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CITY COUNCIL PASSES VACCINE ANTI-RETALIATION ORDINANCE THAT PROVIDES PROTECTIONS TO WORKERS RECEIVING THE COVID-19 VACCINE

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

CHICAGO – The Chicago City Council passed an ordinance today that establishes labor protections for Chicago workers that take time off to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Under the new ordinance, employers are prohibited from terminating, disciplining, or taking any adverse action against a worker 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 workers have access to the life-saving COVID-19 vaccine.

“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 workers are a critical part of that effort. This measure ensures that every 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, April 19, Chicago has expanded eligibility so that all Chicagoans 16 years or older are eligible for the vaccine. This new ordinance will ensure that all workers will be able to take the necessary time off to receive the vaccine now that they are eligible.

“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.”



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Under the new ordinance, all employers are prohibited from taking any adverse action – including termination, demotion, layoff or punitive schedule changes – against workers for taking time off to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally, employers cannot require workers to get vaccinated only during non-shift hours. If an employer requires their workers to receive the vaccine, they must pay them at their regular rate of pay for up to four hours per dose, and they cannot force workers to get the vaccine at times outside their regular shift. If an employer does not require their workers to get the vaccine, they must allow workers that have accrued paid sick leave to use that time to receive the vaccine if the worker chooses to use it.

“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 ensures that Chicago’s most vulnerable workers can access the vaccine without fear.”

The ordinance passed 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 ordinance, which comes into effect immediately, expands 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 between \$1,000 and \$5,000 per offense.

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