

**CHICAGO**  
CHOOSE CHICAGO



**2025 ANNUAL REPORT**





**CHOOSE CHICAGO IS THE  
OFFICIAL DESTINATION  
MARKETING ORGANIZATION  
FOR CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.**

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## OUR MISSION

Enrich our community by attracting meetings, events and leisure travelers to Chicago

## OUR VISION

Elevate the brand of Chicago as a must-experience global destination



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

As we reflect on 2025, we do so with a deep sense of pride in what Chicago’s tourism and hospitality community accomplished during a year defined by global economic uncertainty and political headwinds. While the travel and meetings industry faced meaningful disruption worldwide, Chicago once again proved our resilience—and our relevance—by outperforming national trends.

This progress was fueled by intentional strategy and strong partnerships. In 2025, Choose Chicago launched innovative destination marketing campaigns, strengthened relationships across neighborhoods, welcomed record-setting meetings and events, and elevated Chicago’s profile on the global stage. From high-impact conventions and international trade engagement to community-centered activations and inclusive tourism initiatives, our work delivered tangible economic benefits for businesses, workers, and residents across the city.

None of this momentum happened by chance. It reflects the visionary leadership of our Board of Directors, the steadfast support of our elected leaders, the active engagement of our partners, the collaboration of civic and industry leaders, and the extraordinary dedication of our staff—each committed to ensuring that our \$20 billion tourism industry continues to be a powerful engine for opportunity in Chicago.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, we are confident in Choose Chicago’s position to drive even greater impact. With a robust calendar of globally significant events, continued investment in destination marketing, and a shared commitment to see our city succeed, Chicago is well-positioned to compete—and win—on the world stage.

Thank you for your partnership, your trust, and your belief in Chicago. Together, we are shaping a visitor economy that fuels opportunity, growth, and shared prosperity for all Chicagoans.

With gratitude and optimism,

**Kristen Reynolds**  
*President and CEO,*  
*Choose Chicago*

**Cc: Choose Chicago Board of Directors**



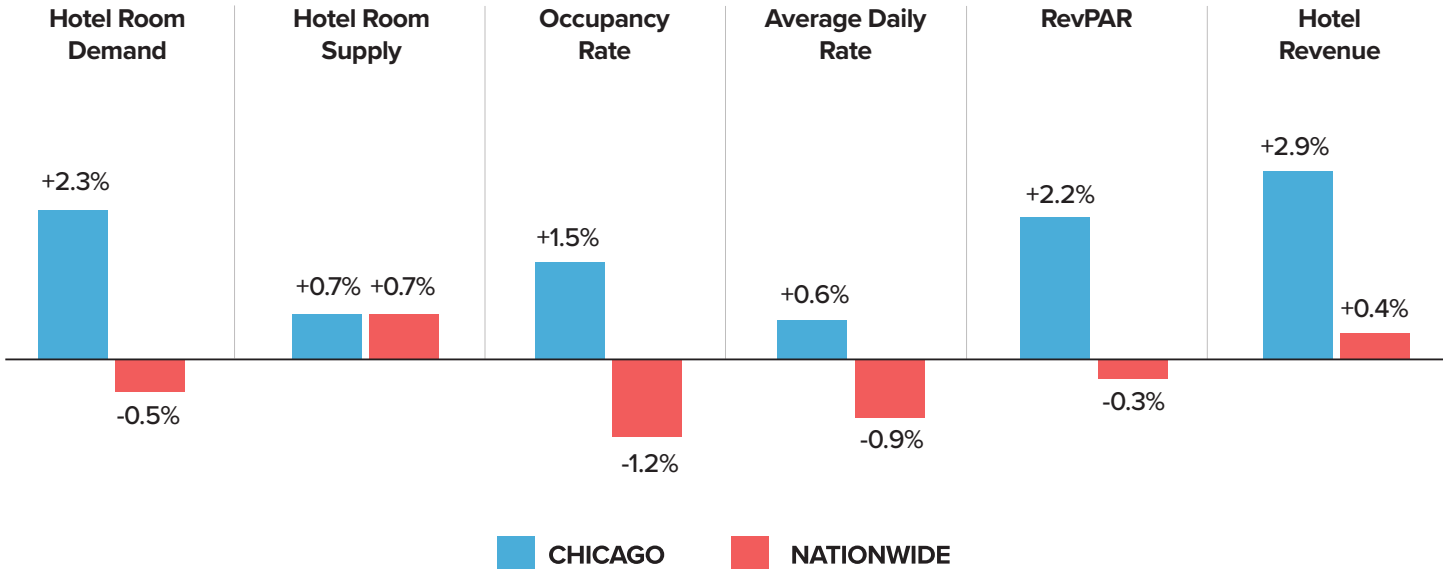
# 2025 HOTEL PERFORMANCE

## HOTEL PERFORMANCE TRENDS

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Demand (Millions)</b>	6.232	9.983	11.055	11.630	11.895
% Change	94.3%	60.2%	10.7%	5.2%	2.3%
<b>Supply (Millions)</b>	14.496	16.530	16.941	17.073	17.198
% Change	19.1%	14.0%	2.5%	0.8%	0.7%
<b>Occupancy Rate (%)</b>	43.0	60.4	65.3	68.1	69.2
% Change	63.2%	40.5%	8.1%	4.4%	1.5%
<b>Average Daily Rate</b>	\$181.22	\$228.58	\$228.32	\$241.59	\$243.10
% Change	35.3%	26.1%	-0.1%	5.8%	0.6%
<b>Rev per Avail. Room (RevPAR)</b>	\$77.91	\$138.04	\$148.99	\$164.57	\$168.15
% Change	120.8%	77.2%	7.9%	10.5%	2.2%
<b>Hotel Revenue (Billions)</b>	\$1.129	\$2.282	\$2.524	\$2.810	\$2.892
% Change	162.9%	102.0%	10.6%	11.3%	2.9%

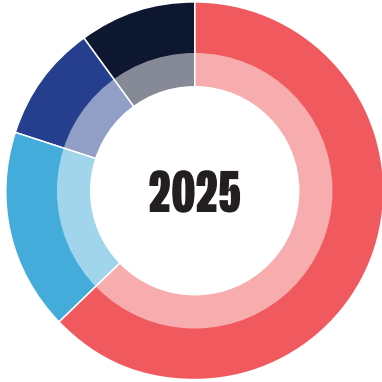
Source: STR Inc.

## YEAR-OVER-YEAR HOTEL TRENDS: CHICAGO VS. NATIONWIDE AVERAGES





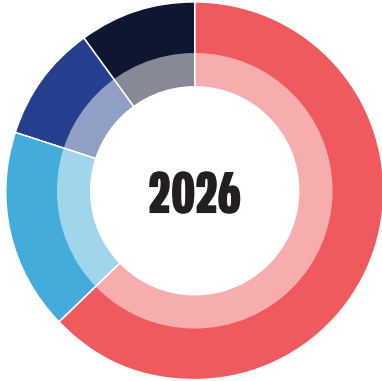
# OPERATIONS & FINANCE



### 2025 BUDGETED REVENUE BY SOURCE

<b>63%</b>	<b>State of Illinois</b>	\$22,000,000
<b>17%</b>	<b>MPEA</b>	\$5,775,000
<b>10%</b>	<b>City of Chicago</b>	\$3,405,000
<b>10%</b>	<b>Private</b>	\$3,478,000

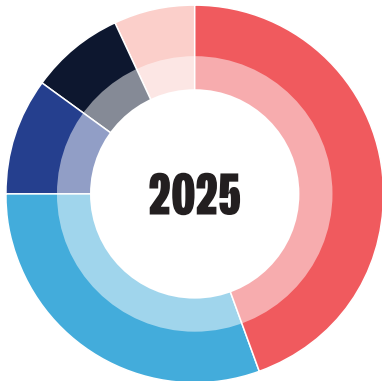
**TOTAL: \$34,658,000**



### 2026 BUDGETED REVENUE BY SOURCE

<b>63%</b>	<b>State of Illinois</b>	\$22,000,000
<b>17%</b>	<b>MPEA</b>	\$5,775,000
<b>10%</b>	<b>City of Chicago</b>	\$3,325,000
<b>10%</b>	<b>Private</b>	\$3,604,000

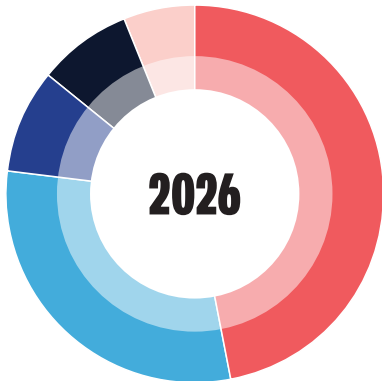
**TOTAL: \$34,704,000**



### 2025 BUDGETED EXPENSES

<b>45%</b>	<b>Marketing</b>	\$15,672,130
<b>31%</b>	<b>Convention Sales and Services</b>	\$10,567,243
<b>10%</b>	<b>Other Departments</b>	\$3,458,108
<b>8%</b>	<b>Corporate Allocations</b>	\$2,676,940
<b>7%</b>	<b>Administrative</b>	\$2,413,734

**TOTAL: \$34,535,155**



### 2026 BUDGETED EXPENSES

<b>47%</b>	<b>Marketing</b>	\$16,581,991
<b>30%</b>	<b>Convention Sales and Services</b>	\$10,569,686
<b>9%</b>	<b>Other Departments</b>	\$3,107,882
<b>8%</b>	<b>Corporate Allocations</b>	\$2,689,226
<b>6%</b>	<b>Administrative</b>	\$2,186,095

**TOTAL: \$35,134,880**







# AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

In 2025, Chicago's momentum was recognized on a global stage. Top travel publications and industry leaders across the world helped reaffirm Chicago's status as a world-class destination—celebrating our culture, creativity, neighborhoods, and unmatched visitor experience.

**CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER BEST BIG CITY**  
*FOR THE 9TH STRAIGHT YEAR!*

**TRAVELZOO BEST BETS FOR 2026**

**FROMMER'S BEST PLACES TO GO IN 2026**

**WALLETHUB BEST WINTER DESTINATION**





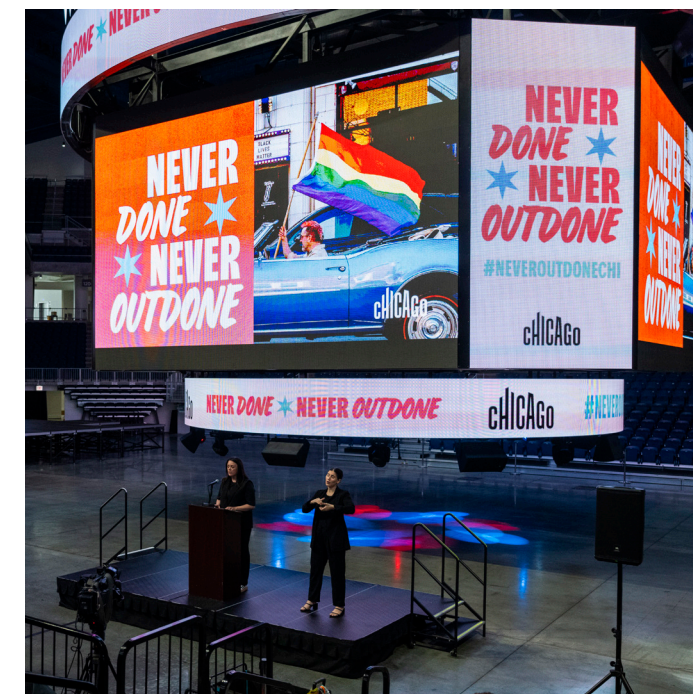
# TELLING CHICAGO'S STORY TO A GLOBAL AUDIENCE

Choose Chicago's Global Design team brought Chicago's story to life on the world stage—welcoming travel trade partners, media, and influencers to experience the city firsthand, engaging key markets through in-market activations and on-the-ground representation, and delivering dynamic marketing and social media campaigns that amplified Chicago's voice worldwide.



## NEVER DONE. NEVER OUTDONE. CAMPAIGN

Launched in June following more than a year of community engagement, the new Never Done. Never Outdone. campaign honors the spirit of Chicago—always evolving, always pushing forward, and never satisfied with the status quo. Designed to resonate with and inspire all audiences, the campaign captures the ambition, creativity, and momentum that define Chicago as a world-class destination.







## GLOBAL STORYTELLING BY THE NUMBERS:

**5,500**

Travel trade professionals trained

**18**

Tradeshows and sales missions attended by the Global Development team

**20**

Group press tours hosted

**724**

Media members and influencers hosted or supported in Chicago

**\$91.9 MILLION**

In earned value for Chicago generated through media coverage

**11 MILLION+**

Web sessions on ChooseChicago.com

**243 MILLION**

Impressions

**5.6 MILLION**

Engagements (likes, comments, shares, and saves) on our social media channels

**CHOOSE CHICAGO ENGAGED WITH MEDIA, INFLUENCERS, AND/OR TRAVEL TRADE OPERATORS FROM 40 COUNTRIES IN 2025.**





## CHICAGO SHINES AT IPW 2025

As host of the U.S. Travel Association's IPW 2025, Choose Chicago welcomed more than 5,000 delegates from over 60 countries—bringing the world's top travel buyers and media to experience the city firsthand. Through Chicago-style events, curated tours, and hundreds of strategic meetings, the weeklong showcase positioned Chicago's culture, neighborhoods, and hospitality on the global stage and is projected to drive millions in future travel and billions in economic impact.

### IMPACT OF IPW OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS

**10.9 MILLION**  
new visitors to the U.S.

**\$26.1 BILLION**  
in visitor spending

**63,000**  
American jobs supported

**\$3.3 BILLION**  
in combined federal, state, and local tax revenue



## JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION AWARDS

In 2025, Choose Chicago once again welcomed the culinary world to Chicago, hosting the full slate of James Beard Awards ceremonies for the ninth year in partnership with the Illinois Restaurant Association. Congratulations to the 2025 Chicago winners: Best Chef: Great Lakes Noah Sandoval from Oriole; Outstanding Bar: Kumiko; and America's Classic winner Lem's Bar-B-Q.



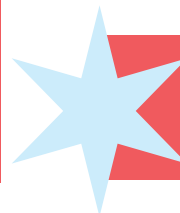
## DICK CLARK'S NEW YEAR'S ROCKIN' EVE

Chicago took center stage on New Year's Eve to close out 2025, hosting a central time countdown for Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve for the first time ever. The Chicago celebration was hosted by hometown icon Chance the Rapper, featuring an all-star lineup of local performers along with fireworks and drone show. The celebration delivered record-breaking New Year's Eve hotel performance, showcased Chicago's unmistakable energy to millions of viewers worldwide, and reinforced the city's strength as a vibrant, year-round destination.



## 2025 MLB TOKYO SERIES

Choose Chicago joined Brand USA, the Illinois Office of Tourism, Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board, and Visit California in Tokyo to promote the American markets featured in the Cubs vs. Dodgers series that kicked off the 2025 MLB season.



**37,528** CHICAGO HOTEL ROOMS FILLED ON NEW YEAR'S EVE 2025



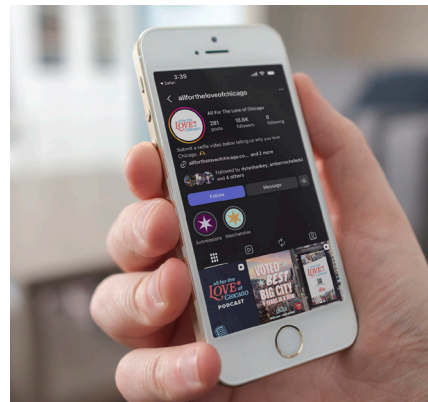
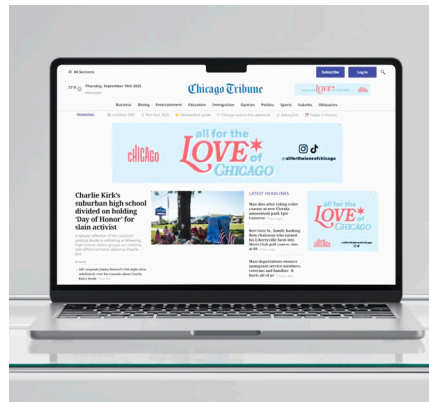
# ELEVATING THE NARRATIVE OF CHICAGO

In 2025, Chicago took back its story. Through targeted initiatives and bold storytelling campaigns, Choose Chicago responded directly to negative rhetoric by elevating the voices, experiences, and pride of those who know the city best. Together with residents, partners, and creators, we told the true story of Chicago—one defined by resilience, creativity, and momentum—and reclaimed the narrative on our own terms.

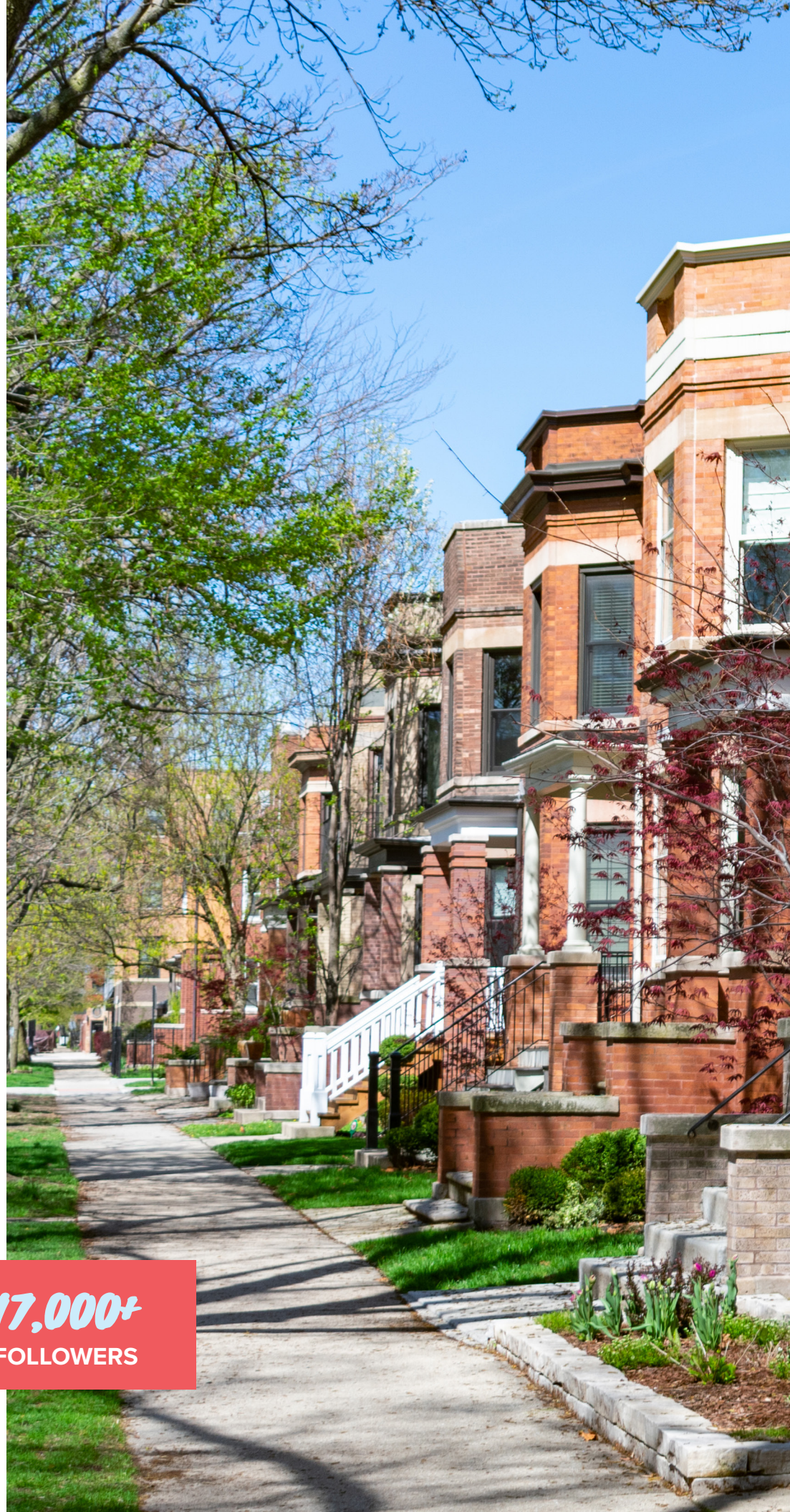


## ALL FOR THE LOVE OF CHICAGO

Launched in response to a rise in negative rhetoric, the All for the Love of Chicago social media campaign calls on everyone who loves the city to share their unapologetic, bold, and unfiltered stories: why we love Chicago, what it means to us, and the lasting effect it leaves behind. The campaign has taken off, with hundreds of submissions, millions of views, positive media coverage, and – new in 2026 – the All for the Love of Chicago podcast.



**17,000+**  
FOLLOWERS



## CHOOSE CHICAGO ROUNDTABLES

Launched in 2023, the Choose Chicago Roundtable series brings together communications and marketing leaders from Chicago institutions to elevate positive narratives about the city while sharing timely updates on Chicago’s momentum. In 2025, roundtables spotlighted key topics including transportation, the arts, Route 66, key conventions, and other defining opportunities for the city to come together to collectively shape the story.

**11**

Roundtables Hosted

**650**

Attendees

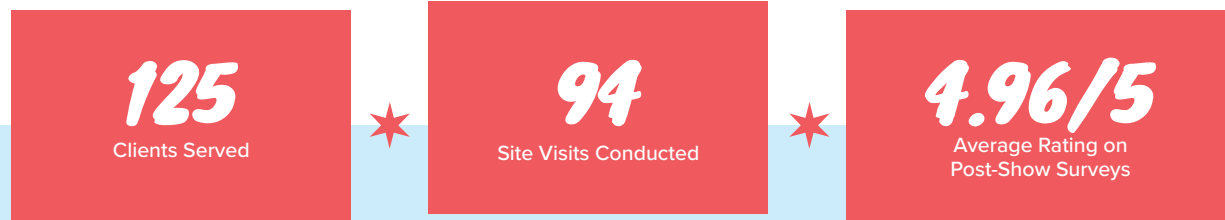




# DELIVERING WORLD-CLASS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Choose Chicago's award-winning Client Services team is the central connection between convention clients and the city of Chicago, ensuring seamless coordination and delivering exceptional, end-to-end experiences for every client.

## CLIENT SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS:



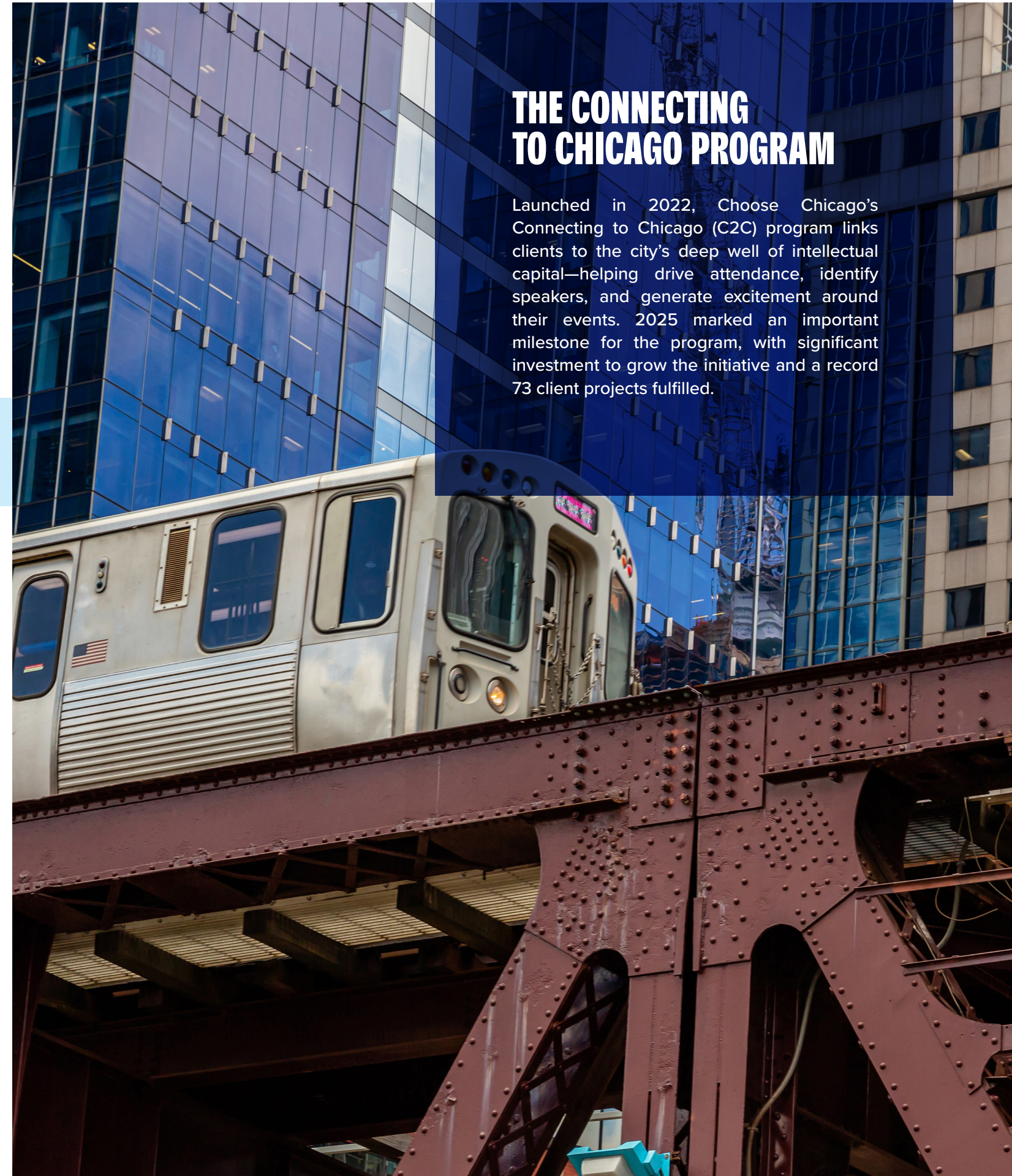
## 12 MAJOR CONVENTIONS SET ATTENDANCE RECORDS IN 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- American College of Chest Physicians - CHEST 2025 Annual Meeting
- American Medical Association of Delegates
- Bank of America Chicago Marathon, 2025 Abbott Health & Fitness Expo
- C2E2 2025
- Destinations International 2025 Annual Conference
- FABTECH 2025
- National Association of Convenience Stores - NACS 2025
- National Bar Association's 100th Annual Convention & Exhibits 2025
- National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) Convention and Trade Show
- ProMat 2025
- RISKWORLD 2025
- Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress



## THE CONNECTING TO CHICAGO PROGRAM

Launched in 2022, Choose Chicago's Connecting to Chicago (C2C) program links clients to the city's deep well of intellectual capital—helping drive attendance, identify speakers, and generate excitement around their events. 2025 marked an important milestone for the program, with significant investment to grow the initiative and a record 73 client projects fulfilled.





# DRIVING MEANINGFUL CONVENTION AND MEETING BUSINESS

From intimate gatherings to citywide conventions, meetings and events are powerful engines of economic growth for Chicago. Choose Chicago's sales team works year-round to promote and secure business at McCormick Place and with more than 150 hotel partners.



RECORD-SETTING  
2025 GOALS ACHIEVED:

**2.8 MILLION**

Hotel room nights booked  
(100.2% of goal – an all-time record)

**65 BOOKINGS**

Citywide  
(132% of goal – an all-time record)

OF THE 65 CITYWIDES BOOKED:

**43**

Represent new, non-legacy events

**31**

Occur in 2030 or earlier

**25**

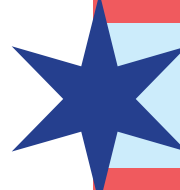
Impact MPEA need dates between  
now and 2030

**11**

Impact 2026 and 2027

## NOTABLE EVENTS SECURED IN 2025 INCLUDE:

- Confidential corporate wins impacting January 2026, April 2026, March 2027, April 2027, and April 2029
- Ace Hardware (August 2028)
- ISSA (October 2028)
- JVA / AAU (new, annual youth sports events every June and December through 2032)
- Society for Human Resource Management (new, set 3-year rotation for Chicago - June 2031, 2034, and 2037)



**100%** OF THE FUTURE PACE DEFICIT ELIMINATED IN 2025



## IN 2025, CHOOSE CHICAGO BOOKED 65 MAJOR\* CITYWIDE CONVENTIONS—NEARLY 50% MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO—INCLUDING 11 TAKING PLACE WITHIN THE NEXT THREE YEARS

### 2023 – 2025 MAJOR CITYWIDE CONVENTIONS BOOKED BY YEAR OUT

Years Out	2023 Total Production	2024 Total Production	2025 Total Production
<1 Year Out	0	1	0
1-2 Years Out	2	1	5
2-3 Years Out	3	3	6
3-4 Years Out	9	6	5
4-5 Years Out	4	8	7
5-6 Years Out	8	8	8
6-7 Years Out	7	12	14
7-8 Years Out	1	2	9
More than 8 Years Out	10	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>65</b>

## 43 OF THE MAJOR CITYWIDE CONVENTIONS BOOKED IN 2025 REPRESENT NEW, NON-LEGACY BUSINESS

### 2023 – 2025 MAJOR NON-LEGACY CITYWIDE CONVENTIONS BOOKED BY YEAR OUT

Years Out	2023 Total Production	2024 Total Production	2025 Total Production
<1 Year Out	0	1	0
1-2 Years Out	2	1	5
2-3 Years Out	1	3	5
3-4 Years Out	6	5	5
4-5 Years Out	0	5	6
5-6 Years Out	2	3	5
6-7 Years Out	2	5	4
7-8 Years Out	1	1	3
More than 8 Years Out	10	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43</b>

## OVER THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS, AN AVERAGE OF MORE THAN 20 CITYWIDE CONVENTIONS WITH 5,000+ PEAK HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS WILL TAKE PLACE EACH YEAR – MORE THAN PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS.

### CONVENTION CENTER EVENTS ON THE BOOKS BY PEAK SIZE

Peak Size	2018	2019	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
5000-6999	4	7	6	9	7	10	5	10	7
7000-9999	6	8	6	4	5	5	9	7	4
10K+	9	4	8	5	8	8	7	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>

## MORE IMPACT IS COMING: 22 CITYWIDE CONVENTIONS OVER 5,000 PEAK HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS REMAIN AS PROSPECTIVE AND TENTATIVE FOR 2028-2031

### PROSPECTIVE AND TENTATIVE CONVENTIONS CENTER EVENTS BY PEAK SIZE

Peak Size	2028	2029	2030	2031
5000-6999	3	2	4	4
7000-9999	2	3	3	0
10K+	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>

\*Major defined as 3,000+ peak hotel rooms





# 2025 PRIORITIES:

## CITYWIDE SALES STRATEGY EXPANSION

Choose Chicago continued executing its citywide sales strategy while expanding its Top 250 Acquisition List to a Top 350—now inclusive of citywide corporate events and legacy accounts historically aligned with other destinations. This approach strengthened pipeline diversification and supported long-term calendar stability for Chicago.

## INVESTMENT IN MULTICULTURAL MEETINGS

Choose Chicago deepened its investment in multicultural meetings, including by successfully launching our first-ever multicultural familiarization tour. This milestone came as we reinforced the organization's commitment to inclusive growth and expanded access to emerging and high-potential market segments.

## MAXIMIZING INDUSTRY HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES

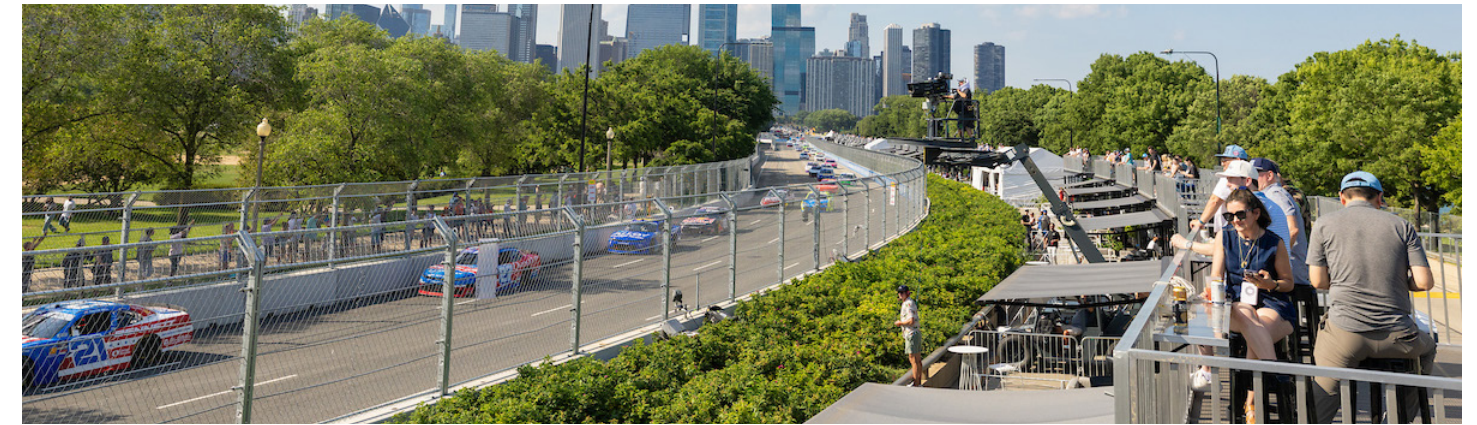
Choose Chicago leveraged the hosting of industry events such as Maritz ESN Together and ELX 2025 to showcase the city to top global corporate event professionals. A signature ELX experience at Wrigley Field, delivered in partnership with the Chicago Cubs, continues to be cited as one of the most memorable customer experiences—underscoring Chicago's ability to deliver differentiated, world-class events.



# RECRUITING AND LEVERAGING HIGH PROFILE SPORTING EVENTS

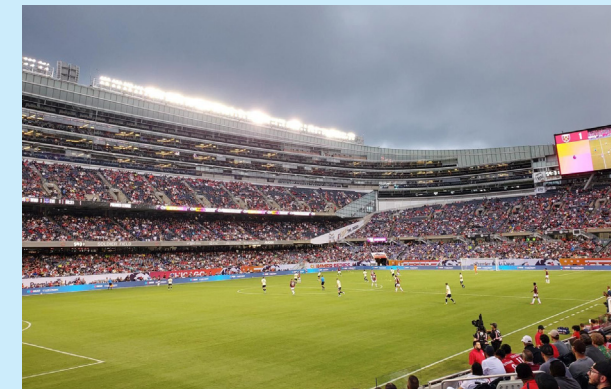


Through the leadership of the Chicago Sports Commission, Chicago continues to secure and execute game-changing sporting events—driving global visibility, economic impact, and unforgettable moments that showcase the city on the world stage. In 2025, the Sports Commission hosted 12 high-profile, high-impact national and international events, including the following:



## NASCAR CHICAGO STREET RACE WEEKEND

The NASCAR Chicago Street Race returned to downtown Chicago for the 3rd straight year, delivering global exposure, major economic impact, and a one-of-a-kind motorsports experience that showcased Chicago's iconic skyline and summer energy to fans around the world.



## PREMIER LEAGUE SUMMER SERIES

For the first time ever, teams from the Premier League – the most popular sports league in the world – faced off in Chicago as part of the Premier League Summer Series.



## “THE REMATCH”: IRELAND VS. NEW ZEALAND RUGBY

“The Rematch” brought Ireland and New Zealand back to Chicago for a historic international rugby showdown, selling out in record time with over 61,000 fans in attendance.



# ADVANCING NEIGHBORHOODS, CULTURE, AND INCLUSIVE INDUSTRY GROWTH

Chicago's neighborhoods and cultural communities are central to the city's identity and appeal as a global destination. In 2025, we deepened our commitment to elevating neighborhood experiences, amplifying arts and cultural offerings, and advancing inclusive industry growth—ensuring the benefits of tourism reach communities across every corner of the city.



## THE DEPARTMENT OF INCLUSIVE TOURISM AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2025, Choose Chicago created the new department of Inclusive Tourism and Community Engagement department—making Choose Chicago the first DMO in the nation to establish a permanent, fully resourced department dedicated to inclusive tourism and integrated directly into the organization's marketing and brand strategy.



## IF IT'S ART, IT'S HERE

If It's Art, It's Here launched as a new campaign spotlighting Chicago's unparalleled arts and culture scene across every neighborhood. Developed in partnership with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the full-funnel campaign showcased Chicago's music, dance, theatre, comedy, architecture, museums, and public art—supported by a new digital hub that helps locals and visitors discover events, cultural institutions, and neighborhood gems citywide.



## NEIGHBORHOOD WAYFINDING INITIATIVE

In collaboration with the Chicago Mayor's Office, Choose Chicago launched the Neighborhood Wayfinding Initiative to make it easier for both residents and visitors to explore the city's diverse communities. 40 permanent wayfinding signs have been installed across six neighborhoods—featuring maps, local highlights, and cultural context—encouraging discovery of local businesses, landmarks, and experiences while strengthening neighborhood identity and economic activity.







## CHICAGO GREETER PROGRAM

Launched in 2002, the Chicago Greeter program is a year-round offering that invites visitors to experience the city through free, personalized walks led by passionate and knowledgeable local volunteers.

### 2025 GREETER PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS:

**165**

volunteer greeters

**15**

languages offered

**1,333**

walks completed

**4,608**

hours donated

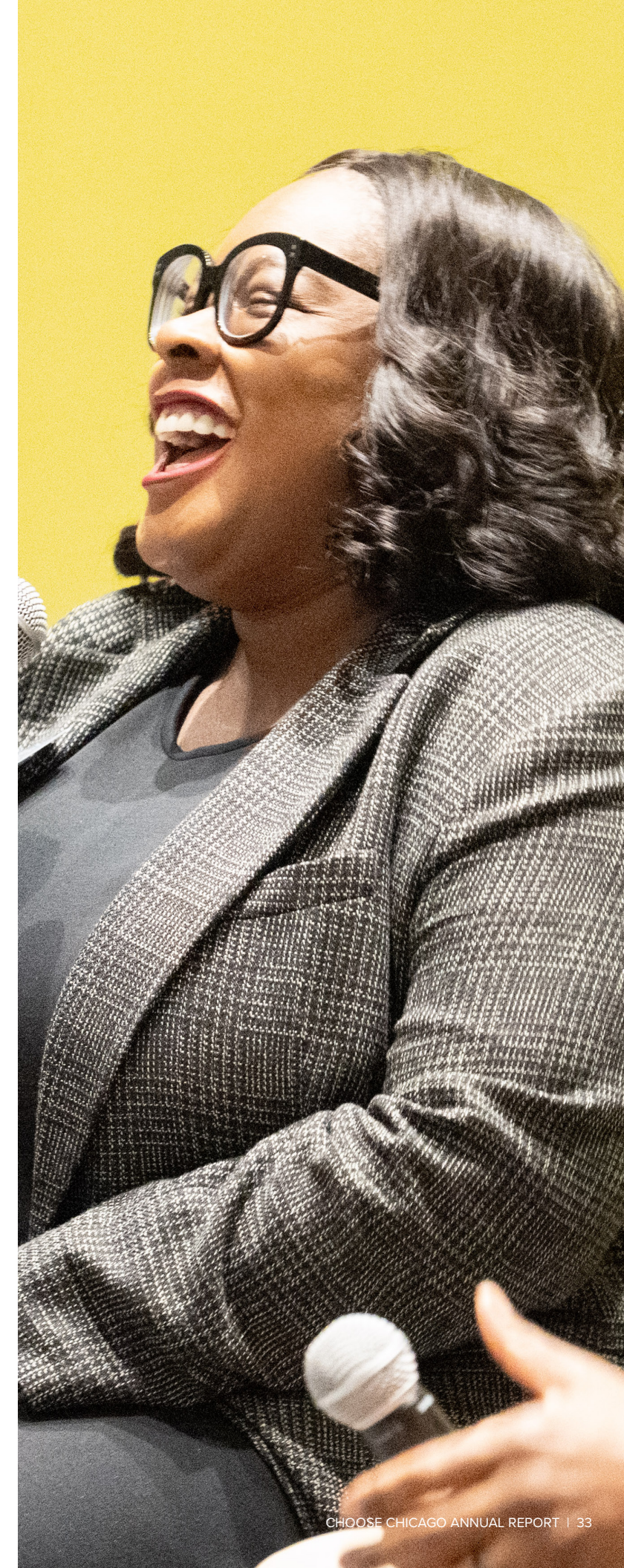
**3,786**

visitors served  
(50% international)



## PARTNER DIVERSITY SHOWCASE

Choose Chicago hosted its inaugural Partner Diversity Showcase and Educational Program at McCormick Place, bringing together more than 45 diverse-owned businesses, industry leaders, and civic partners for a day of connection and learning. 185 attendees took part in the program, which featured cultural performances, two educational sessions focused on building iconic Chicago experiences and accessing tourism opportunities, and panel discussions with leaders from across the meetings and tourism industry.



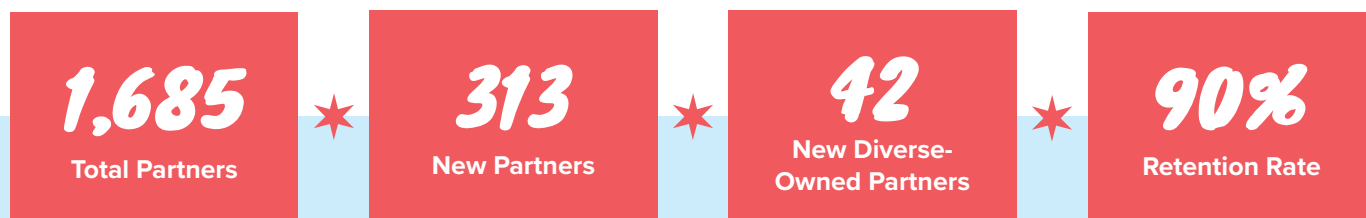


# PROVIDING VALUE TO PARTNERS

Choose Chicago is a partner-driven organization focused on creating value by elevating partner visibility and connecting organizations to impactful marketing platforms and educational opportunities. 2025 was a banner year for the Choose Chicago Partnership department, with a record number of new partners bringing our total partnership level to record highs.



## PARTNERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS:



## EDUCATIONAL AND NETWORKING EVENTS

In 2025, Choose Chicago hosted a series of educational and networking opportunities designed to connect partners, raise visibility, and support ongoing professional development. Key partner events included:

### CHOOSE CHICAGO BRAND SHOWCASE:

An inside, early look at our brand evolution—which became the Never Done. Never Outdone. campaign—and how Choose Chicago is shaping Chicago’s story with authenticity and impact.

### CHOOSE CHICAGO SUMMIT:

An inaugural event designed to give hotel partners, cultural institutions, and tourism stakeholders a front-row seat to data-driven insights and tourism trends that matter most.

### DISRUPTING BIAS AND FOSTERING INCLUSION IN CHICAGO’S TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY:

An interactive session with Choose Chicago and Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association designed to inspire conscious inclusion within the tourism and hospitality industry.

### GLOBAL INSIGHTS, LOCAL IMPACT:

Navigating International Travel: A webinar designed to give partners the latest on inbound travel and how Choose Chicago is strengthening Chicago’s global presence as international dynamics shift.



## CHICAGO RESTAURANT WEEK BY THE NUMBERS

**502**  
participating restaurants  
**RECORD**

**157**  
diverse-owned  
restaurants

**527,000**  
diners served

**\$20.4M**  
in economic impact

## CHICAGO RESTAURANT WEEK

In 2025, Chicago Restaurant Week marked its 18th year, inviting diners to explore the city’s renowned culinary scene through prix-fixe offerings at a record-breaking lineup of more than 500 participating restaurants.





## CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK

Presented by the League of Chicago Theatres in partnership with Choose Chicago, the 13th Annual Chicago Theatre Week provided discounted tickets to productions citywide—inviting audiences to experience the breadth and diversity of Chicago’s vibrant theatre scene.

### CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK BY THE NUMBERS

**60**

Participating  
Theatres

**84**

Participating  
Shows

**400**

Individual  
Performances

**15,000**

Tickets Sold





# THE CHOOSE CHICAGO FOUNDATION

The Choose Chicago Foundation advances equity, diversity, and inclusion in the local tourism industry by supporting initiatives that strengthen youth, community, and workforce development. Through financial assistance and long-term training opportunities, it helps individuals from ethnically and economically diverse communities build pathways to advancement within the hospitality and tourism industry.

The Choose Chicago Foundation awarded a record \$50,000 in scholarships to 10 recipients in 2025



## STUDENT TOURISM DAYS

The Choose Chicago Foundation held two Student Tourism Days in 2025 to introduce high school seniors from Chicago's South and West Sides to the wide range of creative and career pathways within the hospitality and tourism industry. Students explored partner attractions, engaged with industry professionals, and participated in a financial literacy session designed to help inspire the next generation of tourism leaders.



SCAN HERE TO DONATE





# PREPARING FOR A SPECTACULAR 2026

2026 will be a pivotal year for Chicago—marked by once-in-a-generation moments and global attention. Throughout 2025, Choose Chicago laid the groundwork to strategically plan for and maximize these opportunities, ensuring the city is ready to welcome the world, drive lasting economic impact, and showcase Chicago at its very best.

## ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL

In preparation for the 2026 centennial of Route 66, which begins in Chicago, Choose Chicago advanced a series of initiatives in 2025 to build momentum and visibility, including convening a Route 66 roundtable, supporting the creation of a new Route 66–inspired mural, and hosting guided tours that spotlight Chicago’s role as the gateway to this historic journey.



## AMERICA’S 250TH BIRTHDAY

In 2026, the nation will mark America’s 250th birthday, and Chicago will play a central role in the celebration. In preparation, Choose Chicago has partnered with Illinois America 250 to help elevate and promote events across the city that honor this historic milestone—showcasing Chicago’s stories, communities, and contributions as part of a once-in-a-generation national moment.

## OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

The opening of the Obama Presidential Center in 2026 will be a defining moment for Chicago and a transformative milestone for tourism—particularly on the South Side. In preparation, Choose Chicago has been working closely with the Center and tourism leaders across the city to ensure this historic opening drives long-term visitation, investment, and inclusive economic impact for surrounding communities and beyond.

## KICK BACK IN CHICAGO

In advance of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Choose Chicago launched Kick Back in Chicago—a global marketing initiative inviting international visitors to include Chicago on their travel plans, even though the city isn’t an official host. By promoting curated itineraries, neighborhood guides, and major summer events, the campaign positions Chicago as an essential and accessible destination for World Cup travelers looking to experience the city’s culture, attractions, and hospitality before or after match days.



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