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CONTACT: Mika Stambaugh

Mika.Stambaugh@CityofChicago.org

(O) 312.744.5365

(C) 312.805.9385

**CITY OF CHICAGO AWARDS TAXICAB DRIVER WITH FREE TAXICAB MEDALLION FOR
EXEMPLARY SERVICE TO THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY**

Free Taxicab Medallion Offers Financial Freedom, Small Business Benefits for Driver

The City of Chicago today presented the 2015 Taxicab Driver Excellence Award to licensed Chicago taxicab driver Bayo Aladesuru for his one of a kind customer service and dedication to the disability community. The taxicab medallion award was presented to Mr. Aladesuru during the 2016 *Access Chicago* expo, the city's biannual event to showcase its offering of products and services created exclusively for individuals with disabilities.

The Taxicab Medallion Excellence Award was created for drivers providing services to passengers with disabilities. The ordinance allows for a free medallion to be awarded to one wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) chauffeur and the winner is chosen by the Taxicab Driver Excellence Committee. This year's award was presented by committee members Karen Tamley of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) and Maria Guerra Lapacek, Commissioner of the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP).

"It is because of chauffeurs like Bayo who go above and beyond to provide quality service to the disabled community so they can navigate Chicago independently," said BACP Commissioner Maria Guerra Lapacek. "The nominations for Bayo painted a very clear picture of the impact of the service he provides to his customers and what exemplary service looks like."

Every year since 2012, the Taxicab Driver Excellence Award is awarded to a driver exemplifying superior service and a commitment to providing residents of all needs with access to quality transportation. The Taxicab Driver Excellence Committee reviews nominations by the general public and carefully considers each of them before selecting a recipient of the award, which includes a free taxicab medallion.

This year, the committee reviewed 4 nominees. Bayo secured this year's award with over 40 nominations. He's been a licensed chauffeur for 18 years, but 2015 was his year. Throughout 2015 he responded to over 1,800 calls from Central Dispatch for his wheelchair accessible taxicab. One nominee wrote, "I wish I could request him every time I need to go to the doctor. He treated me like a person and not just a customer. I wish every taxi driver had the same courtesy."

Another nominee wrote, "If my husband is not there, Bayo without being asked regularly clears the snow from the area between the garage door and the taxi ramp [...]. Once he picked me up exactly as planned for an early morning trip to the airport even though a family members business had just gone up in flames."

The Taxicab Driver Excellence Committee is made up of three City of Chicago employees and four members of local non-profit organizations and one citizen at large. The committee is run jointly by BACP Commissioner Guerra Lapacek and Commissioner Karen Tamley of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD). Additional committee members are Deputy Commissioner Rupal Bapat of BACP, Efrat Stein of Self Help Home, Carrie Kaufman of Access Living, Lisa Rosen of the Rehabilitation Institute Chicago, Rachel Weisberg of Equip for Equality, and Maureen Reagan, President of MRA Architects.

"Accessible taxicabs are critical to the independence of the disability community and we are proud to recognize the years of exemplary service that Bayo has provided," said MOPD Commissioner Karen Tamley.

BACP oversees the licensing of Chicago's public chauffeurs and public vehicles including taxicabs, transportation network providers, liveries, charter and site seeing buses, horse drawn carriages, ambulances, water taxis and tour boats. The department oversees the purchasing of taxicab medallions, vehicle inspections and rates of fare. Learn more about BACP's Public Vehicle Operations at www.cityofchicago.org/BACP.

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