



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
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CITY OF CHICAGO

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**CLERK VALENCIA ANNOUNCES CREATION OF THE CHICAGO FINES, FEES, &
ACCESS COLLABORATIVE**

The Chicago Fines, Fees & Access Collaborative will be a collaboration between community organizations, City Departments, elected officials, and academic institutions focused on reviewing and reforming the City's fines, fees and collection practices

Today, Chicago City Clerk Anna Valencia announced the creation of the Chicago Fines, Fees & Access Collaborative to review fines, fees and collection practices in Chicago. The Collaborative will conduct a comprehensive review to build an understanding of the current landscape, highlight existing issues, and suggest reforms that work for all Chicagoans, the financial health of the City, and our communities. The collaboration between City departments, elected officials, community-based organizations, as well as academic and civic institutions will also seek resident input on their experiences with the City's fines and fees and will hold roundtables across the city. The Collaborative will be looking to other cities for best practices to increase compliance.

"As municipalities across the country receive less funding and support from the federal government, local governments need to be creative to create policies that work for everyone," said Clerk Valencia. "The City of Chicago needs revenue for its streets, services and schools, but it's good for local government to take a pause and reflect on past policies that have been created over decades to ensure they are serving their intended purpose."

Over the course of a six-month period the Collaborative will review existing policies and provide recommendations to reform existing fines and fees schedules, payment plans structures, accessibility of information and processes, impact of penalties for nonpayment, role of private debt collectors, debt-based policies tied to employment opportunities and the process of enforcement of violations.

"We applaud the Office of City Clerk for working with COFI/POWER-PAC Illinois to create the Chicago Fines, Fees and Access Collaborative. Parents across Chicago have been urging the City to take a deep look into the fees and fines imposed by the City and their disproportionate effect on families facing economic hardship, such as

mine. Families have shared stories of being blocked from employment and other negative consequences stemming from their debt to the City, making it nearly impossible for them to get out of debt and achieve financial stability. We're excited to get to work, examining ways to make our City better for all residents," said Rosazlia Grillier, Co-President of POWER-PAC Illinois, an organization of parent leaders in Chicago and Illinois.

"I'm proud to be a part of the creation of the Chicago Fines, Fees and Access Collaborative, a one of a kind partnership. Government and community working hand-in-hand is vital to creating policy that's innovative and sustainable," said 6th Ward Alderman Roderick Sawyer. "I'm committed to working with the Collaborative to create recommendations for reform that will benefit all Chicagoans."

24th Ward Alderman Michael Scott Jr. shared, "The issue of fines and fees impacts Chicagoans across the city. Far too often, Chicagoans have to choose between being in compliance with fines or spending money on groceries or new clothes for their children. I'm excited to work with the Collaborative to improve the lives of Chicagoans while increasing compliance across the city."

"The Chicago Fines, Fees and Access Collaborative is addressing the elephant in the room. The result will be an understanding and recommendations that will impact generations of Chicagoans. Through the collaboration between community and government officials like me, we will not only get a better understanding of existing issues but also create solutions that can serve as models for other cities," shared 36th Ward Alderman Gilbert Villegas.

Other cities across the country such as San Francisco have implemented reforms after a similar approach to better understand their use of fines and fees to increase revenue and compliance. San Francisco has seen tremendous success in its efforts, including a newly instituted payment plan for low-income residents which that has resulted in parking fines compliance being quadrupled.

Along with the Office of the City Clerk, the Collaborative will consist of the following partners:

- Alderman Ervin (28)
- Alderman Foulkes (16)
- Alderman Garza (10)
- Alderman Mell (33)
- Alderman Pawar (47)
- Alderman Sawyer (6)
- Alderman Scott (24)
- Alderman Villegas (36)
- The City of Chicago Departments of Law, Finance, Budget, Chicago Police Department, and the Department of Family and Social Services

- Chicago Jobs Council
- Community Organization and Family Issues (COFI) & POWER PAC
- The Fines & Fees Justice Center
- Heartland Alliance
- Loyola Chicago Center for Urban Research and Learning
- Shriver Center
- University of Chicago's School of Social Work and Administration
- Woodstock Institute

Earlier this year Clerk Valencia, with the help of local experts and community stakeholders, took steps to make the Office of the City Clerk more financially accessible. This included a change to the municipal code allowing for the creation of a four month City Sticker to lower the barrier into compliance for the City's Wheel Tax, expanding the Veteran no-cost discount to cover those that have been honorably or generally discharged, expanding education efforts and exploring a forgiveness program for residents who have fallen out of compliance with the Wheel Tax.

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