



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 11, 2021

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES CHICAGO HAS MOVED TO PHASE 5 FULLY REOPENING THE CITY**

*Nearly fifteen months since the city closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chicago becomes the largest major city to reopen in the US*

**CHICAGO** – Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, along with CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareño, city and community leaders, announced Chicago has moved to Phase 5, fully reopening the city as of June 11, and an exciting opportunity to get Chicagoans back to the city this summer.

"Due to the incredible progress we've made in our mission to stop the spread of COVID-19, I am thrilled to announce that we are able to safely transition into Phase 5 and become the first major city in the country to fully reopen," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Our ongoing vaccination efforts, which prioritize equity and inclusion, have made a remarkable difference in our COVID-19 journey and have resulted in the lowest positivity rate since the beginning of the pandemic. This progress, as well as ongoing initiatives such as Open Chicago, have allowed us to safely lift capacity limits and reconnect our residents back to the activities they love the most. With today's announcement and even more residents continuing to do their part and get vaccinated, we are one step closer to being able to put this pandemic in our rear-view mirror."

As Chicago becomes the largest major U.S. city to reopen, Mayor Lightfoot partnered with [Raise Marketplace](#) and World Business Chicago to give away hundreds of gift cards to thank Chicagoans, especially healthcare professionals and frontline workers, for navigating through the pandemic.

"We are incredibly honored to partner with Mayor Lightfoot and the city on this initiative to show our appreciation to those who have made a difference in the community during the pandemic, while also encouraging Chicagoans to explore their city and support local businesses," said Jay Klauminzer, CEO of Raise Marketplace.



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From today through July 4, hundreds of \$250 gift cards will be hidden at different locations each weekend in all 77 of Chicago's neighborhoods to encourage people to get back out to local businesses this summer. The gift cards can be used on Raise Marketplace at more than 4,000 shops and restaurants throughout the City of Chicago.

"This historic day is a testament to the hard work of Chicagoans to follow COVID-19 safety protocols and the power of vaccines," said CDPH Commissioner Dr. Alison Arwady, M.D. "While our case rates are the lowest since the pandemic began, COVID-19 has not gone away completely, and overwhelmingly, those who are being diagnosed are those who are unvaccinated. Chicagoans who are not yet vaccinated should get a vaccine as soon as possible – it is the best way to protect yourself, your family, and your community."

Vaccines are safe, effective, widely available, and completely free, and everyone age 12 and older is eligible. Vaccines are available to all at mass vaccination sites like Chicago State University and the United Center, as well as at dozens of pop-up events, mobile vaccination sites, and special events in communities throughout Chicago. A complete list of pop-ups and events is available at [chicago.gov/vaxcalendar](https://chicago.gov/vaxcalendar) and the calendar is updated weekly.

Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago no longer requires masks for fully vaccinated people in most settings. If you are not fully vaccinated, you need to continue to wear your mask in all indoor settings. However, regardless of vaccination status, everyone is required to wear masks in certain settings, including health care settings, schools, correctional/congregate sites, and on public transportation.

For businesses, Phase 5 means a broad lifting of COVID-19 restrictions across industries. For the first time since March 15, 2020, businesses can operate without capacity limits, mask mandates, social distancing, or the prohibition of specific business activities. Masks will still be required in certain settings, such as health care facilities, public transportation (which includes taxis, liveries, and ride-hail services), correctional facilities, shelters, and schools. Since public health guidance recommends that non-vaccinated individuals wear masks when indoors and unable to social distance, businesses are encouraged to post signage indicating that masks are still recommended for unvaccinated customers.

Many businesses will choose to keep certain regulations in place for the safety of their customers and employees, including requiring masks for all customers, and the City supports any business that makes this choice. Many Chicagoans will also continue to wear masks, even if they are fully vaccinated – businesses should be



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supportive of customers and employees that continue wearing a face covering. Full business guidance can be found at [chicago.gov/reopening](https://chicago.gov/reopening).

“These last 15 months have been grueling, but I am incredibly proud of our businesses that have repeatedly stepped up to keep their employees and customers safe,” said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareño. “I want to thank every Chicago business owner and worker for doing their part, and I am excited to work with you all as we continue to recover from this devastating pandemic.”

The City’s reopening follows the release of the [Central City Recovery Roadmap](#), a guide to the revitalization of Chicago’s greater downtown area. The roadmap builds upon the July 2020 ["Forward Together" plan](#), the first Covid-19 recovery effort of any major U.S. city. Roadmap sub-committees focused on Economy and Commerce, Culture and Tourism, Transportation and Mobility, and Residents and Community. Key strategies highlighted in the report include safe, reliable public transit; enhanced pedestrian and bike infrastructure; innovative programming from community-based organizations, and long-term strategic planning for key arterials.

Alongside the report’s release, the City has announced three new street activation series in partnership with major civic organizations – bringing to life the report’s recommendations on activating a thriving street and cultural scene. Recognizing the importance of workplace return commitments to Chicago’s continuing recovery, the City is also leading by example with its workforce – with City employees returning to offices in person 5 days a week by June 28.

As the city fully reopens for the summer, we urge residents to continue to be safe and get vaccinated. To learn more about the Phase 5 reopening, visit [chicago.gov/reopening](https://chicago.gov/reopening).

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