated for Women in Chicago](#)” in partnership with the Mayor’s Women’s Advisory Council, World Business Chicago, Women Employed, and the Civic Consulting Alliance.
- Passed [a resolution in recognition of Transgender Day of Resilience](#) and in memory of Elise Malarly, which also supported *Hire Trans Now*. The Mayor’s Office is partnering with the Chicago Therapy Collective to evaluate and develop trans-inclusive employment practices and recruit 250 new *Hire Trans Now* businesses.

“We can’t talk about the wage gap for transgender workers unless we talk about the employment and safety gap. Despite having equal or more education and skills, transgender workers are least likely to be hired when compared to cisgender workers. Further, when trans workers are hired, they make 60 to 70 cents to the dollar. Despite these harsh economic realities, trans workers consistently report that their primary concern in the workplace remains safety from harm and violence — this is especially true for trans women and trans women of color,” **said Iggy Ladden, Founder and Director of Chicago Therapy Collective.** “We commend the initial steps the City has taken this year toward true gender equity in the workplace, most notably with the passing of the Hire Trans Now Resolution that set clear expectations for trans-inclusion across the city. We look forward to continuing to support the city in ensuring that its various efforts extend to trans people most impacted by gender inequity and violence”

Workplace Gender-Based Violence and Harassment Prevention Training

In 2021, Mayor Lightfoot published the City’s first-ever [Citywide Strategic Plan to Address Gender-based Violence and Human Trafficking](#), generating historic momentum to address the public health and public safety crisis that includes domestic violence, sexual violence, harassment, and human trafficking. Gender-based violence (GBV) not only impacts individuals, families, and communities but workplaces as well. As one of the largest employers in Chicago, the City has a deep responsibility to increase its capacity and knowledge to address GBV in all its forms.

For the past year, the City of Chicago Mayor’s Office and the Department of Human Resources (DHR) have partnered with FUTURES Without Violence (FUTURES) through their *Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center* to develop a robust, tailored and intentional training program for all City employees. The citywide training is launching this month with a multi-day training required for all Commissioners. It will roll-out to all the City’s supervisors and employees throughout 2023. The goals of the training include:



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



1. To *Realize* the impacts of trauma related to gender-based violence on staff and residents.
2. To *Recognize* the elements of that trauma and how they may manifest in our workplaces as well as how City employees may interact with residents who have experienced GBV.
3. To *Respond* with survivor-centered approaches that foster safety, stability, and well-being.

The training aligns with the administration’s efforts to resist policies and practices that are re-traumatizing to survivors and those impacted by GBV to ensure every City employee can work and thrive in a safe, productive, and equitable workplace. The training program was informed by focus groups with City employees in the Fall of 2022 and the curricula will be informed by an advisory body that includes City staff and community-based providers that serve survivors.

“The City is moving in the right direction by prioritizing gender-based violence and pay equity,” **said Karla Altmayer and Sheerine Alemzadeh, co-founders and co-directors of Healing to Action.** “May the City continue to center and uplift survivors by passing meaningful initiatives towards ending gender inequity.”

“During the creation of the City’s gender-based violence (GBV) strategic plan and our work on the GBV Taskforce, members shared new and thoughtful ideas for advancements and greater engagement to address GBV and support survivors. I am heartened and motivated to know that Futures Without Violence will assist the City to implement one of the strategic plan’s goals — a mandatory GBV training series for all City employees,” **said Linda Xóchitl Tortolero, President and CEO of Mujeres Latinas en Accion.** “It’s a critical step in recognizing how GBV affects all Chicago communities, and we have a shared responsibility to prevent and end violence.”

“We applaud the City of Chicago for its commitment to building a workplace culture that is trauma-informed and makes respect for all employees a priority. FUTURES looks forward to partnering with the City so its workforce has the knowledge and skills to both prevent harassment and to support colleagues experiencing gender-based violence,” **said Esta Soler, President, Futures Without Violence.**

Pay Equity Executive Order

Today’s Executive Order by Mayor Lightfoot requires a bi-annual (every two years) pay equity audit of City of Chicago governmental employees. This action aligns with the City of Chicago’s commitment to close racial, ethnic and gender wage gaps and address issues of pay inequity in our city. As a part of this effort, the City of Chicago,



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



led by the Commissioner of Human Resources, the Director of the Office of Budget Management, and the Commissioner of Assets and Information Services will, on a bi-annual basis:

1. Conduct a pay audit of the City workforce to identify gender and racial inequities in employee compensation.
2. Publish a report compiling the findings of the audit including, at a minimum, a comparison of pay by job title, bargaining unit, sex, race, and ethnicity.
3. Make the report available to the public by publishing it on the Department of Human Resources website.
4. Act upon the results of the audit to address any gender or racial disparities in earnings.

This announcement comes the day before Equal Pay Day — March 14th — the date on the calendar that demonstrates how far into the year women must work in order to earn what an average White man earned in the previous year. According to the American Association of University Women's analysis of U. S. Census Bureau data, women on average continue to be paid just 77 cents to every dollar earned by a white man — a gap that is wider for women of color, women with a disability, and trans women. In fact, Black women are paid only 64 cents for every dollar a white man is paid, Latina women only 54 cents and Native women only 51 cents.

“While many systemic issues are at the root of lower wages for working women, at the heart of the gender pay gap are gender discrimination and racial discrimination. I applaud Mayor Lightfoot for taking action. Conducting an Equity Audit is about making sure women and men are paid fairly and equitably for the work they do,” **said Felicia Davis Blakely, President and CEO of the Chicago Foundation for Women**

“It’s time to pay women what they’re worth,” **said Audra Wilson, president and CEO of the Shriver Center on Poverty Law.** “Women earn less than men in nearly every occupation, including occupations dominated by women. That’s why we’re thrilled that Mayor Lightfoot is taking steps to ensure pay equity across city government staff.”

“Women continue to face a persistent pay gap and barriers to equity in the workplace. Women Employed is focused on removing barriers to economic equity and influencing employer practices that increase economic equity for working women. We are thrilled to see the City of Chicago lead once again as one of the city’s largest employers and prioritize pay equity and support for gender-based violence and harassment survivors in the workplace. These two measures are vital to empowering women and ensuring a strong economy, communities, and families. When women



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



thrive Chicago prospers,” **said Cherita Ellens, President and CEO, Women Employed.**

Expanded Parental Leave

Last year, Mayor Lightfoot and Labor reached an agreement on the benefit of expanded paid parental leave for both birthing and non-birthing parents. The new policy took effect January 1, 2023. Under the new policy, City employees are eligible to receive up to twelve (12) weeks paid parental leave regardless of whether they are the birthing or non-birthing parent. With this expansion, the City became the most progressive large city in the Midwest and is one of the most innovative in the country. The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) has not yet accepted the benefit and therefore the City has not reached an agreement with them.

This policy applies to those growing their family by birth, adoption, or foster care as well as for those acting as a surrogate. Employees will receive 100% of their pay for the entirety of the 12 weeks. To be eligible for this benefit, City employees must be eligible for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), meaning they must work for the City for at least 12 months before taking leave and worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the leave.

The City’s prior policy had not been revised since 2011 and provided between six to eight weeks of paid leave for birth parents depending on the type of birth and only two weeks for non-birth parents.

According to Family Values at Work, women who take paid leave after a child’s birth are more likely to be employed the following year and report increased wages than women who do not take leave. First-time mothers who utilized paid leave were 26.3% less likely to quit their jobs and 18.2% more likely to work for the same employer after the birth of their first child. Additionally, paid leave policies create stronger parity in caregiving roles between the birthing parent and the non-birthing parent.

“We know that paid family leave leads to improved physical and mental health of those giving birth and their babies and is beneficial to the whole family. The City is right to expand this benefit in an effort to ensure that all families with newborns have the support they need to thrive,” **said Allison Arwady, M.D., Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health.**

###