



#186: City Haul: Investigating Chicago's Payroll

Date Jan 5, 2016

Sponsor [GitHub](#)

Website chihacknight.org

Some things to know

- There will be food! You are also welcome to take up to 2 drinks from the 'everyone' refrigerator.
- Braintree space: We are free to use the auditorium, small offices directly next to it, and the cafeteria.
- [Twitter](#) and [Flickr](#): share using the **#chihacknight** hashtag. Follow us [@chihacknight](#)
- Website: ChiHackNight.org
- Live stream: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKuT0odkq1s>
- Google Group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/chihacknight>
- Weekly email: <http://eepurl.com/z65hn>
- Join our [Slack](#) channel: <http://slackme.chihacknight.org>
- We have Chi Hack Night stickers! [Here's how you get one](#)
- Wifi Password: PayPalGuest / SafePayments

Agenda

- 6:00 pm Eating and socializing
- 6:15 pm Welcome, introductions & meet your neighbor
- 6:30 pm Announcements
- 6:40 pm Presentation
- 7:15 pm Highlight breakout groups
- 7:30 pm Break into groups and hack

Announcements

Share your civic tech news, events and projects!

So long, 2015

In case you missed it, Derek and Christopher wrote up the [Chi Hack Night 2015 Year in Review!](#)

Chi Hack Night shirts

Derek ordered a big batch of them. Buy your very own for \$11!

Hive Chicago Buzz!

<http://hivechicagobuzz.org> ← RSVP TODAY!

Fri Jan 22 – Kickoff Hangout – 4pm to 8pm

Sat Jan 23 – Hack Day – 8am to 6pm

In the spirit of the [Mozilla Festival](#), our hack day is a place where you can...

COME WITH AN IDEA, LEAVE WITH A COMMUNITY

Work alongside local educators and learners to co-create the solutions that will transform the learning landscape of Chicago.

Thurs. Jan 28 6pm at Google - “State of the Black Tech Ecosystem” presented by [Black Tech Mecca](#)

If you are one of the city's key business, tech, civic, or community players interested in how the black tech community can help drive the city's growth, then this one is for you. This is the only event where the state of the black tech ecosystem will be "demystified" and where you can find out about the most dynamic black tech organizations, the leaders behind them, and how you can engage in the movement.

Invitation Only - If you would like to attend or want to submit someone from your network, fill out [this form](#)

[Network graph of civic tech](#)

Very good meta-picture of the global civic tech scene, according to the open source projects on Github.

Cataloging the City Hall Laquan McDonald emails

On New Year's Eve, there was another party happening. Steven Vance was leading an open collaboration to catalog all the emails released by the Emanuel Administration regarding Laquan McDonald. [You can contribute](#) by reading a few pages of email threads and noting who participated and the gist of their messages. We have only 311 pages left to review!

Time to Open the Cook County State's Attorney's Data!

The Chicago Justice Project has a petition to get the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (Anita Alvarez) to open their data. Help them get to 1,000 signatures!

<https://www.change.org/p/cook-county-state-s-attorney-anita-alvarez-time-to-open-the-cook-county-state-s-attorney-s-data>

[Aaron Swartz Day celebration @ ThoughtWorks Chicago on Monday 1/11](#)

Join ThoughtWorks Chicago in celebrating Aaron Swartz with a film screening, food, and discussion. Please RSVP!

[Civic Tech 101 Feedback](#)

Christopher is getting ready to revamp his 101 for the new year - if you have feedback click the link and write it down. Thanks!

Peter Lisagor Awards

Hacker journalists note: Data journalism is a new category in Chicago's long-running journalism awards contest. Also check out the category for independent bloggers. Details at tinyurl.com/otwr3x6.

Jobs

Post your civic tech job openings here!

The State of Illinois is hiring a Chief Data Officer

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/looking-chief-data-officer-hardik-bhatt?trk=hp-feed-article-title-like>

LISC seeks consultant for Financial Opportunity Centers initiative

LISC Chicago seeks to engage a consultant for an initiative we're part of called Connect Chicago (RFP with further details attached). The consultant will help us better integrate digital skilling with the core services offered at our Financial Opportunity Centers (workforce readiness and financial capability coaching).

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/chihacknight/fYInkEZgnqU>

City of Chicago hiring a Data Scientist

City of Chicago's Data Science team is hiring a new data scientist to join a team of researchers. The position will report to the Chief Data Officer and will be teammates with other data scientists, the open data program, database administrators and business intelligence unit. Will work on projects, such as predictive analytics (e.g., [food inspections](#)), developing open source tools (e.g., [RSocrata](#)), and work on behind-the-scenes data analytics for policy--such as modeling the impact of taxi fare increases. You can take a look at our public projects on the [GitHub page](#). Applications will be open through January 24th at <http://j.mp/1TLY0p4>

Presentation notes: City Haul: Investigating Chicago's Payroll

Help us keep notes from the presentation here!

Relevant links:

- [THE WATCHDOGS: A third of Chicago city workers make \\$100K or more](#)
- [CHICAGO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' PAY : City of Chicago Payroll 2014](#)
- [THE WATCHDOGS: 10 city workers made \\$100K-plus in overtime last year](#)
- [State's \\$100,000 club includes 682 who made more than governor last year](#)

Chris Fusco, Chicago Sun-Times

I called the city every month and asked, "when will the salary dataset get updates?" (Fusco recalls their litany of responses).

Fusco looks at a sergeant in the Chicago Police Department. Joe Chicagoan might read this and think, "Well, Scott made \$125,000 last year, he's hard working, that sounds reasonable"

This is different than how the State does it. They release a dataset that shows the total amount every worker was paid, so you have to request more data to get their salaries/base pay.

The county offers a complete dataset: base pay, over time, etc..

Fusco shows his FOIA request. He asked for this data:

- name
- department
- amount paid in salary
- amount paid in overtime
- any additional pay (bonus, annuity, etc.)
- total paid to the employee

The city asked for a 5-day extension; then another 5-day extension. So Fusco asked the Public Access Counselor (PAC) at the Illinois Attorney General's office.

The city's response to that FOIA request was to give me two links to existing datasets on the Chicago open data portal. But that didn't give me the data I asked for!

Fusco replied to the PAC and explains how the datasets in the portal were insufficient. The PAC stepped in and contacted the city hall FOIA staffer. On August 18th, 8 months later, got the data Fusco actually asked for.

Okay, it'll be easy to right the story now, right? No. In the FOIA response were a lot of explanations needed to fully understand the data. This made it difficult, and it took a few more months to clean/manipulate the data.

The pay in the "other" category really stuck out.

Fusco worked with Darnell Little, a freelance data journalist, to clean/manipulate the data, combine duplicates,

Little said that if we had employee IDs that would make this so much easier. But the city won't, and doesn't have to, employee IDs. So they talked to Molly Poppe, the FOIA staffer, and got her and the data staff at city hall, they assigned people a different unique ID, but there were still some issues.

"Sun-Times website is powered by a gerbil running through a wheel."

Going back to the sergeant, we see that his total pay is \$180,000 because of "other pay", which can be uniform allowance, education, tuition reimbursement.

But for police officers and firefighters, they have other kinds of pay within "other pay". We found out things like "baby furlough day". Baby in this case means "mini". There was also "saturation" traffic detail pay.

Fusco describes some different schedulings of firefighters, like "Daley days". (It's too difficult to try and explain here.)

Q&A

Dennis Roarty: Was compensation distributed widely?

Fusco: Yes. There are POs that seem to work a lot of overtime, and there are others that don't work any overtime.

Q: Did you think about using age or hiring date to help with your unique ID problem?

A: They won't give out age or date of birth.

Forest Gregg: For pension contributions, what kind of pay forces a pension contribution?

A: Overtime is not pensionable. But some kinds of the "other" pay is "pensionable".

Q: Are pension deductions or benefits reflected in this data?

A: No. The deduction for their pension is not reflected here. The benefit of that pension (later, after retirement) is also not reflected here (nor should it, because the pension benefit is dependent on the salaries of the worker's last X years of work).

Eve Tulbert asked a question but I didn't get it.

Q: Will the city publish the data you wanted, instead of the data they were posting that wasn't good sufficient for your analysis?

A: Tom Schenk (Chief Data Officer): Chicago Police Department has a different way to record pay, so it takes some computer and staff resources to put it together this way, but we're working on improving that process. We don't publish employee IDs because those IDs are also used to access other resources, including resetting passwords. Overtime data isn't as straightforward as you might think.

Fusco: The larger issue is, we're talking about workers earning over \$100,000 in overtime pay. At what point are cops busting their humps, and at what point does that cause a detrimental effect on the officer, and policing in the city?