



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2021

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office
312.744.3334
press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR LIGHTFOOT INTRODUCES VACCINE ANTI-RETALIATION ORDINANCE TO ENSURE PROTECTIONS FOR WORKERS RECEIVING THE COVID-19 VACCINE

New ordinance will build on the City's commitment to protecting Chicago's most vulnerable workers while ensuring access to the COVID-19 vaccine

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today introduced an ordinance that would establish labor protections for Chicago workers that take time off to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Under the proposed ordinance, employers will be prohibited from terminating, disciplining or taking any adverse action against an employee for taking time off to receive the vaccine. This ordinance builds on Mayor Lightfoot's ongoing commitment to strong labor protections and will provide critical safeguards to ensure Chicago's essential workers have access to the COVID-19 vaccine as we prepare to enter Phase 1c of the vaccine distribution plan.

“Our essential workers have kept this city running throughout the pandemic, and as we near the end of the crisis, no worker should have to choose between keeping their job and getting the COVID-19 vaccine,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Widespread vaccination is core to our ability to overcome this pandemic and vaccinating our essential workers are a critical part of that effort. This measure will ensure that every eligible worker can receive this life-saving vaccine without fear of retaliation and will further Chicago's reputation as a City for Workers.”

Since the COVID-19 vaccine first came to Chicago in December 2020, the City has followed a distribution plan that has prioritized equity while targeting individuals and locations most vulnerable to the virus. On Monday, March 29, Chicago will enter Phase 1c of its vaccine distribution plan, which will make essential workers eligible for the vaccine. This proposed ordinance will ensure that all workers will be able to take the necessary time off to receive the vaccine when eligible.

Under the proposal, employers are prohibited from taking any adverse action – including termination, demotion, layoff or punitive schedule changes – against an employee for taking time off to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Furthermore, if a worker has paid sick leave or other accrued time available, employers must allow their employees to use that time off to receive the vaccine. Finally, if an employer



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



requires a worker to be vaccinated, it must compensate the worker for the time taken to receive the vaccine if it is during a shift, up to two hours per dose.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that the most vulnerable workers are often the most critical to our city,” said Susan Sadlowski Garza, 10th Ward Alderwoman and Chairwoman of the Committee on Workforce Development. “I am proud to support this ordinance and continue our efforts to make sure that Chicago remains a world class city for workers.”

The ordinance introduced today builds on the COVID-19 [Anti-Retaliation Ordinance](#) that passed City Council in May 2020. That ordinance, which remains in effect, protects all workers from any retaliatory action from their employer if they are unable to work due to public health directive or COVID-19 related illness. Today’s proposed ordinance would expand the protections guaranteed under the Anti-Retaliation Ordinance to protect workers that take time off to receive the vaccine. Employers that violate this ordinance, which will be enforced by the Chicago Office of Labor Standards within the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, are subject to fines of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 per offense.

“One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, our commitment to Chicago’s workers has not wavered,” said Rosa Escareño, BACP Commissioner. “We will get through this pandemic only when we effectively deliver the COVID-19 vaccine to critical workers throughout the city, and this ordinance will ensure that Chicago’s most vulnerable workers can access the vaccine without fear.”

As part of the effort to ensure the most vulnerable Chicagoans have access to the COVID-19 vaccine, Chicago has also launched the Protect Chicago Plus program, which initially targeted 15 of the city’s hardest hit communities with resources including more vaccine and continues to support the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccine in Chicago. Chicago has also targeted the hardest-hit communities with exclusive access to appointments at the United Center and other mass vaccination sites around the City. To learn more about the City’s vaccine distribution plan, including the eligibility requirements for Phase 1c, visit Chicago.gov/COVIDVax.

###