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Chicago Committee on Economic, Capital and Technology Development Pushes For A Guaranteed Income

*Ald. Villegas, Ald. Hadden, Ald. King Introduce Legislation to Use
COVID-relief dollars for Basic Income*

CHICAGO, IL -- [A resolution](#) introduced to the Committee on Economic, Capital and Technology Development of the Chicago City Council would offer relief to Chicagoans struggling economically due to COVID-19 in a simple, effective way: by guaranteeing Chicagoans cash. The resolution, introduced by Alderman Gilbert Villegas, Alderwoman Maria Hadden, and Alderwoman Sophia King cites the need for a guaranteed income.

“After almost a year in crisis, Chicago’s families are still struggling to attend to their most urgent needs. At the same time, the businesses in our neighborhoods are struggling to keep their doors open. Today, the solution we offer to provide them relief is bold, yet simple: we resolve to find a way to guarantee a basic income for Chicagoans.” **said Alderman Gilbert Villegas.** “Distributing cash directly to Chicago families would transform life for millions of Chicagoans for generations to come.”

The opportunity to secure a guaranteed income for Chicagoans arises in light of the expected passage of the American Rescue Plan, which, similarly to the CARES Act of spring 2020, would offer the City of Chicago discretionary funding to provide relief to residents. The resolution highlights the need to distribute that funding directly and efficiently to Chicago’s families via guaranteed income and cash payments.

Harish I. Patel, Director of Economic Security for Illinois, a policy group which has been encouraging policymakers to put more cash in people’s pockets, said: “Cash policy is smart policy. Cash meets most urgent needs with immediate impact. But cash is more than a quick fix. Recurring cash payments are a long-term investment, offering tangible and continued resources

so families can pursue their goals with a sense of stability and security. With this resolution, the City Council promises to seek ways to give more dignity back to Chicago's families."

The resolution outlines the economic insecurity faced by many Chicago residents, including the worsening racial wealth gap, a legacy of disinvestment via policies like redlining, and the more recent advent of gig economy jobs. It outlines a desire for the City Council to pursue a basic income pilot with the funds the City receives from the Biden administration to attend to the economic needs imposed by COVID-19 and by increasing wealth inequality and a widening racial wealth gap.

"This crisis is new, but the economic insecurity our families face is not. Prior to the pandemic, families-- specifically Black and Brown families like the ones in my ward-- have been watching their paychecks diminish year over year as neighbors have been priced out-- or pushed out-- of the communities they love. Guaranteeing a basic income would put more power in the hands of these families," **said Alderwoman Maria Hadden.**

The resolution, if passed, would establish that the City Council would hold hearings on the creation of a guaranteed basic income, an idea that was first raised with the launch of the [Chicago Resilient Families Task Force](#) in 2018.

"Over the course of this year, we've watched as businesses, people, and governments have needed to innovate. COVID-19 has required us all to think differently about the work we do. In some ways, what we're offering here is revolutionary; but in other ways, it's common sense. Let's figure out how to give Chicagoans cash. After all, they know better than we do what they need," **said Alderwoman Sophia King.**

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[Economic Security for Illinois](#) is a non-partisan non-profit advocating for bold policy solutions that work for working people. We promote ideas that will put money in people's pockets.