

For over a year, the City of Chicago has worked tirelessly to ensure that our small business community survives the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis. As we shift from survival to recovery, **Mayor Lightfoot's Chi Biz Strong Initiative will jumpstart a recovery that is rapid, equitable, and enduring.** This bold initiative will reimagine the way we do business in Chicago – providing immediate financial relief for businesses, overhauling city policies to reduce red tape, and protecting workers and consumers.

Supporting Businesses, from Start-up to Expansion:

An entrepreneur decides to pursue her dream of starting a restaurant.

Start-up costs are challenging, but thanks to the City's new **expedited restaurant licensing** and faster **sign and awning permit process**, she gets her license in a few days and her awning permit in a little over a month - saving her time and money during a critical period for her business.

The newly legal **sidewalk sign** she puts outside ends up being one of her biggest sources of new customers, drawing in pedestrians who had not realized a new place opened.

She relies heavily on delivery while people are still nervous to eat indoors - and the **15% cap on 3rd party delivery fees** ensures she keeps more of her revenue as she works to make ends meet.

As business picks up, the entrepreneur decides to expand her restaurant into new lines of business.

Now that **cocktails-to-go** are allowed she improves her margins by offering her popular drinks for takeout. She also starts hosting private events through a 3rd party platform, where she is now **protected from unfair competition from unlicensed venues.**

HOSPITALITY

The hospitality industry is a major segment of Chicago's economy that has been deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Chi Biz Strong aims to accelerate the launch and growth of hospitality businesses, by reducing red tape and supporting businesses.

- **Expedited Restaurant Licensing:** Under a new pilot program, restaurants that open in a space that used to be a similar, previously inspected restaurant can receive their license after completing a self-inspection health checklist – enabling them to open their doors 10 to 14 days faster
- **Delivery and Carryout of Cocktails:** If allowed under State of Illinois law, retail liquor dealer licensees may sell sealed cocktails for off-premises consumption
- **Aligning City and State License Terms:** Currently, the City's special event liquor license has an 11-day term, while the State license has a 15-day term. This package would extend the City's term to 15-days, saving businesses with longer events the cost and time of applying for a second City license
- **Charter/sightseeing buses:** To support the tourism industry as it recovers, this package refines security requirements on charter and sightseeing buses to enable the driver to act as the security guard in certain circumstances, making it easier to operate while still maintaining public safety
- **Fair Marketplace Reforms:** This package requires that third-party facilitators that connect consumers to services and spaces work with licensed businesses – protecting venues and vendors from unfair competition and protecting the public from unlicensed operators

- **Hotel Clarification:** Given the rise of new operating models, this package aims to eliminate confusion in hotel licensing by clarifying the requirement to operate contiguous blocks of rooms
- **Consumer Protection:** To address public safety, quality of life, and health concerns, this initiative revises City policies for the late-night sale of packaged goods (prohibiting their sale in the late evening hours and early morning) and updates regulations on the sale of flavored tobacco products
- **Expanded Workforce Opportunities:** This package will provide rehabilitated returning residents with a pathway to gain a Public Place of Amusement license, similar to the current process to demonstrate rehabilitation for a liquor license

ATTRACTIVE, INVITING STOREFRONTS

Too many businesses have experienced permanent and temporary closures during the COVID-19 pandemic – making it critical to support the speed of existing businesses’ recovery and new businesses’ launch. This package will provide new ways to advertise and a faster path to getting up and running, to accelerate our recovery.

- **Legalized Sidewalk Sign Advertising:** To help businesses draw in customers the City will legalize sidewalk signs (e.g., A-frame signs) where the sidewalk width allows, with a new low-cost permit
- **Faster Signs and Awnings:** As we recover from the pandemic it is critical that businesses open quickly, but they currently have to wait up to 150 days to get a permit for signs, awnings, and other critical business infrastructure. Building on the temporary Sidewalk Café Permit reforms enacted during the pandemic, the requirement to pass a unique City Council ordinance for each Public Way Use Permit will be removed. The new process will shave up to two months off the permitting process for signs and awnings, while preserving the involvement of local alderman that understand the unique needs of their communities

TAXICABS

The taxicab industry has been hit particularly hard by COVID-19, with the number of active taxicab and Transportation Network Provider chauffeurs dropping nearly 80% – compounding pre-pandemic challenges. This package includes multiple actions to streamline regulations while maintaining safety, with cost savings of over \$20,000 per vehicle **saving the industry up to \$20M in 2021 alone.**

- Increase taxicab age mandate to extend lifetime of vehicles on the road by 3-5 years (based on vehicle type), without compromising safety standards
- Lower barriers to entry for operators by increasing the maximum mileage for first-time taxicabs
- Grow the fleet of nearly 500 available Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles while reducing the burden on individual operators (e.g., by doubling the number of hours they can operate in a day)
- Expand workforce opportunities for drivers by reducing felony lookback for chauffeurs to be in line with other municipalities
- Establish an “Electric Public Passenger Vehicle” license along with parameters on their operations, to support innovative and environmentally sustainable transit and protect public safety