



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND FAMILY  
INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE (FII) LAUNCH COVID-19 HOUSING ASSISTANCE  
GRANT PROGRAM**

*One-time grants available for rent and mortgage payments of Chicago residents  
impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic*

**CHICAGO** - Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Department of Housing (DOH) today announced the creation of a COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grant program to assist Chicagoans who have lost their jobs or otherwise been impacted by the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Made possible by a partnership with the Family Independence Initiative (FII), DOH will deploy \$2 million from the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) to fund one-time grants to help impacted Chicagoans with rent and mortgage payments.

“Due to the unprecedented impact the COVID-19 crisis, we have a responsibility as a city to support of our residents and families during their urgent time of need,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “This program represents a critical resource not only to our communities but our entire city as we navigate this evolving challenge and ensure every Chicagoan remains safe, healthy and secure.”

The fund will award 2,000 Grants of \$1,000 each. Half of these grants will be awarded through a lottery system, while the other half will be distributed by non-profit community organizations across the city. Chicago residents experiencing temporary financial hardships due to COVID-19 will be able to apply online via the DOH Online Intake Portal at [www.chicago.gov/coronavirus](http://www.chicago.gov/coronavirus) and over the phone through community-based organizations.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate their economic impact by showing documentation such as a recent unemployment insurance claim, notification of employment status change, as well as proof of household income at or below 60% of the area median income prior to job loss.

“The City of Chicago understands the need to respond quickly to the financial straits so many of our residents find themselves in,” said DOH Commissioner Marisa



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Novara. "Sudden job loss or reduction in hours has a cascading effect on the ability to pay rent and mortgage, creating housing instability at a time when we need it most. The Dept of Housing is gratified to use its funds to provide relief for our fellow residents. "

Grants are expected to be awarded between early and mid-April. Awardees will receive funds via transfers to their banking institution, PayPal, or CashApp accounts. Delegate agencies are prepared to assist awardees who do not have immediate access to a computer or a bank account. Funding through the City's online portal will be awarded by a lottery system while nonprofit organizations based throughout the city will distribute funds using their existing neighborhood networks.

"This program will give Chicagoans some desperately needed relief and protection against the economic ravages of COVID-19," said Ald. Harry Osterman, chair of the City Council's Housing and Real Estate committee. "We want people to stay in their homes and stay safe. The COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grand program will help thousands of Chicagoans do both."

The Family Independence Initiative (FII) works with families to break the cycle of poverty and achieve economic and social mobility by bridging the information and resource gap to fuel their goals and dreams. FII's technology platform strengthens social networks and helps provide access to resources that will improve residents' financial outlook. FII is a partner in the City's efforts to eliminate poverty in a generation, stemming from a call to action announced by Mayor Lightfoot last month to direct more City resources to address systemic poverty and reduce economic insecurity in Chicago.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated in unprecedented ways exactly what it means to live paycheck to paycheck," said Ebony Scott Director of the Family Independence Initiative, Chicago. "In the midst of a global health crisis where people are fearful they could lose their jobs or even their lives, they should not have to be concerned that they may lose the roof over their heads, too. This partnership gets cash into their hands to provide them at least some sense of security during this troubling time."

The COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grant is a part of Mayor Lightfoot's comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which spans economic relief measures taken for residents, businesses and to ensure a swift and precise health response to protect residents in the face of this unprecedented pandemic. Earlier this week, Mayor Lightfoot announced action to expand shelter and care for populations most vulnerable to COVID-19 and has continued to make progress



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toward lifting the burden from the City's healthcare system. The City continues to provide essential services maintained as Chicago remains under a state order issued by Governor Pritzker for residents to stay at home now through April 7th. For more information and updates on COVID-19, text COVID19 to 78015, email [coronavirus@chicago.gov](mailto:coronavirus@chicago.gov) or visit [Chicago.gov/coronavirus](http://Chicago.gov/coronavirus).

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