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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND BACP ANNOUNCE NEW PROGRAM TO PROVIDE  
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) FOR CHICAGO'S TAXICAB  
INDUSTRY**

*New program will offer over \$800,000 in subsidies to purchase PPE for taxicab drivers and vehicles; supports safe and accessible trips for paratransit riders that rely on taxicabs*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) Commissioner Rosa Escareno today announced the launch of a new program that offers subsidies to all Chicago's taxicab medallion owners so that they can purchase the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) they need to operate safely in Chicago. Under the program, the City is making available \$200 per taxicab per year for reimbursements for face coverings, gloves, disinfecting products, partitions and other PPE products and service. Today's launch builds on the City's ongoing efforts to support safe and reliable public vehicle transportation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Chicago's paratransit residents rely on our taxicabs to stay connected to jobs, education and opportunity," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Through this new program, we can further ensure Chicago's public vehicle transportation industry has the resources and support they need to keep operators, employees and customers safe during this difficult time."

Distributed from the City's Accessibility Fund, the subsidies provided to Chicago's taxicab owners could total up to \$800,000. Licensed Taxicab Medallion Holders and Taxi Affiliations are eligible to apply [here](#) for reimbursement today through a form which can be found on BACP's website. To be eligible, taxicabs must be in good standing with the PACE Taxi Access Program (TAP), through which paratransit customers travel via taxicab at reduced rates for trips originating within the City of Chicago. Applicants can receive reimbursement of up to \$200 per taxicab for PPE. Items eligible for reimbursement include but are not limited to:

- Masks
- Gloves



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- Hand Sanitizer
- Cleaning Products and Services
- Plastic or Vinyl Partitions
- Partition Installation Costs

“Chicago’s taxicabs have long been an essential service, particularly for passengers with disabilities,” said Rosa Escareno, BACP Commissioner. “This latest effort removes a financial burden on taxicabs while ensuring that drivers have the protection they need to keep themselves and their passengers safe.”

For many paratransit passengers, the [PACE Taxi Access Program \(TAP\)](#) is essential as their primary means of mobility. All City of Chicago licensed taxicabs are available to accept and transport certified paratransit passengers through TAP and all are required to install and maintain technology to accommodate payments and service through this program. To provide relief for residents during the COVID-19 outbreak, PACE has temporarily eliminated paratransit passenger fees for the Taxi Access Program.

"Chicago's taxi industry is a critical component in the City's efforts to provide more accessible transportation options for people with disabilities," said Laurie Dittman, Acting Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities. "Even throughout this unprecedented time, Chicago is making every effort to not only ensure our residents with disabilities have access to transportation but also that the Wheelchair-Accessible Vehicle (WAV) medallion holders have the PPE they need to stay safe."

Earlier this week, BACP [announced](#) that the department has entered into a contract for Curb Mobility, LLC (CURB) to manage the City’s Centralized Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Taxicab Dispatch Service. Beginning July 1, 2020, passengers can request a WAV taxicab ride by calling 1-888-WAV-CABS (1-888-928-2227) or by downloading the CURB app. Passengers will also be able to make in-app electronic payments for their rides via the CURB app. For more information, including steps on how to download the CURB app, visit [gocurb.com/ChicagoWAV](http://gocurb.com/ChicagoWAV).

“As a Chicago taxicab owner and operator, I am thrilled to be able to take advantage of the \$200 reimbursement program that BACP is offering,” said George Kasp, taxicab medallion owner-operator. “Personal Protective Equipment is essential to my ability to continue doing my job safely and responsibly.”

As part of the City’s relief efforts for the taxicab and rideshare industry, the payments for Ground Transportation Tax and other business taxes have been deferred through the crisis, with the [resumption of collection activities phased in](#)



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[over the next few months](#). Public Vehicle licenses that have expired or will expire between March 15 and June 30 will have until July 30 to renew. BACP has also created a direct subsidy for WAV taxicabs by increasing the annual subsidy for vehicle maintenance by \$1,000, increasing the WAV driver leasing subsidy from \$15 to \$25/hour.

"We are glad to see the City of Chicago Department of BACP stepping up to protect & assist the taxicab industry and their customers by providing PPE funds," said Jong B. Lee, President of Sun Taxi Association. "Chicago is taking positive steps toward recovery and the PPE funds will go a long way in stopping the spread and protecting passengers in the vehicles. Everyone needs to do their part, so that we can continue to move forward and get back to being safe."

To assist taxicabs and all business owners secure affordable PPE supplies from verified sources, the City has partnered with local startup Rheaply to launch "Chicago PPE Market", a program that will facilitate access to PPE for Chicago's small businesses and nonprofits. Chicago-based organizations will be able to connect with a network of local manufacturers and suppliers to access protective shields, reusable face masks, hand sanitizer and other products at cost-controlled rates via [chicagoppemarket.com](http://chicagoppemarket.com). Buyers can register for the Chicago PPE Market here and then check their email for a link to access the online platform.

To use the Chicago PPE Market, buyers browse available listings for reusable face coverings, hand sanitizer, and protective shields; request to purchase specific PPE based on their desired quantity and the advertised price; and communicate directly with the supplier through the in-platform messaging feature to agree on payment and pick-up or delivery details.

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