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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT SIGNS HOTEL WORKER RIGHT TO RETURN TO WORK
ORDINANCE**

The ordinance requires hotels to offer employees their previous positions before hiring replacement workers.

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, alongside hotel workers and labor leaders, signed the Hotel Worker Right to Return to Work ordinance today. This legislation requires that as guests return and hotels increase staffing, hotels offer employees their previous positions or other positions for which they are qualified before hiring any replacement workers.

As the city recovers from the pandemic, many places are returning to a place of normalcy. More tourists are visiting the city, and hotel capacity is increasing. Over the course of the pandemic, at least 62 Chicago hotels have laid off over 12,000 Chicago hotel workers. This ordinance is an important step in ensuring workers' rights following economic recovery from the pandemic.

"The Hotel Worker Return to Work Ordinance is an important step forward in our equitable and inclusive reopening strategy, as it protects the employees who were and still are essential to our city's success," said Mayor Lightfoot. "As our economy roars back to life, with our hospitality and tourism industries at its core, we must ensure that the workers in these industries have access to the tools they need to be financially stable and secure. Given how incredibly difficult this past year has been, this ordinance will provide much-needed relief to our hotel workers and remind them that they are critical to not only our city's recovery, but long-term prosperity as well."

The ordinance includes key provisions that will ensure hotel worker protections and enforcement of the policy, specifically with eligibility, right to return, timing, enforcement, and how long the ordinance remains in effect.



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"We are in a crucial moment of our city's reopening to fully support the workforce that allows our city to thrive," said Committee on Workforce Development Chairman Susan Sadlowski-Garza, 10th Ward. "This ordinance reaffirms our commitment to having a strong, vibrant and skilled workforce that will propel our city forward and shows our hotel workers that we appreciate their hard work from pre-covid days and honor the sacrifices they made while the city was shut down."

According to the ordinance provisions, hotel workers would be qualified for a position if they previously held the same or similar position at their hotel. They would also be qualified for a role in the same department or division and offered the same training a newly hired worker would receive.

Additionally, when more than one hotel worker is qualified for a position, the role would go to the worker with the most seniority.

"Today, thousands of hotel workers who lost their jobs through no fault of their own can take comfort in knowing that when the guests come back to their hotels, they'll be able to go back to work," said UNITE HERE Local 1 President Karen Kent. "I'm thankful for the support of the Chicago labor movement and for the Mayor's leadership as we take this crucial first step towards the equitable recovery that Chicago's hospitality workers deserve."

Hotels must notify employees of recall opportunities through registered mail and via email/text to ensure the best possible chance that workers who have relocated or had their phones disconnected are not overlooked. Hotels may make simultaneous, conditional offers of employment to multiple laid-off workers to streamline that process. Hotel workers offered a job under the ordinance have five business days to accept or decline.

"My job at the hotel is all I've known for almost two decades. As a 46-year-old woman, it is very difficult to find a new job," said Erika Hernandez, a Humboldt Park resident whose downtown luxury hotel fired her due to the pandemic. "Thanks to this ordinance, I know that I can go back to work at the job I love. It will help protect me and many other women like me."

Hotel workers can seek enforcement of this ordinance through civil action after providing notice to their hotels and allowing 15 days for the hotel to cure any alleged violation. The ordinance, which immediately goes into effect, remains in effect until December 31, 2023.



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