



CITY OF CHICAGO



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND CITY CLERK ANNOUNCE FINES AND FEES REFORMS TOTAL
\$11.5 MILLION IN DEBT RELIEF FOR RESIDENTS IN LESS THAN THREE MONTHS**

*City Sticker Amnesty and Debt Relief Initiatives to bring relief for nearly 12,000 motorists who
have submitted nearly 30,000 City Sticker tickets*

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and City Clerk Anna M. Valencia today announced the results of the City Sticker amnesty and debt relief initiatives, which drew tens of thousands of Chicago residents from every zip code across the city to submit for ticket forgiveness. Since the City Sticker and debt relief program began, 11,400 motorists applied for sticker forgiveness totaling \$11.5 million in outstanding debt.

The City Sticker debt relief initiatives are part of a series of recently-enacted reforms by Mayor Lightfoot and the City Council to address regressive ticketing policies which have disproportionately affected the city's most vulnerable residents, and to help those with debt overcome barriers to financial stability.

"I grew up in a family that lived paycheck to paycheck, so I personally understand how it is that regressive fines and fees affect thousands of Chicagoans who already struggle to make ends meet, particularly in our Black and Brown communities," said Mayor Lightfoot. "These initial results from the City Sticker forgiveness initiatives prove that when the deck is not stacked against Chicagoans and they are given a realistic, accessible pathway to compliance, they will take it. With our work far from over, together with the Clerk's Office, City Council and advocates we will continue unwinding the City's historically regressive fines and fees system, so that it no longer holds our residents back."

Since launching the City Sticker forgiveness initiatives in October, nearly 9,000 motorists have come into compliance by purchasing a vehicle sticker, a 910 percent increase over last year. A

total of nearly 11,400 individuals applied for sticker forgiveness totaling more than \$11.5 million in outstanding ticket debt. In addition to the debt relief initiatives, the City allowed residents the entire month of October to purchase a City Sticker with no back charges or late fees.

“We’re thrilled to announce the success of these historic reforms,” said Clerk Valencia. “When we started this work, we knew we had to approach these issues from a holistic and collaborative perspective. None of this would have been possible without the support and dedication of Mayor Lori Lightfoot, City Council and the advocates who all came to the table ready to work together for the greater good of our residents. Though these are just the first steps this is a monumental moment in our process towards long-term reforms that create a city and system that works for all Chicagoans.”

During this time, the City also offered the Reduced Term Sticker, allowing residents to purchase the required City Sticker vehicle registration for a shorter period of time lowering the barrier into compliance. More than 3,000 residents took advantage of this option in its first month. For those who complied by October 31, the City began accepting applications from individuals in November to have at least three outstanding or overdue City Sticker tickets forgiven, depending on financial hardship status. These efforts represented the first time ever a sticker ticket debt amnesty was offered without requiring a partial payment.

“We applaud Mayor Lightfoot and Clerk Valencia for earnestly engaging advocates and impacted individuals in the City Sticker program,” said Brent Adams, Senior Vice President of Policy & Communication at Woodstock Institute. “Chicago will continue to need a sustained, coordinated effort to recover from its “addiction” to regressive fines and fees, a system that has devastated lives in Black and Brown communities.”

While the City Sticker amnesty and debt forgiveness program has ended, the City of Chicago has enacted a number of long-term reforms to help people pay off old debt or avoid burdensome debt in the first place, including: elimination of license suspensions for non-moving violations; reduction of excessive late fees on the City Sticker program; launch of a series of new payment plans that expand the options for paying off debt; and new pathways to compliance to help residents who are eligible to avoid any number of the devastating consequences of onerous city debt – including water shut offs, tow and impound, and more.

“Many of our residents, particularly those in low-income communities, have been looking for ways to help lift some of the weight delinquent debt is placing on working families,” said 24th Ward Alderman Michael Scott, Jr. “Thanks to Mayor Lightfoot, the Clerk, the Collaborative, my colleagues in the City Council and other key stakeholders, we are making real changes to the regressive fines and fees practices of the past by creating lasting reforms that is will improve people’s lives.”

While Chicago is one of the largest cities in the nation to tackle fines and fees reforms this comprehensively, other cities which have implemented similar ticketing reform policies have found reforms to increase payments and compliance. Other major U.S. cities that have implemented similar measures, including San Francisco and Phoenix, have actually seen an

increase in revenues generated by non-delinquent collections since reducing or revising their systems of fines and fees.

Residents and motorists can get more information on signing up for payment plans and other City debt forgiveness initiatives available year-round by visiting the “New Start Chicago” website at www.Chicago.gov/newstartchicago. The website provides a one-stop-shop for information on how to access payment plans, suspended driver’s license and ticketing reforms, and assistance with paying utility bills.

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