

# [***Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot Vies For Re-Election After Rocky First Term: What To Watch For In Tuesday s Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67NK-6021-JBCM-F365-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Rising crime rates during the pandemic have become a central issue in the nine-person race.

**Body**

**Topline**

Democratic Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot is jockeying for a second term in Tuesday s nine-way mayoral election, after a tough four years in office and amid polling that shows her trailing two candidates in a race that is likely headed for a runoff.

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Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot speaks to supporters at a campaign rally on February 25, 2023 in Chicago, Illinois. Lightfoot is facing eight contenders in the mayoral race. (Photo by Scott Olson/Getty Images)

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Polling in the race has been mixed: Lightfoot is trailing conservative-leaning former Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas and progressive Cook County Commissioner Brandon Johnson, according toa Victory Research polltaken days before Tuesday s election.

The results show Vallas has a clear lead, with 27% of the 806 likely voters saying they would cast their ballots for him, followed by 20% for Johnson, 19% for Lightfoot and 16% for U.S. Rep. Jesús Chuy García (D) the poll s margin of error is 3.45%.

However,internal pollingconducted by Lightfoot s campaign last month shows her leading the pack with 25% of support among 800 likely voters, followed by Vallas (22%) and García (18%).

The contest is officially nonpartisan and does not include any primaries, and will go to a runoff election on April 4 if one candidate fails to win 50% of the votes a likely scenario given the crowded field of Democratic contenders.

Lightfoot has seen her early popularity as a stalwart leader during the pandemic fade, amid rising crime rates and heated public feuds with local lawmakers and the city s largest unions, including the conservative Fraternal Order of Police, which endorsed Vallas, and the liberal Chicago Teachers Union, which endorsed Johnson.

Crime has become a central issue in the race: Though homicides dipped 14% in 2022 from 2021, when the city recorded more killings than in any year of at least the previous 20, the 695 murders logged last year are still well above pre-pandemic 2019, when there were 500 murders, according toChicago police statistics.

**Key Background**

Lightfoot, a 60-year-old former federal prosecutor elected as the city s first Black female and openly gay mayor in 2019, has faced a series of controversies during her four years in office. Less than a year into her tenure, the Covid-19 pandemic shut down the city. Rising crime rates followed, as they did in many large cities, with domestic violence incidents, shootings, and retail and auto thefts posting sharp increases. Chicago was one of several major cities where high-end retail districts were hit with looting in the wake of the George Floyd protests in the summer of 2020. The city s population has also declined, as has Lightfoot s reputation. Her persona as a stern leader earned her a degree of popularity early in her term, but her style has come to be seen by many in political circles as overly abrasive. She feuded with Democratic Gov. J.B. Prtizker s administration over his administration s Covid-19 protocols, she battled the teacher s union to reopen schools and repeatedly engaged inheated public exchangeswith City Council members. She can be dismissive and condescending, City Council member Andre Vasqueztold the . In response to the criticism, Lightfoot compared her style to her predecessors, including former Mayors Rich Daley and Rahm Emmanuel. It s not like they won contests for Mr. Congeniality, she toldthe . Lightfoot also told alocal TV station about 99% of criticism of her demeanor is driven by racism and sexism.

**Tangent**

Lightfoot s re-election campaign has centered on highlighting investments in impoverished neighborhoods under her watch and her early popularity during the pandemic. She has also touted record spending on public safety, including the police department and anti-violence programs. Vallas has cast the city as gripped by out-of-control crime and blamed leadership for failing to hold people accused of crimes accountable. He has advocated for tougher crime penalties, more arrests and hiring more police officers. Johnson, who vows on his campaign website to invest in affordable housing and additional resources for public schools, has faced criticism for his previous support for defunding the police. García, who lost a runoff election to Emmanuel in 2015, has spotlighted his Latino heritage and extensive career in ***politics***, starting with his election to the Chicago City Council in 1986. In a January attack ad, Lightfoot highlighted a donation García received to his congressional campaign from disgraced FTX crypto exchange founder Sam Bankman-Fried.

**Big Number**

18%. That s the share of votes Lightfoot won in the first round of the 2019 mayoral race, when she faced 13 other contenders, including Vallas, who won the less than 6% of votes.

**Further Reading**

The 9-person stage drama in Chicago that won t end on Election Day(Politico)

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot Faces Tough Re-Election Bid(The Wall Street Journal)

As Lightfoot Tries for Second Term, Jabs Go From Friendly to Harsh (The New YorkTimes)

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