

Mayor Lori Lightfoot has been **committed to worker's rights and opportunities** both prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and during the ensuing crisis, with actions including:

- Raising the **minimum wage** to \$15 an hour by 2021 for most Chicagoans, and eliminating the subminimum wage for workers with disabilities by 2024
- Passing **Fair Workweek** legislation to give lower-wage workers and their families predictability in scheduling and fairer working conditions
- Implementing COVID-19 **Anti-Retaliation** Ordinances prohibiting employers from retaliating against employees for obeying a health order to quarantine, isolate or take time off to be vaccinated
- Launching the **Your Home is Someone's Workplace Campaign** to elevate care workers and provide information, guidelines and resources on creating safe workplaces

**The Mayor's Chi Biz Strong Initiative** will jumpstart a rapid, equitable, and enduring recovery – by providing immediate financial relief for businesses, an overhaul of city business policies to reduce red tape, and critical protections for workers. **This bold initiative will ensure that workers' rights and safety are a central component of our economic recovery coming out of the pandemic.**

### WAGE THEFT PROTECTION

Almost \$400 million in wages are stolen from Chicagoland workers by bad-faith employers every year – \$7.3 in wage theft per week.

- Low-wage workers experience the highest prevalence of wage theft and single parents in Illinois have over \$1 withheld from every \$4 they have earned.

Chicago's first ever wage theft ordinance will grant the City new ability to protect and recoup stolen wages for these workers, to ensure a truly equitable economic recovery.

- Employers shall be liable to the employee for any non-payment and for damages at 2% of the non-payment amount for the months following the original incident, as well as face fines for violations of the ordinance
- In addition, repeat offenders will be investigated to determine their continued eligibility to do business with the City and maintain their business license
- This initiative will also strengthen record retention requirements to prevent wage theft – codifying the standard already existing within Rules

### CHAIN BUSINESS WORKER SUPPORT

Under the Chicago Minimum Wage Ordinance, the Office of Labor Standards has found that some chain business employers were classifying themselves as smaller businesses and therefore paying a lower minimum hourly wage. This initiative would ensure chain workers are paid the correct minimum wage, by requiring that employers aggregate their number of covered employees if they are all employed by members of a single unitary business group (as defined for Illinois income tax purposes).

## DOMESTIC WORKER SUPPORT

Chicago's care workers have been hard-hit by the pandemic in an industry with high rates of exploitation. This initiative would support domestic workers by requiring that employers of domestic workers provide a written contract to the worker setting their wage and work schedule (to be provided in the worker's primary language).

Chi Biz Strong would also place Chicago's 8,000 domestic workers on the path to a \$15 minimum wage in August 2021, by moving all domestic workers up to Schedule 1 of the Minimum Wage. This measure will generate up to \$28M in additional income for Chicago's domestic workers over the next two years – the majority of whom are women of color, and many of whom struggle to care for their own families despite working to care for others.

## ENHANCED LEAVE POLICY FOR WORKERS

To create more flexibility for workers and their families, eligible Paid Sick Leave uses will be expanded and clarified to include:

- Care for a family member with a closed school, classroom or place of care for any reason
- Compliance with future public health orders (e.g., to obey a quarantine or isolation order)
- Preventive care, diagnosis, or treatment for medical, mental, or behavioral health issues for workers and their family members
- Reasons related to human trafficking (an expansion of current uses for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking)

In addition, this initiative will codify the retention of earned Paid Sick Leave for workers at companies that transfer/sell to new owners.

## ADDITIONAL WORKER PROTECTIONS

- **Tipped Wage Study:** Mayor Lightfoot's minimum wage ordinance called for a study on tipped wages to be conducted in 2020. Given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumers and workers, this study will now be shifted to 2021-22 to provide a more accurate assessment of the tipped wage economy– to better inform future worker policies.
- **Workplace Safety:** To enhance worker protections, alongside introducing the Chi Biz Strong Initiative the City will create an internal Workplace Safety Response Team across departments to better share information and hold bad actors accountable.
- **Worker Outreach and Education:** The City is committed to providing outreach and education activities to enhance engagement with vulnerable workers, particularly domestic workers whose rights have been violated. In 2021, the City will fund a community-based organization to conduct “know your rights” outreach and disseminate information to workers citywide.