It was a great year for Chicago. Our city was recognized for its outstanding culinary community, thriving craft beer scene and for being one of the all-around best places in the country.
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<td>Executive Staff</td>
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</table>
The year resulted in many historic milestones. Chicago welcomed a record 57.7 million visitors, an increase of 4.3% from 2017. This growth resulted in a 4.4% increase in overall hotel room demand and an encouraging 4.6% growth in average daily rate for our hotel partners.

For the second year in a row, Chicago was selected as the best big city in the United States by the readers of Condé Nast Traveler. This type of significant buzz increased engagement with our digital and social media platforms and generated publicity around the globe.

The economic impact of our industry and our partners is vivid. Overall tourism expenditures exceeded $16 billion, including almost $1.1 billion in tourism tax revenue. Hotel tax revenues alone generated $437 million.

Due to this growth, state hotel tax revenue increased by $12.9 million and Chicago hotel tax revenues increased by $11.7 million. Equally important, our industry supported 150,616 tourism-related jobs here in Chicago including 1,786 new opportunities added in 2018.

This year, we once again surpassed our annual goal and confirmed more than 2.6 million future room nights by securing commitments from 60 major bookings at McCormick Place and 2,340 future meetings in and with our partner hotels. In total, these meetings will welcome over 3.9 million future attendees — meeting, staying and playing in Chicago.

The success also translated into positive results for our clients. In 2018, 20 of the 50 major meetings in Chicago broke either all-time attendance records and/or exhibitor participation records.

Our thriving meetings and events industry is augmented by a growth in leisure visitors. The number of leisure visitors increased 4.8% in 2018 — more than double the growth generated in 2017. This increase also helped support new hotel investments; Chicago welcomed nine new hotel properties in 2018.

Attracting more international visitors to Chicago remains a priority. There was a 3.8% increase in passport holders arriving on non-stop international flights at O’Hare and Midway airports, reversing a negative trend in arrivals over the past several years.

Our accomplishments are due in large part to the tremendous support and cooperation we receive from the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, including the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and the Chicago Department of Aviation, the Metropolitan Pier and Exhibition Authority and dozens of corporate sponsors celebrated within this report. These include the Chicago Federation of Labor and our union partners focused on serving our customers, clients and guests.

And finally, we appreciate the support from our 1,552 partner members representing the best of Chicago’s accommodations, arts, culture and entertainment, attractions, dining and nightlife, trade associations, transportation, convention-related services and countless community groups.

Thank you to each of you who shares in our mission and a special acknowledgement to our Board of Directors and committees and, of course, our team of professionals at Choose Chicago.

Thank you to each of you who shares in our mission and a special acknowledgement to our Board of Directors and committees and, of course, our team of professionals at Choose Chicago.

On behalf of Choose Chicago, we want to thank you for your collaboration and commitment to the tourism, hospitality and meetings industry. We’re extremely pleased to share our 2018 Annual Report, which highlights many of the key accomplishments of our organization and the results of our valued partnerships.
2018 OPERATIONS

REVENUE BY SOURCE

50.9%  STATE OF ILLINOIS
24.1%  MPEA AGREEMENT
13.9%  PRIVATE REVENUES
11.1%  CITY OF CHICAGO

$29,136,677

EXPENSE BY DEPARTMENT

32.6%  MARKETING
31.3%  SALES & SERVICES
7.0%  MEDIA RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS
4.1%  GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT
1.8%  CULTURAL TOURISM
1.5%  RESEARCH
4.0%  CHICAGO SPORTS COMMISSION
2.7%  EXECUTIVE OFFICE
4.5%  CORPORATE ALLOCATIONS
2.3%  IN-KIND
1.9%  PUBLIC POLICY
6.3%  ADMINISTRATIVE

TOTAL EXPENSES: $33,146,509*

* Includes Board-approved draw-down of $4,009,832 in operating reserves to support 2018 initiatives
Tourism is a crucial part of the city’s economic growth and job development. Chicago continues to benefit from the revenue and employment generated by its thriving tourism industry.

**TOURISM-RELATED EMPLOYMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>133.5K</td>
<td>136.0K</td>
<td>140.5K</td>
<td>145.1K</td>
<td>148.8K</td>
<td>150.6K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+1.2% from 2017

**DIRECT TOURISM SPENDING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$13.3B</td>
<td>$14.1B</td>
<td>$14.6B</td>
<td>$14.9B</td>
<td>$15.4B</td>
<td>$16.0B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+4.0% from 2017

**TOTAL TAX REVENUE GENERATED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$836.1M</td>
<td>$885.2M</td>
<td>$891.6M</td>
<td>$953.1M</td>
<td>$1.0B</td>
<td>$1.1B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+4.0% from 2017

**CHICAGO HOTEL TAX REVENUE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$106.3M</td>
<td>$113.6M</td>
<td>$123.9M</td>
<td>$127.1M</td>
<td>$128.5M</td>
<td>$140.2M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+9.1% from 2017

**STATE HOTEL TAX REVENUE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$117.5M</td>
<td>$125.6M</td>
<td>$137.0M</td>
<td>$140.5M</td>
<td>$142.1M</td>
<td>$155.1M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+9.1% from 2017
In 2018, Chicago set a new tourism record with **57.7 MILLION VISITORS**, 2.4 million more than the previous year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Visitation (Domestic &amp; Overseas)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>57.7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>55.3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>53.8M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>52.6M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>50.0M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>48.3M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These increases are the result of a continued focus on growing our overnight and leisure visitors to Chicago, who tend to spend more and stay longer.
### Hotel Snapshot - Central Business District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupancy Rate</td>
<td>75.36%</td>
<td>+3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Rate</td>
<td>$213.11</td>
<td>+4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooms Available</td>
<td>15.6M</td>
<td>+3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooms Occupied</td>
<td>11.8M</td>
<td>+4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Per Available Room</td>
<td>$160.61</td>
<td>+5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Hotel Tax Revenue</td>
<td>$140,237,989</td>
<td>+9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** All values represent changes from the previous year.
Hosting events, meetings and conventions contributes to the economic health of the city and state. Our collective teams help bring meetings and events to McCormick Place and Chicago hotels and event venues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL MEETINGS BOOKED</th>
<th>IN ECONOMIC IMPACT AS A RESULT OF ALL CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS BOOKED</th>
<th>MEETINGS BOOKED FOR HOTEL IN-HOUSE BUSINESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,421</td>
<td>$4.0B</td>
<td>2,336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAJOR EVENTS BOOKED IN 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Anticipated Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APRIL 2019</td>
<td>STAR WARS CELEBRATION</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUNE 2019</td>
<td>SLATE INNOVATION SUMMIT</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JULY 2019</td>
<td>INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VENUE MANAGERS VENUECONNECT</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 2019</td>
<td>NISSAN FY20 NATIONAL DEALER MEETING</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER 2019</td>
<td>INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF VENUE MANAGERS VENUECONNECT</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH 2021</td>
<td>ORACLE CORPORATION</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 2021</td>
<td>AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS ANNUAL MEETING &amp; MUSEUM EXPO</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER 2021</td>
<td>NATIONAL BLACK MBA ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE &amp; EXPOSITION</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 2021</td>
<td>OR MANAGER CONFERENCE &amp; PACU MANAGER SUMMIT</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH 2022</td>
<td>ACADEMY OF MANAGED CARE PHARMACY ANNUAL CONFERENCE</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECEMBER 2022</td>
<td>AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION FALL MEETING</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**McCORMICK PLACE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Future Meetings Secured</th>
<th>Total New Major Future Meetings and Conventions</th>
<th>Total Meetings Will Convene in Chicago for the First Time</th>
<th>Total Meetings Have Not Met in Chicago for 10 Years or More</th>
<th>Total Economic Impact from New Meetings Booked at McCormick Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1.2B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**McCORMICK PLACE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Events Booked in 2018</th>
<th>Anticipated Attendees</th>
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<tr>
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<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**RECORD-BREAKING PARTNERSHIPS**

Choose Chicago’s Partnership Program empowers local organizations to expand their marketing reach and connect to visitors in innovative ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL PARTNERS, A NEW RECORD</th>
<th>NEW PARTNERS IN 2018</th>
<th>RETENTION IN 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,552</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2018 PARTNER BREAKDOWN**

- **35%** Dining
- **18%** Meeting & Event Suppliers
- **12%** Accommodation
- **7%** Tours/Attractions
- **5%** Associations/Organizations
- **4%** Special Event Venues
- **4%** Transportation
- **3%** Theatre/Performing Arts
- **3%** Shopping
- **2%** Museums
- **2%** Sports & Recreation
- **2%** Visitor Resources
- **1%** Convention Centers / Conference Facilities
- **1%** Music, Comedy and Nightlife
- **1%** Conventions / Conference Facilities

**PARTNER NETWORKING & EDUCATION EVENTS**

Our annual events are designed to help partners build their network and expand their professional knowledge. Here’s an overview of this year’s innovative initiatives:

- **MENU ENGINEERING**: Dining partners learned how to increase profits and lower costs with William Post, former President and COO of Levy Restaurants and co-founder of Roti Modern Mediterranean.
- **TOP 10 TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS**: A group of Chicago’s most passionate advocates spoke about the top tourism developments in 2018 and beyond that will impact the visitor experience in Chicago.
- **MARKETING OUTLOOK**: Partners reviewed the results of Choose Chicago’s summer marketing efforts and got a preview of 2019 plans from President & CEO David Whitaker and the leadership team.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA MEET-UP**: This event helps partners pick up relevant skills and answer questions about making the most of social media.

**NEW INITIATIVES**

- **ONBOARDING VIDEO SERIES**: This series of emails and videos helps educate new partners about the benefits and resources available through their partnership with Choose Chicago.
- **AMBASSADOR WELCOME PROGRAM**: This program empowers Choose Chicago Ambassadors to guide new partners on the many opportunities available to them during their first year of partnership.
OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Thank you to our 2018 Strategic Marketing Partners for their unmatched level of commitment to Chicago. The support of Strategic Marketing Partners helps us strengthen Chicago’s position as the top destination for leisure and business travel.

“THANKS TO OUR LONG-STANDING PARTNERSHIP WITH CHOOSE CHICAGO, WHICH HIGHLIGHTS THE DIVERSITY AND VIBRANCY OF OUR CITY, OUR AIRPORTS CONTINUE TO WELCOME MORE TRAVELERS TO THE CITY EACH YEAR.”

COMMISSIONER JAMIE L. RHEE, CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION
CULINARY EVENTS

These annual events showcase Chicago’s acclaimed culinary scene, from award-winning restaurants to celebrity chefs. They also help our dining partners build awareness for their business and bring in more guests.

JAMES BEARD AWARDS
Choose Chicago and the Illinois Restaurant Association are proud to host the James Beard Awards through 2027. Congratulations to Chicago’s Abraham Conlon of Fat Rice, named Best Chef: Great Lakes in 2018.

CHICAGO RESTAURANT WEEK
365 participating restaurants
115 first-time participants
639,610 diners served
$29.9M in economic impact

NEW RECORD
139 restaurants participated in JAMES BEARD EATS WEEK, an 11-day culinary celebration leading up to the awards.

FIRST BITES BASH
1,500 guests
65 participating restaurants
$12,000 raised for the Greater Chicago Food Depository

SPONSORED BY:
“IT WAS AMAZING! THERE IS SO MUCH FABULOUS THEATER IN CHICAGO — AND THIS MAKES IT MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL OF US.”

CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK ATTENDEE

OUR UNION PARTNERS

Choose Chicago and our industry enjoy the strong support and service of the Chicago Federation of Labor and a collective team focused on serving our customers, clients and guests.
Our Client Services team serves as an expert resource to convention planners. They help ensure that meeting planners and attendees have a world-class experience in Chicago from start to finish — and help bring them back to our city year after year.

**TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- **92** conventions served in 2018, a new record
- **17** pre-promotion trips highlighting Chicago to conventions coming here in 2019
- **4.8** average rating out of 5 that our Client Services Managers received on their service performance in 2018 from client surveys
- **217** site visits educating clients about Chicago

**RECORD CONVENTIONS IN 2018**

- **JAN. 2 – 7**
  - FELLOWSHIP OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS - SLS18
    - Record attendance
- **JAN. 22 – 24**
  - INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION COMPANY - AHR EXPO
    - Record attendance
    - Record exhibit space
    - Record exhibitors
    - Record participating countries
- **APRIL 14 – 18**
  - AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH - AACR ANNUAL MEETING
    - Record attendance
- **MAY 6 – 10**
  - LIGHTFAIR INTERNATIONAL
    - Record exhibit space
- **MAY 7 – 19**
  - AMERICAN WIND ENERGY ASSOCIATION - WINDPOWER
    - Record exhibitors
- **MAY 22 – 24**
  - NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION - NATIONAL RESTAURANT SHOW
    - Record exhibit space for the fourth year in a row
- **JUNE 1 – 5**
  - AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY - ASCO ANNUAL MEETING
    - Record attendance
    - Record fundraiser for the Conquer Cancer Foundation
- **JUNE 11 – 13**
  - NEOCON
    - Record attendance
- **JUNE 14 – 27**
  - INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION - ISTE CONFERENCE & EXPO
    - Record attendance
    - Record exhibitors
- **JULY 21 – 26**
  - ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION - 2018 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
    - Record attendance
    - Record exhibitors
    - Record exhibit space
- **JULY 29 – AUGUST 2**
  - AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR CLINICAL CHEMISTRY - AACC ANNUAL MEETING & CLINICAL LAB EXPO
    - Record exhibitors
    - Record exhibit space

**ROZ STUTTLEY**, Director of Client Services, was awarded the 2018 Convention Manager of the Year Award by the national Event Service Professionals Association.

**$70,000 raised** for the Greater Chicago Food Depository and Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly during ASAE 2018.

**AUG. 8 – 10**
- ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT - 2018 ANNUAL MEETING
  - Record attendance

**AUG. 18 – 21**
- AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES - ASAE 2018 ANNUAL MEETING & EXPOSITION
  - Record attendance
  - Record funds raised for local charities

**SEPT. 10 – 15**
- THE ASSOCIATION FOR MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY - INTERNATIONAL MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY SHOW
  - Record attendance
  - Record exhibit space
  - Record exhibitors

**OCT. 14 – 17**
- PMMI - PACK EXPO INTERNATIONAL
  - Record exhibit space
  - Record exhibitors

**NOV. 4 – 6**
- ASSOCIATION FOR FINANCIAL PROFESSIONALS - AFP 2018
  - Record attendance
  - Record exhibit space
  - Record exhibitors

**DEC. 19 – 21**
- THE MIDWEST CLINIC - INTERNATIONAL BAND, ORCHESTRA AND MUSIC CONFERENCE
  - Record attendance
  - Record exhibit space

**DEC. 27 – 29**
- MUSLIM AMERICAN SOCIETY - MAS-ICNA 2018
  - Record attendance
Choose Chicago continued to build on its award-winning Welcome Home campaign, which helped bring in a record number of regional, national and international visitors to experience the city that feels like home.

5 KEY IMPROVEMENTS

1. Shifted from traditional media to a digital-first approach
2. Connected with people on their devices through behavioral targeting
3. Expanded from a regional-only focus to a national and international focus
4. Aligned messaging across nine key content pillars
5. Implemented a robust global influencer marketing strategy

WELCOME HOME CAMPAIGN RESULTS

- **$5.3M** total media investment
- **$1.2B** economic impact
- **929,269** incremental trips generated
- **58.4M** average impressions delivered per month
- **+$44% from 2017**
- **+$22% from 2017**
- **+$37% from 2017**

- **+$238** return on media investment
- **+$6.49** hotel tax return on investment

WEBSITE ENGAGEMENTS (JANUARY – DECEMBER)

The expansion of Welcome Home to a national audience drove increased traffic from the states with the ten largest cities, along with our core regional audience.

- **MINNESOTA** 33%
- **WISCONSIN** 6%
- **MICHIGAN** 8%
- **MISSOURI** 15%
- **TEXAS** 36%
- **CALIFORNIA** 38%
- **FLORIDA** 41%
- **INDIANA** -1%
- **OHIO** 19%
- **DC** 34%

CHOOSECHICAGO.COM (JANUARY – DECEMBER)

- **8.3M** website visits (+14.5% from 2017)
- **6.0M** new visitors (+17% from 2017)
- **4.7M** mobile visits (+23% from 2017)

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS @CHOOSECHICAGO

- **287,346** likes (+19% from 2017)
- **94,237** followers (+2.5% from 2017)
- **227,158** followers (+19% from 2017)
GLOBAL INFLUENCER MARKETING
The Marketing and Media Relations teams hosted 45 social media influencers and vloggers from several key countries. Influencers were taken on tours of Chicago, with itineraries covering different traveler interests, and then shared their experiences on social media.

S O C I A L  M E D I A
In 2018, we saw increased engagement with our in-language social media accounts in many of our target countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>YouTube Impressions</th>
<th>Instagram Followers</th>
<th>Facebook Impressions</th>
<th>Weibo Reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>880,485 views</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING
Our international marketing efforts drove significant increases in traffic to our website from many of our target countries.

GROWTH IN INTERNATIONAL FOLLOWERS
- **436%** INSTAGRAM (GROWTH FROM 2017 TO 2018)
- **32.8%** FACEBOOK (GROWTH FROM 2017 TO 2018)
- **1,961** WECHAT FOLLOWERS SINCE LAUNCH (SEPTEMBER 2018 - DECEMBER 2018)

GLOBAL WEBSITE TRAFFIC
(GROWTH FROM 2017 TO 2018)

- **436%** GLOBAL WEBSITE TRAFFIC (GROWTH FROM 2017 TO 2018)
Our Media Relations team generates print, online, social and broadcast media coverage of Chicago. We pitch and promote the destination across the globe to domestic and international journalists and host media in the city to experience firsthand all that Chicago offers.

**USA**
- Travel + Leisure
  - Circulation: 969,266
  - Media value: $1.2M

**MEXICO**
- Milenio
  - Circulation: 104,244
  - Media value: $29,382

**CHINA**
- Men’s Health
  - Circulation: 850,000
  - Media value: $310,590

**GERMANY**
- abenteuer und reisen
  - Circulation: 95,833
  - Media value: $200,882

**JAPAN**
- Agora
  - Circulation: 861,000
  - Media value: $90,000

**FRANCE**
- L’Obs
  - Circulation: 359,285
  - Media value: $139,060

**BRAZIL**
- O Estado de São Paulo
  - Circulation: 162,630
  - Media value: $318,843

**U.K.**
- Saturday Magazine (Daily Express)
  - Circulation: 370,632
  - Media value: $20,708

**CANADA**
- Toronto Star
  - Unique visitors monthly: 3.5M
  - Media value: $32,144

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**DECEMBER – JANUARY 2018 HIGHLIGHTS**

- $37.5M earned media value
- 7B readers, listeners and viewers
- 2,000 published articles and broadcasts highlighting travel to Chicago
- 449 media hosted in Chicago
- 46 domestic and international press tours
- 19 domestic and international in-market media events
We need the support of local and national leaders to secure funding and achieve our goals. Our Public Policy & Community Affairs team helps Choose Chicago build strong relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. The team also helps develop policy solutions, particularly in the travel industry, and works to educate and empower our membership to join their advocacy.

In 2018, our Public Policy team was instrumental in securing 2019 funding for Choose Chicago from our state government. This year, the team will continue to work closely with elected officials and spread the word about the positive impact of tourism.
Cultural Tourism

Our city is brimming with cultural events, attractions and neighborhoods. And our Cultural Tourism team is responsible for promoting them to the world. In 2018, they made groundbreaking strides in positioning Chicago as a global tourism destination.

CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK

Chicago Theatre Week, back for its sixth year in 2018, showcases Chicago’s world-class theatre scene. Choose Chicago partners with the League of Chicago Theatres to offer value-priced tickets to 115 shows from 100 participating organizations.

CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK TICKET SALES

17% of attendees came from more than 50 miles outside of Chicago, including 40 states and Germany, Canada, Belgium, Mexico and the U.K.

66% of Theatre Week attendees visited a new theatre.

CHICAGO GREETER

This free service matches visitors with friendly, knowledgeable volunteers for guided tours of Chicago’s downtown and neighborhoods.

9,780 TOTAL TOUR PARTICIPANTS IN 2018

+6.9% from 2017

5,750 international participants

4,030 domestic participants

600 tours conducted in a language besides English

CHOOSE CHICAGO & CHINA

Our close relationship with the Ministry of Culture & Tourism of the People’s Republic of China strengthens cooperation between our communities and highlights both as global cultural destinations.

During the fifth year of our Chinese New Year celebration, we invited the Chongqing Chuanju Opera Theatre and the Zhejiang Symphony Orchestra from China to perform to a sold-out audience at the Chicago Symphony Center. Choose Chicago also co-hosted the Chinese Mongolia Band for two concerts during the annual World Music Festival.

CHICAGO FRIDAY NIGHT FLIGHTS

The second season of Chicago Friday Night Flights showcased our city as an epicenter of the craft beer movement, in partnership with the Illinois Craft Brewers Guild. More than 3,590 tasting passes were sold to six events in vibrant areas across the city.

MOBILE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

The Mobile Visitor Information Center launched in 2018 in partnership with CTM Media Group. The center handed out 39,290 brochures & Chicago Official Visitor Guides over the summer.

“IT WAS AMAZING! THERE IS SO MUCH FABULOUS THEATRE IN CHICAGO — AND THIS MAKES IT MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL OF US.”

CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK ATTENDEE

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CHICAGO THEATRE WEEK ATTENDEE
Global Development

International visitors stay longer and spend more, making them a vital part of the city’s tourism goals. In 2018, our Global Development Team helped raise awareness of Chicago as a leading tourism destination in major markets around the globe.

34
COUNTRIES
REACHED

108%
ABOVE GOAL IN
FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TRIPS

100%
OF GOAL REACHED IN
INTERNATIONAL TRADE
SHOWS ATTENDED

Our team collaborated with Brand USA to add Chicago to their USA Discovery Program. The Chicago badge is now active in eight markets: Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, China, India, Mexico, U.K. and Ireland.

3,451 travel trade professionals reached through 31 sales missions and calls

1,999 appointments at 13 international and 3 domestic trade shows

12 key client events hosted

27 FAM trips hosted in Chicago for 268 travel trade professionals

81 international destination trainings held, reaching an audience of over 5,114

76 initiatives to promote international and domestic tourism to Chicago

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** Abbreviations:
- ** Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg
- ** Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden
- *** Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates
Hosting major athletic events can be a game-changer for our city. The Chicago Sports Commission wins the rights to host high-profile, major sports events to drive economic impact, create jobs and generate positive media exposure.

12 EVENTS HOSTED IN 2018

#12 BCW 2019 RANKING OF SPORTS CITIES PLACED CHICAGO AS ONE OF THE WORLD’S BEST SPORTS CITIES

106,800+ ROOM NIGHTS GENERATED IN 2018

THE RUGBY WEEKEND
Nov. 3 at Soldier Field
6 teams played in a historic tripleheader
35,000 attendees
1st time New Zealand’s national women’s team competed in U.S.
1st time Italy’s national men’s team competed in Chicago

LAVER CUP
Sept. 21 – 23 at the United Center
93,000+ attendees
50+ countries represented by attendees
35,485 room nights
$98.6M economic impact
9.7M viewers in 205 territories

“WE KNOW THIS IS A SPORTS-CRAZED CITY. WE ARE VERY THRILLED TO BE HERE.”
ROGER FEDERER

MAJOR EVENTS IN 2019

UNITED SOCCER COACHES CONVENTION
Jan. 9 – 13 at McCormick Place
14,070 attendees from all 50 states and 38 countries
$21.3M in economic impact
10,306 room nights

BIG TEN MEN’S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
March 13 – 17 at United Center
122,242 attendees over seven sessions — 2nd largest in event history

CONCACAF GOLD CUP
July 7 at Soldier Field
60,000+ anticipated attendees

FIVB VOLLEYBALL NATIONS LEAGUE 2019
July 10 – 14 at Credit Union 1 Arena
35,000+ anticipated attendance over five days
STAY CONNECTED

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