



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES PASSAGE OF ORDINANCE TO CONTINUE DRIVE  
TO ELIMINATE RED TAPE, UNNECESSARY BUSINESS LICENSES**

*Latest Reforms Will Result in a Two-Thirds Reduction in Business Licenses Since 2011, Putting Total Number at 70 Percent Fewer Than Washington, DC and 25 Percent Fewer than New York City*

City Council today passed Mayor Rahm Emanuel's ordinance that eliminates red tape for businesses across Chicago by cutting the number of required business licenses to 40 – a reduction of two-thirds since 2011. The reduction would make the total number of business licenses in Chicago 70 percent fewer than Washington, D.C. and 25 percent fewer than New York City.

"The City of Chicago should be a partner and not a problem for neighborhood businesses," said Mayor Emanuel. "By cutting red tape by two-thirds we are setting the national standard for how cities can support neighborhood businesses while creating economic opportunities that reach every part of Chicago."

Today's ordinance build on an effort that began in 2012, when the Mayor's license reforms reduced the number of businesses license types from 117 to 49, saving businesses money and time. Further reforms passed the City Council last month to modernize the home occupation license, eliminate redundant inspections, and reduce license fees for businesses.

This ordinance implements the latest round of reforms by cutting seven business license types by consolidating standalone licenses into broader license categories for liquor, public place of amusement and tobacco. It also would remove unnecessary or duplicative inspections for tobacco license applicants.

These changes have a meaningful impact on many businesses in the City. In combination with the first phase of reforms, this set of reforms will effect over 2,000 businesses, which are set to benefit from inspection reforms that cut meaningful days off the time to open a business.

The reforms were recommended by the Chicago Task Force on Removing Barriers to Employment and Entrepreneurship, which Mayor Emanuel formed to provide the City Council with recommendations for cutting red tape that too often gets in the way of job and business opportunities. The Task Force is co-chaired by Deputy Mayor and Chief Neighborhood Development Officer Andrea Zopp and Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) Commissioner Samantha Fields.

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Today's action builds on the Emanuel administration's record of improving and streamlining City services. In his first year in office, Mayor Emanuel eliminated the job-killing employee head tax. In 2016 Mayor Emanuel launched an online business license application system to allow Chicago's business owners to apply electronically for required City licenses. The paperless process allows businesses to submit applications and any required documents, as well as pay for any license application fees, through the web. The City has also streamlined the process to issue public way use sign permits in Chicago.

Last summer, the Mayor reformed the process to issue public way use sign permits in Chicago. As of last month, more than 1,000 signs have been approved through the new process, saving on average more than 30 days. A third of the signs have cut nearly 70 percent off of the previous approval time.

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