

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER • 78 EAST WASHINGTON STREET • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

TEL: (312) 744-2400 • FAX: (312) 744-2359 • TTY: (312) 744-2947

Contact: Kristin Unger
312.742.1080
kristin.unger@cityofchicago.org

LOVE CHICAGO? BECOME A GREETER!
Chicago Greeter Program Recruiting New Volunteers

The Chicago Office of Tourism is actively seeking new volunteers to join their **Chicago Greeter** program, a free tour service in which locals introduce visitors to more than 40 special interest topics and 25 neighborhoods in Chicago.

As volunteers, **Chicago Greeters** give informal two to four hour “insider introductions” to their favorite features of Chicago—topics can range from hidden gem restaurants in the loop to public art in Pilsen. Visitors are matched with Greeters based on each visitor’s interests, availability and language. Greeters are encouraged to personalize visits with their own experiences and specialties, taking guests across the city, demonstrating its walkability and the user-friendliness of its public transportation system.

Current **Chicago Greeters** include Jared Wouters, who says volunteering with the Greeter program has been a rewarding experience. “Becoming a Greeter is a great way to show off the parts of Chicago visitors may not know about. In the last four years, I’ve met people from around the world and shown them the city from a local’s point of view.”

All potential Greeters are welcome to apply through the **Chicago Greeter** website, at www.chicagogreeter.com/apply. New Greeter interviews and training will be conducted through spring 2009. Greeters are most needed in the following areas:

- German, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and other foreign language skills
- Individuals familiar with Bronzeville and African-American history in Chicago
- Individuals familiar with south side neighborhoods such as Bridgeport, Morgan Park, Hyde Park and Beverly

Ideal Greeters are friendly, enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the city. Becoming a **Chicago Greeter** requires no additional experience—just a passion for Chicago. Basic training is provided by the program. Visits are generally scheduled between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. The **Chicago Greeter** program requests a commitment of at least six visits per year.

Since April 2002, **Chicago Greeter** has been a resource for visitors as well as locals entertaining visiting family and friends. Chicago Greeter currently has 180 volunteers, representing dozens of languages. There have been over 7,000 Greeter visits to date, servicing visitors from more than 75 different countries.

Travel parties of six or less interested in taking a **Chicago Greeter** visit must register seven to ten business days in advance online at www.chicagogreeter.com. Visitors with questions about their upcoming Greeter visit should call 312.744.8000, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Chicago Greeter** and *InstaGreeter* visits originate at the Chicago Cultural Center Visitor Information Center, 77 E. Randolph Street.

Visitors and Chicagoans planning to entertain out-of-town guests can receive Chicago brochures, reserve hotel accommodations and receive trip-planning assistance by calling toll-free 1.877.CHICAGO (1.877.244.2246), or visiting www.cityofchicago.org/tourism. Brochures and information on Chicago's exciting events and activities are also available at the Visitor Information Centers. The centers are located at Chicago Water Works, 163 East Pearson Street at Michigan Avenue and the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 East Randolph Street. The TTY toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1.866.710.0294.

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the official City agency dedicated to promoting Chicago to domestic and international visitors and to providing innovative visitor programs and services.

###