



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT SUPPORTS GOOD, SUSTAINABLE JOBS FOR WORKING FAMILIES

The City of Chicago to Increase Airport Workers' Minimum Wage and Encourage Local Recruitment

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Alderman Gilbert Villegas (36th Ward), Alderwoman Susan Sadlowski-Garza (10th Ward), Alderman Matthew O'Shea (19th Ward), the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA), and union leaders today announced the passage of an ordinance that will ensure an increase to the minimum wage to support good and sustainable jobs at our city airports. With this new minimum wage, airport workers will continue to be a part of the City of Chicago's economic growth, while guaranteeing these airport jobs remain competitive. The ordinance also incentivizes local recruitment efforts to encourage opportunities for City residents.

"COVID-19 changed our lives, forcing local businesses to close and turning thousands of workers into essential workers—including those at our airports," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Without our airport workers, we simply wouldn't be where we are in our COVID-19 journey, as these dedicated men and women took on the duty to keep our airports running safely. This increase to the minimum wage recognizes their success and showcases our commitment to good-paying and sustainable jobs that will benefit our working families."

"We believe that everyone benefits when we have an experienced, well-trained, and well-compensated workforce at our airports – that's one way that we remain competitive," said CDA Commissioner Jamie L. Rhee. "This ordinance creates a pipeline to recruit talent, especially from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, into these essential jobs and then supports these employees to grow and gain experience. As we all know, it's a been a tremendously challenging time in the aviation industry, and the CDA will continue to work hard to bring down operational costs for our airline partners."



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Today's announcement affects employees of the airports' Certified Service Provider Program (CSPP), which issues licenses from the CDA to third-party businesses that work for the airlines and other onsite tenants. Workers include ground handlers, luggage handlers, aircraft cleaners, wheelchair attendants, catering companies and other businesses whose workers keep our flights running.

The ordinance benefits our city and nearly 6,500 workers at approximately 70 companies at O'Hare and Midway in two keys ways:

- The first one includes a Local Recruitment Commitment that will help create sustainable new jobs, with each licensee committed to using best efforts to recruit workers from the socio-economically disenfranchised areas of the city, as identified by the Department of Procurement Services on the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Areas maps it issues. Each licensee will be required to submit a memorandum to CDA within 60 days of reissuing their license after the passage of this ordinance, outlining what the company is doing to recruit from these areas. This will ensure that these good, living wage airport jobs and careers are going to City residents.
- Second, this ordinance will raise the minimum wage for these workers above the City's minimum wage. Currently, the City's minimum wage for these workers is \$15 an hour. On July 1, 2022, the minimum wage for these workers will rise to \$17 an hour. On March 1, 2023, it will rise to \$18 an hour. And lastly, on July 1, 2024, and every July 1 thereafter, the minimum wage will increase along with any increase in the Consumer Price Index.

"Today's passage of a wage increase is a huge victory for Chicago's Airport Workers," said Genie Kastrup, Executive Vice President for SEIU Local 1. "Many workers will receive anywhere from a \$1 raise to a \$5 raise depending on their job classification – this is life changing. This increase recognizes the essential work of airport workers and ensures that they can now provide for themselves and their families. I look forward to continuing our work to be a strong advocate for all airport workers."

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the aviation and travel industries, and the past few years have been challenging for the airlines that operate at the local airports.

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