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CITY OF CHICAGO HOSTS ACCESS CHICAGO EXPO FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Biennial expo promotes wide range of accessible products and services that facilitate inclusion and independence for people around the city with all types of disabilities

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) today encouraged residents from across the city to attend the City's signature biennial event for the disability community and the Midwest's premier exhibition of services and products for people with disabilities. At *Access Chicago*, residents and individuals can test products and get information on the wide-range of accessible products and services created exclusively for individuals with disabilities. *Access Chicago* 2016 will take place today, July 13th at Navy Pier between 10am-5pm.

"The City of Chicago is committed to improving accessibility for all of our residents, no matter where they live or what their needs may be," said Mayor Emanuel. "I encourage residents around the city to take advantage of this premier expo that provides residents access and information to the tools and services that they need to navigate our city, and participate in the vast opportunities that make our city unique."

New to this year's expo is the presentation of the 2016 Taxicab Medallion Excellence Award, which will be presented to the licensed taxicab driver who has demonstrated exemplary service and dedication to the city's disability community. The award was created to encourage taxicab drivers to better accommodate passengers with disabilities, and was a direct result of the Mayor's taxi reform ordinance passed by the City Council in January of 2012. The annual award presentation will take place for the first time at the *Access Chicago* expo at noon on Wednesday.

"Every two years, Chicago convenes the best in the business and top community organizations at this premier event to help residents living with disabilities to live more independently," said MOPD Commissioner Karen Tamley. "This year we hope that residents and families from across

the city and the region join us in accessing the services and initiatives that are helping make our city the most accessible in the nation.”

Access Chicago is free and open to residents and people with disabilities of all ages. In addition to testing products and services, residents may connect with more than 100 vendors, social service and community organizations to learn about the latest services and programs made exclusively for the disability community. Attendees can also do the following:

- Find information on disability-related services and programs—from housing and employment, to health and transportation;
- Participate in new activities, including cooking demos and interactive therapeutic art sessions;
- Receive free health screenings in the on-site health pavilion;
- Take part in various adaptive sports and recreational demonstrations; and
- Participate in events for the entire family, complete with a photo booth and raffle prizes.

Access Chicago is hosted bi-annually in July by the MOPD, and also marks the City’s official recognition of the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In response to the passage of the ADA, the City created the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities to ensure accessibility compliance, promote inclusion and meet the diverse needs of Chicagoans with disabilities. The City of Chicago is proud to have installed over 80,000 ADA compliant curb ramps; provided disability accessibility at close to 70 percent of CTA stations; and included the needs of people with disabilities into all city emergency plans.

All *Access Chicago* attendees are eligible for discount parking provided at Navy Pier on the day of the expo. For more information on this year’s *Access Chicago* expo, please visit:<http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/mopd/provdrs/accesschicago.html>

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