



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES CANNABIS RESOURCE FAIR TO INFORM AND
CONNECT RESIDENTS WITH EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN
THE NEW INDUSTRY**

New citywide resource fair hosted in partnership with cannabis businesses, industry experts, social equity leaders, government agencies and legal aid organizations from across Chicago and statewide

CHICAGO –As part of ongoing efforts to ensure Chicago's communities and residents benefit from the recent launch of legalized cannabis, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced that the City of Chicago will host a first-of-its-kind Cannabis Resource Fair to connect residents with employment and business opportunities, expungement and legal aid assistance, and more information on cannabis regulations and laws within the city. Led by the Mayor's Office, the upcoming resource fair, scheduled for February 1 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., will convene cannabis businesses, industry experts, social equity leaders, advocacy groups, government agencies and legal aid organizations from across Chicago and statewide to serve as one-stop-shop for residents interested in joining or learning more about this new and emerging industry.

"Since day one, we have worked hand-in-hand with city and state officials, community advocates, and industry partners to build a framework that ensures cannabis legalization uplifts the economic life of all our neighborhoods and residents, particularly those in our black and brown communities who have borne the brunt of the war on drugs," said Mayor Lightfoot. "With our first-of-its-kind resource fair, we're teaming up with experts representing all angles of this new industry to empower our residents who are either interested in learning more or becoming the next employee, business owner or investor in Chicago's newest industry, with the resources they need to succeed."

The City's Cannabis Resource Fair is open to the public for free and will be hosted at the UIC Forum, located at 725 W. Roosevelt Rd. Residents will have an opportunity to visit informational tables and directly participate in workshops hosted by local dispensary businesses, cannabis advocacy groups and State and County agencies, including Illinois NORML, Cabrini Green Legal Aid, Illinois Equity Staffing and the P.U.R.E. Coalition.

"Over the last couple of years, our chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws has worked alongside legislators and advocates to craft a legalization model that would build on-ramps for impacted individuals and communities," said Edie Moore, executive director of Chicago NORML. "From becoming retail shop owners, growers,



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vendors and ancillary support firms, it's time for Chicago's small and minority-owned businesses to reap the benefits from this new industry."

Throughout the day-long resource fair, the City will host six presentation and panel discussions to provide a wide range of information and direct access to experts from the industry. Panels, held by range of community, industry and state partners, including the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), will focus on subjects ranging from Know Your Rights and expungement, to license application support and financial assistance.

"With recreational cannabis now legalized in the State of Illinois, we are excited about the opportunity to provide businesses and residents around the state with the assistance and resources they need to bolster the economic impact in their communities," said Michael Negrón, Assistant Director at DCEO. "Inclusion in this new industry has been at the heart of the state's efforts from the beginning, and this first-ever City of Chicago cannabis resource fair will serve as a critical network for residents interested in job opportunities, investment pathways, and supports and services for this emerging market."

While panel participants and times will be announced closer to the event, the following panels will be featured:

- **Working in the Industry**
An overview of the various paths to work in the industry, including available jobs as well as the skills, training and certification necessary.
- **Starting a Business in the Industry**
From dispensary to craft grow to transporter to infuser, find out about the different licenses and what it takes to get started in each area.
- **Expungement**
A conversation highlighting the expungement provisions of the state law, including an opportunity for more personalized consultations and how you can erase low-level convictions and arrests for marijuana possession.
- **Cannabis 101 and Know Your Rights**
An explanation of all things pertaining to legalization, including the current state of the industry and key provisions of legalization.
- **Contracting Opportunities**
From construction to security to HVAC to electricians, there are plenty of contracting opportunities and services within the cannabis industry. This panel will highlight the needs of the cannabis industry and offer contractors a chance to think about how to increase their customer base to the industry.
- **Navigating City Regulations**
From the Zoning Board of Appeals process to building permits and state licenses, this will be your chance to ask City and State staff questions to understand what it takes to operate in the City of Chicago and State of Illinois

"With the historic legalization of cannabis in Chicago and across the state, now more than ever are residents ready to join this city's evolving and growing cannabis market," said



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Shawnee Williams, of Illinois Equity Staffing. “We look forward to meeting residents from across the State to connect, recruit and build their cannabis business into realities.”

In addition to asking questions at the panel discussion, staff from City departments will be on-site to answer questions and distribute information to help better inform residents about the City’s latest rules and regulations passed at City Council this fall, including dispensary zoning regulations and CPD’s reformed enforcement policies.

Residents and businesses interested in attending the City’s upcoming Cannabis Resource Fair can register [here](#). This event is free to the public. .To learn more about the legalization of cannabis in Chicago, residents can also visit Chicago.gov/cannabis.

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