



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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MAYOR EMANUEL LAUNCHES CHICAGOSHVELS.ORG TO BRING CHICAGOANS TOGETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN WINTER-PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS

ChicagoShovels.org Leverages Social Media and New Technology to Connect Neighbors, Encourage Chicagoans to "Adopt-a-Sidewalk," and Track City Snow Plows in Real-Time

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Rahm Emanuel launched ChicagoShovels.org, a new, interactive online resource that helps Chicagoans engage and participate in critical winter-preparedness efforts. The new site is being launched with a real-time "Plow Tracker" that allows residents to monitor the progress of the City's snow plows, a volunteer "Snow Corps" program, and links to winter web apps. The City is also launching an "Adopt-a-Sidewalk" shoveling initiative where Chicagoans can soon visit the site and sign up to be a part of the program.

"Winter preparedness is everyone's responsibility, and when we come together, community by community, block by block, we can help reduce the dangers and health risks that winter weather can bring," said Mayor Emanuel. "ChicagoShovels.org is an important resource that not only informs Chicagoans about how they can help their neighbors, but allows them to see the City's snow program in action during severe weather."

ChicagoShovels.org brings together City and public resources to help residents and business owners navigate winter and snow-related issues. The portal provides a platform for residents and businesses to organize and participate in neighborhood-level activities.



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The Adopt-a-Sidewalk tool will be launched in Beta to allow for user feedback that will help continually make improvements to the technology.

“ChicagoShovels.org uses innovative technology and social media to help Chicagoans connect and work together to help address the challenges of winter weather in their neighborhoods,” said Chicago’s Chief Technology Officer John Tolva.

The portal will feature several key elements:

- **Adopt-a-Sidewalk Program:** This web app will allow neighbors and businesses to connect with each other to help shovel sidewalks and offers a platform for sharing resources. Users “adopt-a-sidewalk” near their home or business by “claiming” it on an interactive map. Chicagoans will be able to see which sidewalks are claimed and have an option to connect with their neighbors to help keep their sidewalks clear. Users can also “share” various snow items. The ability to share items will be powered by www.OhSoWe.com, a site that facilitates the sharing of resources such as shovels and snow blowers.
- **Real-time Snow Plow Tracker:** During major snow cleanup efforts, the City will activate the real-time “Plow Tracker” map, allowing the public to track the progress of City snow plows and make snow removal efforts more transparent.
- **Volunteer “Snow Corps”:** Snow Corps is a new program that connects volunteers with residents in need of snow removal – such as seniors and residents with disabilities. Groups and individuals can volunteer to help those in need by signing up using an online form.
- **New Winter Readiness Apps:** Chicago web and app developers have leveraged the City’s [open data](#) to build apps that help the public weather winter storms. Twoinch.es informs and alerts drivers of winter parking bans. WasMyCarTowed.com uses the City’s towed and relocated vehicle data to help people locate their vehicles.
- **City Resource Links:** With just one click, Chicagoans can submit an online 311 request, view press releases, sign up for Notify Chicago alerts, watch educational



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videos, follow the Mayor's Office on Twitter, and find answers to frequently asked questions.

The City is also making components of the final code for ChicagoShovels.org available to other developers interested in building on the technology for use in their own communities. Adopt-a-Sidewalk was built by the City leveraging resources from private partners like OhSoWe and Code for America.

The City of Chicago's data portal, data.cityofchicago.org, currently hosts more than 271 datasets with over 20 million rows of data. Since Mayor Emanuel took office on May 16, 2011, the portal has been viewed nearly 750,000 times and over 37 million rows of data have been accessed.

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