

# Everyday Advocacy: Become a 311 Expert

Using 311 to document problems, request city services, and track progress is one of the best tools we have for improving our city. A few simple tips can help ensure the information you report is useful and action is taken to address the issue you have identified.

## 1. KNOW YOUR OPTIONS.

Phone, Website, Smartphone Apps.

With the rise of the internet and smartphones, residents have never had more options for making a request for city services. In addition to dialing 311 from any phone within the city, reports can also be made on the [city's website](#) or through one of several smartphone applications.

**Tip:** Not all types of services can be requested through smartphone applications. For example, reporting uncleared snow on sidewalks requires you to call 311 or go to the city's website. Remember too, that your neighbors might not have access to or feel comfortable using the internet, encourage them that using phone is just as good to report the things they see. To see a complete list of service types you can request through 311 [follow this link](#).

## 2. BE SPECIFIC. Know what to ask for and document the details.

Before you get all excited and start dialing 311 or fire up your web browser, do a quick check to make sure you have all the basic information related to your request – location, description of the problem, type of service needed (don't worry if you don't know this last one).

This will help speed up filing your request, leaving more time for you to find other problems to report!

**Tip:** New smartphone applications make it easy to automatically note your location and document issues with photos and comments.

## 3. TRACK YOUR REQUEST. Make sure your request leads to results.

With any kind of advocacy, follow-up is everything. After you file your service request, you will receive a tracking number that lets you monitor the status of your report with the city's Service Tracker website: [servicetracker.cityofchicago.org](http://servicetracker.cityofchicago.org). You can also use this number to follow up with your alderman's office for any issue; it makes it easier for them to track as well.

