



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2023

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER REQUIRING RECOMMENDATION ON
CONTINUATION OF KEY FINES AND FEES REFORM PROGRAMS**

The Clear Path Relief and Administrative Debt Relief programs, both set to expire at the end of 2023, have provided critical financial relief to Chicago residents.

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot signed an Executive Order requiring the Comptroller, in consultation with the Office of Budget and Management, the Office of Climate and Environmental Equity, the Department of Water Management and other relevant departments, to present to the Mayor and City Council Committee on Finance a recommendation memorandum on the continuation, expansion and improvement of three debt relief programs that are cornerstones of the Mayor's Fines and Fees reform efforts. The recommendation, to be presented on or before August 1, 2023, will outline potential improvements to Utility Billing Relief (UBR) program which was made permanent in 2022. It will also evaluate the continuation and expansion of the Clear Path Relief (CPR) and Administrative Debt Relief (ADR) programs, which are due to expire at the end of this year.

All three programs have provided unprecedented levels of financial relief and a pathway out of debt for Chicagoans who owe as a result of municipal fines and fees—many of which disproportionately impact low-income communities and contribute to cycles of poverty. UBR addresses debt stemming from sewer and water bills, while CPR addresses that resulting from vehicle-related violations. ADR, the newest of the three programs, provides relief of administrative hearing debt, including but not limited to violations issued by the Departments of Streets and Sanitation, Police, Buildings, and Business Affairs and Consumer Protection. More information about all fines and fees reform programs can be found at chicago.gov/newstartchicago.

“When I took office, I made it a priority to address issues, like regressive fines and fees structures, that have contributed to cycles of poverty in our city,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “I am proud of the reforms we have made, including the critical pathways out of debt and into



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



financial stability we have paved. I look forward to seeing how the Comptroller recommends these programs to be continued and expanded going forward.”

“Since Mayor Lightfoot came into office, in 2019, the City has implemented numerous fines and fees reforms to help individuals come into compliance. These programs have helped to reduce over a quarter of a billion dollars of debt weighing down individuals and small businesses,” said City Comptroller Reshma Soni. “Seeing the success of these programs, we appreciate the Mayor’s commitment to recommend extending these programs so we can continue to see the positive impacts in years to come.”

Fines and fees reform has been a key priority of Mayor Lightfoot since she took office in 2019. Under her leadership, reforms have been made with input from advocacy groups, city departments, as well as the Fines and Fees Access Collaborative, formed in 2018, and led by the City Clerk’s Office. Accomplishments include:

- Over 21,000 unique households, to date, have received relief totaling \$37.3 million on water and sewer bills through the Utility Billing Relief program
- Over 62,000 motorists, to date, have received relief totaling \$32.2 million for vehicle-related debt via Clear Path Relief and Fix-It Defense
- Over 28,000 dockets closed via the Administrative Debt Relief Program providing \$8.4 million of relief on Administrative Hearings debt.
- \$11.5 million of debt forgiven from the 2019 City sticker debt relief program
- Created a pathway to compliance through implementing an affordable \$25 down payment plan on Administrative Hearings related debt
- \$129 million in vehicle impoundment storage fees forgiven
- Boot reforms, saving motorists \$34.6 million in collection costs and fees
- Significantly reduced and capped vehicle impoundment fines
- Eliminated fines at Chicago Public Libraries
- Paused Tax Intercepts for EITC Recipients
- Paused on ticketing for COVID Relief
- Ended all debt-based Driver’s License suspensions, saving motorists \$14 million
- Ended the City practice of water shutoffs due to non-payment
- Reformed the debt check process for new City of Chicago hires and businesses seeking licenses, including promoting access to pre-hire or pre-licensure payment plans

###