

A composite image featuring a Chicago skyline. On the left, a bridge structure is visible above a river, with a dense cluster of purple and pink flowers in the foreground. The right side shows a large bridge with its bascule raised, revealing a cityscape with various skyscrapers, including one labeled 'LONDON HOUSE'. Several sailboats are on the water, and the water reflects the sun.

CHICAGO
CHOOSE CHICAGO

2024 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 BOARD CHAIR

2024 was an incredible year for Choose Chicago and our city’s broader tourism and hospitality industry. We welcomed an estimated 55.3 million visitors (a 6.3% year-over-year increase), saw international visitation surpass 2 million visitors for the first time since 2019, and generated an estimated \$20.6 billion in economic impact through leisure travel and events, supporting some 131,000 jobs along the way. And to top it off, Chicago’s hotels generated a record \$2.8 billion in revenue—an 11% increase over the previous year. Together, we clearly demonstrated the powerful role our industry plays in driving equitable economic growth across Chicago communities.

2025 will be my last year as Board Chair at Choose Chicago. As I reflect on my time in this role, I am filled with pride at all we have accomplished together in the last six years. We weathered challenges unlike any our industry has ever faced—from a global pandemic to a rapidly evolving travel landscape—and emerged stronger, more resilient, and more unified than ever. We also celebrated major milestones that showcased Chicago’s global stature, from hosting the first-ever NASCAR Chicago Street

Race Weekend to welcoming the world to the 2024 Democratic National Convention.

As I prepare to complete my term as Board Chair, I do so with immense optimism for what lies ahead. With the leadership of Kristen Reynolds as Choose Chicago’s new President and CEO and the continued support of our civic, hospitality, and cultural partners, I am confident that our city’s best chapters are yet to be written.

Thank you all for your trust, partnership, and dedication to realizing Chicago’s incredible potential. Serving my city in this capacity and working alongside all of you has truly been the honor of a lifetime. I look forward to cheering you and the amazing Choose Chicago team on from the sidelines for many years to come.

Sincerely,
Glenn Eden
Board Chair, Choose Chicago

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Partners,

On behalf of the entire Choose Chicago team, thank you for all you have done in the past year to advance our shared priorities. Your support, advocacy, and collaboration helped us to welcome over 55 million visitors, drive a record \$20.6 billion in economic impact, and once again clinch the title of Best Big City in the U.S. in the Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards. Moving forward, it will be your continued engagement and effort that propels our organization to achieve more and set the bar ever higher for our city and our industry.

Landmark events in 2024 like the Democratic National Convention, the NASCAR Chicago Street Race, and a record-breaking summer for Chicago hotel performance helped generate momentum that we continue leveraging to demonstrate to the world that we are a welcoming, proud city that knows how to get big things done.

I am thrilled to be stepping into this role at a time when Chicago's tourism industry has such incredible momentum behind it, but I also recognize the economic and global challenges we are facing. I am confident that with the power of our partnerships and the innovative, bold spirit that our city is known for around the world, we will take our work—and our impact—to new heights in the years ahead.

Thank you again for the vital role you play in advancing Chicago's tourism and hospitality industry. I look forward to doing amazing things together.



With gratitude,
Kristen Reynolds
President and CEO, Choose Chicago



THE BEST BIG CITY IN THE UNITED STATES

In 2024, Chicago was named Best Big City in the U.S. as voted on by readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* for a historic eighth straight year. We celebrated this unprecedented accomplishment aboard Chicago's First Lady and partnered with local artists like Katie Lukes and Sentrock to share the news with the world.



2024 TOURISM AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

2022 HOTEL PERFORMANCE

Hotel Occupancy Rates		
Total	Leisure	Group
68.2%	46.0%	20.8%
+4.5% YOY	+3.4% YOY	+7.0% YOY

Hotel Rooms Occupied (Millions)		
Total	Leisure	Group
11.64	7.85	3.55
+5.3% YOY	+4.2% YOY	+8.5% YOY

Hotel Revenue		
Total	Leisure	Group
\$2.81 Billion	\$157 Million	\$489.2 Million
+11.5% YOY	+11.5% YOY	+11.5% YOY

Other Key Performance Indicators		
Avg. Daily Rate	Rev Per Room	Rooms Avail
\$241.67	\$164.78	17.1 Million
+5.8% YOY	+10.6% YOY	+0.8% YOY

Source: STR Inc.

2024 VISITATION (MILLIONS)

Millions	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total (Domestic & Overseas)	16.52	30.70	48.62	51.97	55.34
% Change	-73.2%	85.9%	58.4%	6.9%	6.5%
Total Domestic	16.03	30.18	47.18	50.13	53.3
% Change	-73.0%	88.3%	56.3%	6.3%	6.3%
Business	4.12	6.83	12.29	13.21	14.46
% Change	-67.9%	65.7%	80.0%	7.5%	9.5%
Leisure	11.91	23.35	34.89	36.92	38.84
% Change	-74.4%	96.1%	49.4%	5.8%	5.2%
Total International	0.488	0.528	1.443	1.838	2.043*
% Change	-77.9%	8.2%	173.3%	27.4%	11.1%
Total Overseas	0.315	0.336	0.960	1.218	1.377*
% Change	-78.4%	6.7%	185.9%	26.9%	13.0%
Mexico Visitation (Air Only)	0.086	0.127	0.148	0.167	0.195*
% Change	-58.5%	48.3%	16.8%	12.8%	16.9%
Canada Visitation (Overnight Only)	0.087	0.065	0.335	0.453	0.470*
% Change	-84.0%	-25.9%	417.9%	35.2%	3.9%

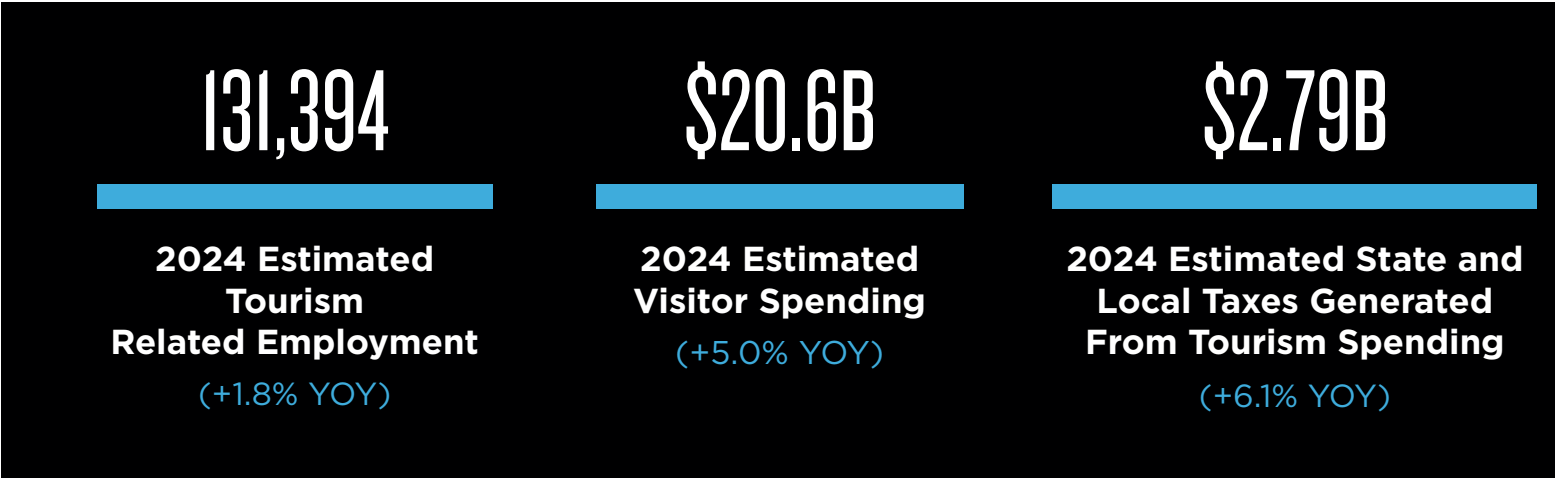
*Preliminary
Source: DK Shifflet, Tourism Economics



HOTEL PERFORMANCE TRENDS

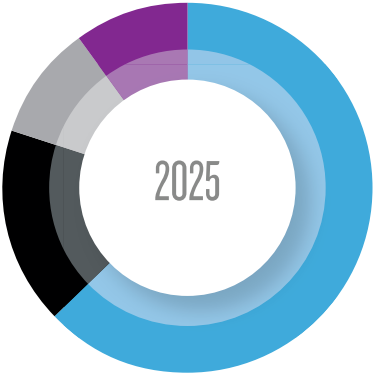
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Demand (Millions)	3.208	6.232	9.983	11.055	11.641
% Change	-73.3%	94.3%	60.2%	10.7%	5.3%
Supply (Millions)	12.176	14.496	16.530	16.941	17.073
% Change	-24.9%	19.1%	14.0%	2.5%	0.8%
Occupancy Rate (%)	26.3	43.0	60.4	65.3	68.2
% Change	-64.5%	63.2%	40.5%	8.1%	4.5%
Average Daily Rate	\$133.93	\$181.22	\$228.58	\$228.32	\$241.67
% Change	-34.6%	35.3%	26.1%	-0.1%	5.8%
Rev per Avail. Room (RevPAR)	\$35.29	\$77.91	\$138.04	\$148.99	\$164.78
% Change	-76.8%	120.8%	77.2%	7.9%	10.6%
Hotel Revenue (Billions)	\$0.430	\$1.129	\$2.282	\$2.524	\$2.813
% Change	-82.5%	162.9%	102.0%	10.6%	11.5%

Source: STR Inc.



Source: Tourism Economics, Choose Chicago

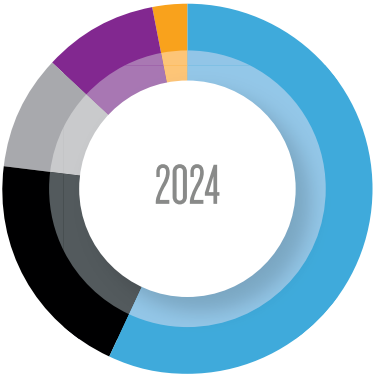
OPERATIONS & FINANCE



2025 BUDGETED REVENUE BY SOURCE

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

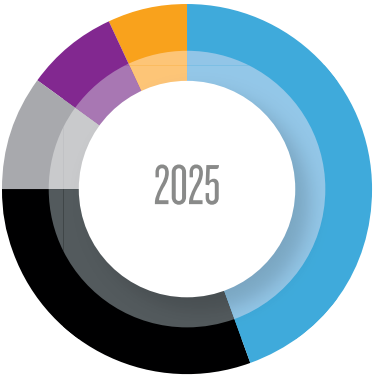
TOTAL: \$34,658,000



2024 BUDGETED REVENUE BY SOURCE

57%	State of Illinois	\$18,971,928
20%	MPEA	\$6,450,000
10%	City of Chicago	\$3,325,000
10%	Private	\$3,135,000
3%	ERC Refund	\$1,049,000

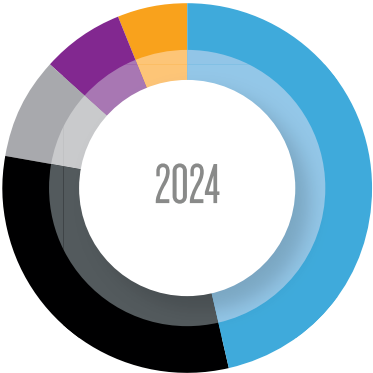
TOTAL: \$33,053,428



2025 BUDGETED EXPENSES

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

TOTAL: \$34,535,155

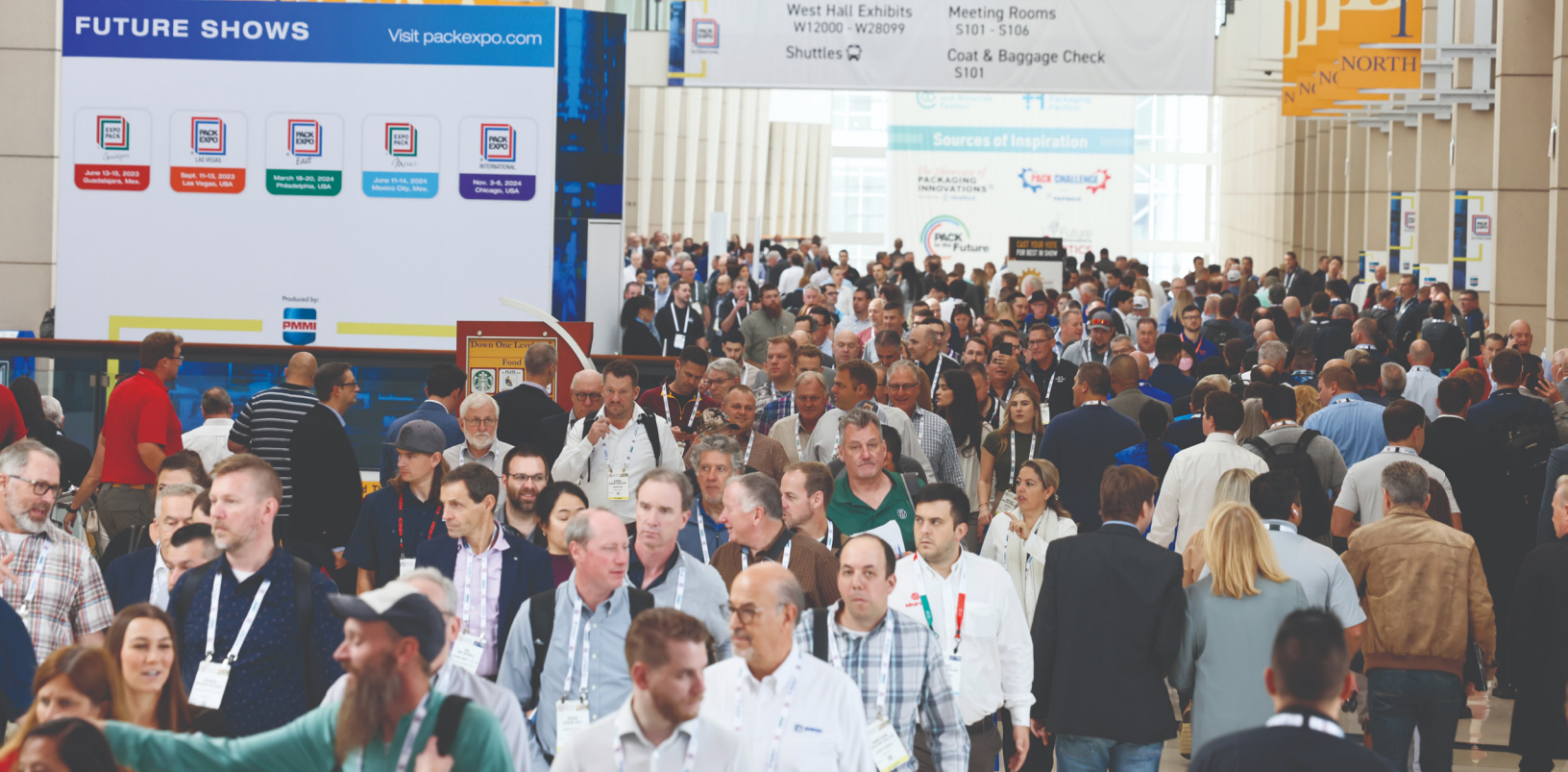


2024 BUDGETED EXPENSES

46%	Marketing	\$15,120,923
31%	Convention Sales and Services	\$10,208,028
9%	Other Departments	\$3,062,623
7%	Corporate Allocations	\$2,332,000
6%	Administrative	\$1,986,961

TOTAL: \$32,710,535





DRIVING MEANINGFUL CONVENTION AND MEETING BUSINESS

Meetings and conventions of all sizes are critical economic drivers for Chicago. The Choose Chicago Sales team is responsible for promoting and securing conventions and meetings at Chicago’s McCormick Place and over 150 hotel partners. 2024 was a banner year for the Sales team, booking 2,005 total meetings, which will deliver an economic impact of over \$4.8 billion for Chicago.

AMBITIOUS 2024 GOALS ACHIEVED:

2.65 MILLION

Hotel room nights booked
(103% of goal)

49 BOOKINGS

Citywide
(109% of goal)

27 BOOKINGS

Citywide impacting need dates
(135% of goal)

Choose Chicago booked a wide variety of future shows in 2024, including major annual conventions, regularly recurring trade shows and association meetings, and one-hotel meetings. Notable events secured in 2024 include:

- NAACP National Convention 2026
- National Association for the Education of Young Children 2027 Annual Conference - taking place in December.
- A3 Automate Show 2028, 2030, and 2032
- American Chemical Society 2026 and 2032 Meeting and Expo
- NAESA: Association for International Educators 2029 - taking place over Memorial Day Weekend.

MAJOR CONVENTIONS AT MCCORMICK PLACE BOOKED THROUGH 2028

	Number Of Conventions Booked	Total Rooms	Estimated Total Attendance	Estimated Total Economic Impact
2024	26	1,158,233	907,419	\$1,788,432,411
2025	30	1,088,787	798,485	\$1,612,927,284
2026	29	1,008,682	794,637	\$1,602,585,403
2027	26	1,018,595	772,237	\$1,577,031,596
2028	25	1,026,548	833,737	\$1,764,181,961
2029	26	948,513	765,237	\$1,587,998,110

Major is defined as 3,000+ peak hotel room nights



SPOTLIGHT: ONE-HOTEL MEETINGS

While major citywide conventions often get more attention, Choose Chicago also works to book smaller meetings at individual hotels throughout Chicago. This work is immensely important to our over 150 hotel partners and historically represents 40% of our total production. In 2024, we booked 1,900 one-hotel meetings at local hotels, representing an economic impact of over \$1 million.

DELIVERING WORLD-CLASS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

Choose Chicago’s award-winning Client Services team serves as the primary liaison between Chicago’s convention clients and all things Chicago, and is dedicated to creating an outstanding experience for clients.



CLIENT SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS:



2024 CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

2024 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

From launching the initial bid to welcoming delegates to town, Choose Chicago was engaged in every step of the planning process for the DNC. Our team served as the liaison to the Chicago tourism & hospitality community for the Chicago 2024 Host Committee and the Democratic National Convention Committee for well over a year in the lead up to the convention.



SPOTLIGHT: CHOOSE CHICAGO MEDIA CENTER

Taking advantage of the spotlight on Chicago during the DNC, we launched the Choose Chicago Media Center, leveraging the full force of the Marketing department to tell the Chicago story to locals, visitors, and the 15,000 members of the media covering the DNC. This effort included taking part in dozens of media interviews, Chicago-style activations at the Delegate and Media Parties, supporting activations across the city, hosting a DNC Pep Rally, and more.

IMPACT OF THE DNC

DEMONSTRATED
ABILITY TO HOST
MAJOR EVENTS

INCREASED
COORDINATION
BETWEEN CITY, STATE,
PARTNERS

CHANGED
PERCEPTIONS
OF CHICAGO LONG-TERM

\$370.4 MILLION
ECONOMIC IMPACT



SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (SHRM) ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO 2024

In Chicago for the first time since 2018, the SHRM Annual Conference & Expo brought human resource professionals, executives, students, and others to Chicago to explore the latest trends in the ever-evolving HR landscape. The show attracted a record 26,000 attendees and will be back in Chicago in 2027.



IMTS 2024 - THE INTERNATIONAL MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY SHOW

Taking place in Chicago every other September, IMTS is the Western Hemisphere's largest manufacturing trade show. This year's event was spectacular, with 89,020 registrants, 1,737 exhibiting companies, a Student Summit that attracted 14,713 visitors, and 40 million pounds of machinery on display. The bi-annual show had an economic impact of over \$200 million on Chicago.



SPOTLIGHT: CONNECTING TO CHICAGO

Choose Chicago's Connecting to Chicago program connects clients to the vast intellectual capital present in Chicago to drive attendance, find speakers, and build excitement for their event. In 2024, we fulfilled a record 64 client projects through our Connecting to Chicago program.

TELLING CHICAGO'S STORY TO A GLOBAL AUDIENCE

In 2024, Choose Chicago brought together Marketing, Media Relations, Economics, and Global Development to form the Global Design team. This high-powered team worked collaboratively to tell the Chicago story to a global audience by hosting travel trade operators, media, and influencers in Chicago; engaging directly with key audiences through in-market visits and on-the-ground media and travel representation; and launching engaging marketing and social media campaigns.

GLOBAL STORYTELLING BY THE NUMBERS:

2,752
travel trade
professionals trained

878
media members and
influencers hosted or
supported in Chicago

\$53.8M
in earned value for
Chicago generated
through media coverage

15M
web sessions on
ChooseChicago.com

100M
impressions generated
across social media
channels

4.7M
engagements (likes,
comments, shares, and
saves) on our social media
channels

Choose Chicago engaged directly with media, influencers, and travel trade operators from 23 countries in 2024 by hosting them in Chicago and/or visiting their markets.



CHICAGO STYLE CAMPAIGN

In 2024, Choose Chicago invited the world to find their Chicago Style through our newest pocket campaign. The campaign, which ran regionally and nationally from July to December, had a return on ad spend of \$200:1 across digital advertising. The campaign appeared across Chicago in the lead up to and during the DNC, with a focus on high-impact digital out-of-home media, yielding over 22 million impressions.



US TRAVEL'S IPW 2024

Choose Chicago brought our Chicago Style to Los Angeles for US Travel's IPW 2024, the largest inbound global travel trade show in the United States. Ahead of hosting IPW 2025 in Chicago this summer, we went all out with our partners to showcase the best of Chicago to thousands of international travel buyers and media.



CHICAGO STYLE: LONDON EDITION

Choose Chicago went to London to leverage a Chicago Bears game and drive future tourism from this key international market. We sponsored a Chicago-themed bar and hosted key media, travel trade, and clients throughout the trip.



PROMOTING CHICAGO'S NEIGHBORHOODS AND CULTURAL OFFERINGS

Chicago is proud to be a city of neighborhoods, with unmatched arts and culture in every corner of the city. Choose Chicago works to promote all our diverse and unique neighborhoods as global cultural destinations.



THE 77: A CITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Choose Chicago’s Neighborhood Strategy team, in partnership with Skalawag Productions, released a new travel series titled “The 77: A City of Neighborhoods.” This groundbreaking long-form series tells the in-depth and authentic stories of residents and small business owners in five neighborhoods, debuting in April at the CIBC Theater. The series has won two Midwest Emmy Awards and racked up over 160,000 views across YouTube and Amazon Prime.



ROUTE 66

Beginning in downtown Chicago, Route 66 is a major attraction for both national and international visitors. In 2024, Choose Chicago launched a new program to explore the “Mother Road” and the neighborhoods along its route in Chicago.

WAYFINDING MARKERS

Choose Chicago installed an eye-catching downtown pylon and four neighborhood signs to draw visitors these locations and surrounding businesses while providing educational experiences.

NEIGHBORHOOD TROLLEY TOURS

In partnership with Tours With Mike, Choose Chicago launched free Trolley Tours for the public, which took place over the summer of 2024.

CLASSIC CAR SHOWS

Choose Chicago organized four Classic Car Shows in neighborhoods along Route 66 in the summer of 2024, featuring classic cars from Klairmont Collections and tasty treats from local eateries.



THEATRE SEASON

The second annual Theater Season campaign, produced in partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) and the League of Chicago Theatres, ran during the fall of 2024 to encourage locals and visitors to explore productions across Chicago’s diverse theater community.



2024 GREETER PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS:



SPOTLIGHT:
THE CHICAGO GREETER PROGRAM

Launched in 2002, the Chicago Greeter program is a year-round service that offers visitors the opportunity to explore Chicago on a free customized walk of the city with enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers.

ELEVATING THE NARRATIVE OF CHICAGO

In Chicago, great things happen every day. Unfortunately, the local and national news is often dominated by coverage that focuses on the negative, ignoring or burying the positive. Choose Chicago worked to elevate the positive narrative of our city through a number of targeted initiatives in 2024.

PR ROUNDTABLE

Beginning in late 2023, Choose Chicago launched the PR Roundtable group to bring together over 100 marketing and communications leaders at cultural institutions and other organizations throughout Chicago. This group meets virtually and in-person to share updates, hear from local leaders, and network to elevate our collective efforts to tell the Chicago story.

CHOOSE CHICAGO ROUNDTABLE

Too often, readers need to scroll past the negative news to find the great things happening in Chicago. The new Choose Chicago Roundup e-newsletter aims to change that, by bringing the best of Chicago to your inbox every other week.



ELEVATING THE NARRATIVE BY THE NUMBERS:



RECRUITING AND LEVERAGING HIGH PROFILE EVENTS A WORLD-CLASS SPORTS CITY



The Chicago Sports Commission recruits and supports high-profile, major sporting events that drive significant economic impact and positive exposure for the city of Chicago. With exciting new events and the return of classics, 2024 was an outstanding year for sports in Chicago.



NASCAR CHICAGO STREET RACE WEEKEND

Returning to Chicago for its second year in 2024, the NASCAR Chicago Street Race once again transformed Grant Park into an iconic street course. This year’s race, which minimized disruptions with a shorter build time and expanded access to new fans, welcomed over 53,000 unique attendees and generated \$128 million in economic impact.



AVP CHICAGO OPEN

The Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP) Chicago Open returned to Chicago over Labor Day weekend for the ninth time, with the world’s best volleyball players competing in the new AVP League format on Oak Street Beach with the stunning Chicago skyline in the background.

PREMIER LEAGUE MORNINGS LIVE

Chicago’s hosted the 10th Premier League Mornings Live in the fall of 2024, transforming Lincoln Park into a fan festival with live in-person broadcasts on NBC, screenings of all the Premier League matches, and family-friendly activities and activations. The free, two-day event set all-time attendance records, with over 15,000 fans.



NHL WINTER CLASSIC

2024 closed with the return of the Discover NHL Winter Classic, with an outdoor hockey matchup at Wrigley Field between the Chicago Blackhawks and the St. Louis Blues on New Year’s Eve. After hosting the NHL’s biggest event for the second time, Wrigley Field also hosted the Frozen Confines: Big Ten Hockey Series in the days following the Winter Classic.



SUNDANCE INSTITUTE X CHICAGO 2024

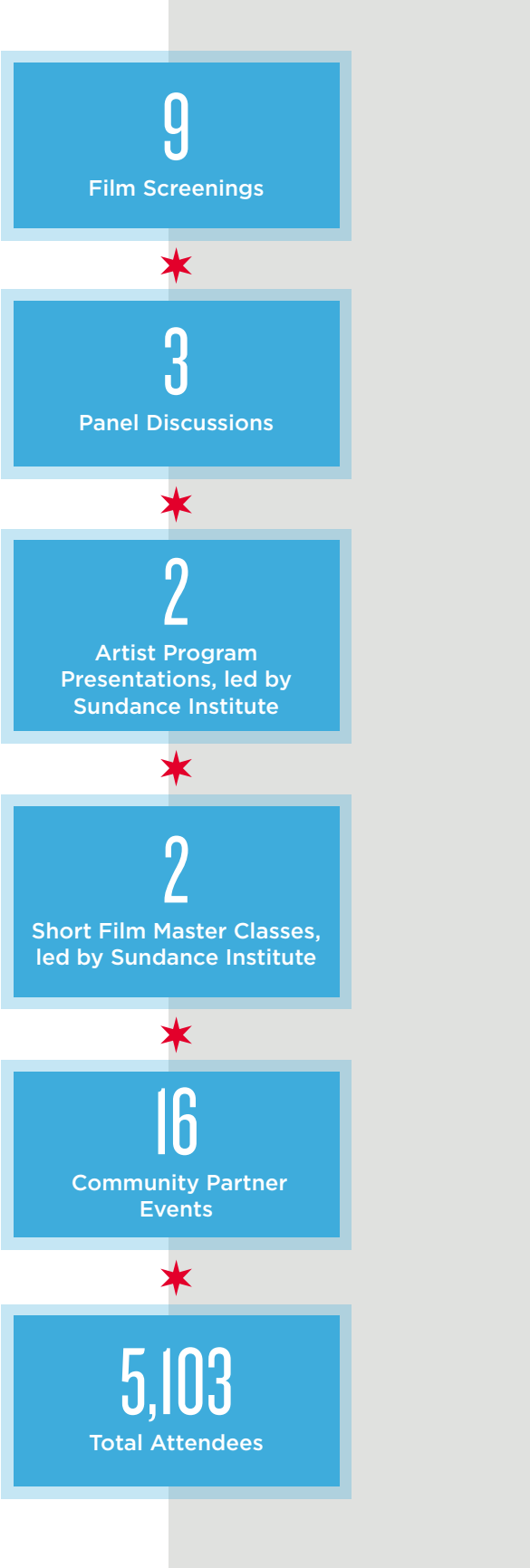
Choose Chicago, in partnership with the City of Chicago and the nonprofit Sundance Institute, hosted the independent film event Sundance Institute x Chicago in June of 2024. This event made Chicago the only U.S. city to host an independent artist and film weekend in partnership with the Sundance Institute outside of Park City, Utah, the long-time home of the annual prestigious Sundance Film Festival. This landmark event showcased a lineup of films and panel discussions, celebrating both the art of filmmaking and championing creative independence in Chicago's vibrant cultural sector.



JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION AWARDS

Choose Chicago, along with the Illinois Restaurant Association, was proud to host all of the James Beard Awards ceremonies in 2024 for the 8th year. Congratulations to Logan Square's Lula Café for winning the James Beard Award for Outstanding Hospitality!

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE X CHICAGO 2024 BY THE NUMBERS:



PROVIDING VALUE TO PARTNERS

Choose Chicago is a partner-based organization dedicated to driving value for our partners by driving exposure for their organizations and connecting them to marketing platforms and educational resources.

PARTNERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS:



EDUCATIONAL AND NETWORKING EVENTS

In 2024, Choose Chicago held monthly educational and networking help partners build relationships, increase awareness, and expand their professional knowledge. Highlights of partner events included:

Accessibility Best Practices for a WOW Customer Experience: Partners walked away equipped to recognize visible and invisible disabilities and create a more inclusive environment while creating an exceptional customer experience.

The Future Landscape of Tourism: Results of MMGY's 2023 Future Study highlighting key trends and industry best practices was presented along with the results of the DestinationNEXT assessment, an in-depth survey of key stakeholders and clients on Chicago's strengths, opportunities, and community alignment.





CHICAGO RESTAURANT WEEK AND FIRST BITES BASH

Chicago Restaurant Week celebrated its 17th anniversary in 2024, offering visitors and locals the opportunity to experience Chicago's incredible culinary scene through prix-fixe menus at hundreds of participating restaurants.



CHICAGO RESTAURANT WEEK & FIRST BITES BASH BY THE NUMBERS:

JANUARY 19 - FEBRUARY 4

423

Participating Restaurants



87

New Restaurants



1,600

Attendees at
First Bites Bash



1.34M

Page Views



\$10,000

Donated to Pilot Light
and the James Beard
Foundation



CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK

The 12th Annual Chicago Theatre Week, presented by the League of Chicago Theatres in partnership with Choose Chicago, offered value-priced tickets to shows across the city, allowing locals and visitors to explore the extraordinary range of theatrical offerings in Chicago.

CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK BY THE NUMBERS:

FEBRUARY 8 - 18

64

Participating
Theatres



81

Participating
Shows



18,100

Tickets Sold



SPOTLIGHT: STUDENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Launched in 2019, the Choose Chicago Student Partnership Program aims to connect local tourism and hospitality students with opportunities across the broader tourism industry. The program grew with 100 new student partners in 2024, bringing the total to 250 student partners representing 40 different colleges and universities.

NURTURING A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE INDUSTRY

Choose Chicago, through our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion efforts and the Choose Chicago Foundation, are committed to fostering diversity and breaking down barriers to entry in the tourism industry.

The Choose Chicago Foundation awarded \$30,000 in scholarships in 2024 to six recipients



BUSINESS DIVERSITY POLICY

In 2024, Choose Chicago established our first Business Diversity Policy, setting good faith goals as an organization to do business with 25% diverse-owned businesses, including 15% allocated to minority-owned business enterprises.



EDI SCORECARD

To provide important baseline data for the organization and help us continue to push for more diversity, in 2024 Choose Chicago created the first EDI Scorecard to measure our EDI impact across the organization in key areas including vendor diverse spend, partner diversity, workforce development, and staff diversity.

THANK YOU TO OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS



THANK YOU TO OUR UNION PARTNERS



CHOOSE CHICAGO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Glenn Eden
Board Chair

Marilynn Gardner
Vice Chair

Liz Lombardo Stark
Treasurer & Chair of the Finance Committee

Chevy Humphrey
Secretary

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Ivan Capifali
Phil Clement
Catherine De Orio
Lisa Duarte
Richard Gamble
Devin Griffith
Nina Grondin
Patrick Hatton
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Tracey Payne
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Juan Salgado
Alexandra Sims
Michael Strautmanis
Cherryl Thomas

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Jorge Valdivia
John Wells
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Elizabeth "Betsy" Ziegler

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Jason Ervin
Clinée Hedspeth
Benjamin Humphrey
Patrick Kelly
Rich Levin
Kristin Richards

IN MEMORIAM

David Jacobs
Myrna Salazar

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President and CEO

James Meyer
Chief Financial Officer

Lisa Nucci
Chief Marketing Officer

Tara Welch
Chief of Staff

Dustin Arnheim
Senior Vice President of Sales and Services

Larren Austin
Executive Assistant to the President & CEO



