

September 26, 2023

To the elected officials of the City of Chicago:

As public health practitioners, we firmly believe that all people deserve a work environment that protects their health and safety. **The rideshare industry falls short of this mark, creating an urgent public health and racial equity crisis that disproportionately harms Chicagoans of color.** Chicago can lead in supporting the health and well-being of drivers by passing the Rideshare Living Wage and Safety Ordinance. We urge you to support this critical legislation.

In 2022, [at least 31 app-based workers](#) were murdered on the job, the majority of whom were people of color. Reporting from *The Markup* found that *at least* 84 Chicago rideshare drivers were [carjacked](#) between 2017 and 2022. And according to a [2021-2022 survey](#) of 502 app-based drivers in Chicago, 86% of drivers of color and 87% of women drivers felt unsafe at least once a month while driving, compared to 79% of all drivers. Despite this, rejecting rides that feel unsafe may cost drivers their jobs and livelihoods. [Human Impact Partners](#) found that drivers face a constant threat of having their accounts permanently deactivated without warning. The looming threat of deactivation puts drivers in a double bind between their safety and their pay – in particular for drivers of color.

Income is a [key predictor of health](#). We all need financial security to thrive, manage stress, prevent disease, and meet our basic needs. Through deactivation and low pay, the rideshare business fuels economic insecurity, ultimately harming workers' health. In Chicago, [86% of app-based drivers](#) rely on the gig economy to pay for their basic expenses, but that income is anything but reliable. Fares and bonuses are set by an algorithm with little transparency for drivers, while the proportion companies take has increased and [may be as high as 50%](#). In the same [Chicago survey](#), nearly half of drivers reported earning less than \$15 per hour – which is less than the city's minimum wage. Beyond deactivation, drivers may face a ["time out"](#) from declining too many rides, which poses a financial risk to drivers dependent on the income and creates hesitancy to reject rides that don't fit their schedule or geographic range. Put together, low pay, low control, and high unpredictability mean drivers must drive long hours to make ends meet and can never be certain about earnings.

The research is loud and clear: rideshare drivers, in particular drivers of color, face dual and compounding crises of financial security and safety. There is a public health and racial justice imperative to improve working conditions for rideshare drivers by raising wages, increasing stability, promoting fare transparency, protecting against deactivation, and continuing to study and document drivers' experiences with safety and pay.

The Chicago Rideshare Living Wage and Safety Ordinance is an opportunity to do just that. Chicago can be a national leader in extending important protections to drivers to improve financial stability, health, and wellness. We are asking for your support in protecting rideshare driver health and safety by passing this critical ordinance.

Sincerely,

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