



CITY OF CHICAGO



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
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Wednesday, March 23, 2022

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City Clerk of Chicago, Anna Valencia, launches Electronic Voting in Chicago City Council Chambers

*The launch of electronic voting is the first stage in Clerk Valencia's Council Modernization Initiative set to bring Chicago into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

[Chicago, IL] - Today, City Clerk Anna Valencia, in partnership with Alderwoman Michelle Harris and Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, launched the use of electronic voting (eVoting) in City Council Chambers. EVoting is the first phase of the historic Council Modernization initiative aims streamline the current legislative management system – creating a more efficient and effective council process.

**"This is a historic day for Chicago's City Council," said Valencia. "We are proud to lead the way as the largest U.S. city to implement electronic voting. EVoting will not only benefit the members themselves; it will also give Chicagoans a clearer understanding of how their government works."**

EVoting allows Aldermen to vote electronically in Council Chambers using an electronic voting application. Once votes are cast, they will be displayed on monitors in Chambers.

**"Electronic voting is a fast, sustainable and accessible solution to the challenges presented by traditional, paper heavy voting methods," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "As the first major U.S. City to implement eVoting, we will be able to bring more efficiency and transparency to Council processes. I applaud Clerk Valencia on this huge step forward to bring Chicago City Council into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."**

Valencia started this work in 2017 when her office convened a diverse group of individuals to gather feedback on how to improve the function, accessibility, and transparency of the City Council process. This included an internal Working Group comprised of Aldermen, representatives from the Mayor's Office and various City departments. This also included an external Advisory Council made up of academic and community stakeholders. After securing the vendor, Electronic Knowledge Interchange (EKI), the groups worked collaboratively to bring eVoting to Chicago for the first time in the City's history.

**"It is a significant day for Chicago City Council," said Michelle A. Harris, Chairman of the Committee on Committees and Rules. "eVoting transforms the way we work as a legislative body and is a huge step forward to modernize Chicago City Council. I look forward to continuing this collaboration as we introduce the next phase of Council Modernization."**

Valencia's entire Council Modernization initiative is broken into three phases, eVoting, to streamline the current voting process, being the first. The first phase will also include digital co-sponsorship and digital submission and tracking of legislation. Phase two will focus on moving the more paper-heavy committees, paperless and improving departmental data sharing. Lastly, phase three will include implementing language and ADA access and real-time eVoting for all committees.

To date, Chicago is the largest city in the United States to use electronic voting. New York and Los Angeles still utilize voice votes.

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