



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT WILL JOIN AARP ILLINOIS AT TOWN HALL TO ADDRESS CHICAGO'S SENIOR POPULATION ON HEALTH CONCERNS AND GUIDELINES RELATED TO COVID-19**

*Chicago announces additional supports and services in place for seniors in Chicago*

**Chicago** — AARP Illinois and Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced they will cohost a telephone town hall next week joined by Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler from the City's Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) to engage directly with the City's senior population. The town hall was developed to address to growing questions and concerns about health, wellness and service offerings in response to the novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), and it will address thousands of Chicago residents on Thursday, March 26 at 7 p.m. In advance of the Telephone Town Hall, AARP and Mayor Lori Lightfoot will host a Facebook Live Monday afternoon at 3:30 p.m.

The sessions will offer listeners a chance to learn how to access the resources in place throughout Chicago, including those made available by the City to offer assistance older people, as well as those caring for them. DFSS is communicating with nearly 40,000 seniors across the city via ongoing robocalls with information and guidance from the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) regarding COVID-19. The department has also taken several steps to help the senior population including delivery of boxed meals food, arranging for transportation options and helping those most in need continue to have care in place.

"It's times like these that it is critical for organizations to band together in helping keep members of the general public, specifically those at a higher risk, healthy and informed," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I am pleased to join AARP in doing just that. Safeguarding the health and wellness of Chicagoans is our top priority during these difficult times, and I want to thank AARP Illinois for their partnership in creating an event that will help us to communicate the robust response plan put in place by the City along with its public and private partners."



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The town hall will be available to 41,000 AARP members in Chicago as well as members of the general public through a Facebook and Twitter Livestream. Data shows that members of the older population, specifically people that are age 60 or older are more vulnerable to COVID-19, which causes a respiratory illness that can lead to serious cases of pneumonia.

“People who are 60 and older are at an increased risk for serious illness from COVID-19, especially those living in long-term care settings where patients are grouped in a communal space and the virus can easily spread,” said AARP Illinois State Director Bob Gallo. “AARP has been working to promote the health and well-being of older Americans for more than sixty years and is more committed to do so than ever during this worldwide pandemic.”

In addition to working to ensure that older adults, their families and those caring for them have the most accurate and up-to-date information to protect themselves from COVID-19 and prevent the spread to others, AARP has also been working with City leaders on other concerns related to the outbreak, including:

- The need for robust support and resources provided to states and local communities, including health care professionals and first responders, who are on the front lines of this effort.
- The potential for fraud as scammers prey on older adults during this time – using headlines as opportunities to steal money or sensitive personal information.
- Social isolation and the risks associated with leaving vulnerable older adults without access to food and regular human contact during this time.
- Worries about financial security during uncertain economic times with markets reacting (or overreacting) to coronavirus news of the day.

The town hall will offer participants clear guidance on actions they can take to protect themselves from COVID-19 and reduce the spread throughout the city. After the town hall, an information packet that outlines the services put in place throughout Chicago to assist older residents will be e-mailed to as many of the call’s participants and AARP Chicago’s 250,000 members as possible.

The town hall will be carried live by AARP screeners to ask questions directly to AARP Illinois, Mayor Lightfoot and Lisa Morrison Butler, Commissioner of the City’s Department of Family & Support Services.

“Supporting our vulnerable populations is more important now than ever before,” said Lisa Morrison Butler, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Family & Support Services. “We all should call older loved ones, neighbors and friends to



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check up on them. Everyone has a role to play in getting ready, staying healthy and making sure seniors have the support they need.”

AARP Illinois members in Chicago who opt to receive telephone town hall calls as part of their membership will receive a phone call shortly before the start of the March 26 event. Those who wish to join the tele-town hall through Facebook and Twitter can do so from the AARP and Mayor’s Office pages.

You can find AARP's coronavirus resources at [www.aarp.org/coronavirus](http://www.aarp.org/coronavirus).

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### **About AARP**

*AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence, 1.7 million members in Illinois and 250,000 in Chicago, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. To learn more, visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.*