



Legislation Text

File #: 1016-2023, **Version:** 1

This ordinance enacts a new chapter of city code to provide protections for freelance workers in Columbus. This ordinance also amends sections of City Code related to the enforcement of these provisions by the Wage Theft Prevention and Enforcement Commission.

Freelance work is one the fastest growing sectors within the workforce. Nearly 40% of the workforce is engaged in freelance work as of 2022. Researchers expect that over half of the workforce will be participating in freelance work by 2027 due to the rapid growth, and due to younger generations' interest in the flexibility and opportunities that freelancing provides. In Columbus, it is important to invest in and protect the freelancers today and be prepared for the larger freelance sector of tomorrow.

Protecting freelance workers supports those at the foundation of the community. The majority of caregivers in the workforce choose freelance work because it allows them better opportunities to balance their priorities and responsibilities. Nearly 50% of freelancers choose this sector because they cannot work for a traditional employer due to personal circumstances. Protecting freelancers is one more step Columbus City Council can take to promote the financial stability and overall well-being of families.

These steps are necessary because the greatest unique challenge that freelancers face is uncertainty - unpredictable income. Every year, 50% of freelance workers struggle to collect payment. 71% of freelancers will struggle to collect payment at least once over the course of their career. These changes to the Columbus City Codes will require that contracts are in place for freelance work representing more than \$250 of work, will require that freelancers are paid in full and in a timely manner, and will give freelancers a course of action if these agreements are not honored.

This ordinance establishes protections for freelance workers in Columbus, placing enforcement of these provisions with the Wage Theft Prevention and Enforcement Commission. These updates will strengthen Columbus' workforce and Columbus' families.

FISCAL IMPACT: No funding is required for this legislation.

To enact Chapter 2337 and Section 377.18; to amend sections 377.02, 377.11, 377.12, 377.15, 377.16 and 377.17; and to repeal existing sections 377.02, 377.11, 377.12, 377.15, 377.16 and 377.17 of the Columbus City Codes, to provide protections to freelance workers in Columbus.

WHEREAS, freelance workers are an increasingly large portion of the workforce with nearly 4 in 10 workers engaging in freelance work in 2022; and

WHEREAS, freelance work is only going to continue to grow, with an expected 87 million freelance workers expected to be active in the national economy by 2027; and

WHEREAS, freelancers often choose freelance work for increased flexibility, especially for caregivers who seek to balance responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, freelance workers do not have the same protections as traditional workers, and 71% will struggle to collect payment during their career and 50% will struggle to collect payment once a year; and

WHEREAS, protections to freelance workers will help alleviate concerns of income stability; and

WHEREAS, Columbus City Council seeks to promote financial stability for all members of the workforce and protect vulnerable workers; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That Chapter 2337 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby enacted per the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 2. That Section 377.02 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby amended per the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 3. That Section 377.11 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby amended per the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 4. That Section 377.12 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby amended per the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 5. That Section 377.15 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby amended per the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 6. That Section 377.16 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby amended per the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 7. That Section 377.17 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby amended per the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 8. That Section 377.18 of the Columbus City Codes is hereby enacted per the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 9. That existing Sections 377.02, 377.11, 377.12, 377.15, 377.16 and 377.17 are hereby repealed.

SECTION 10. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.