



THE EXPERIENCE GALA

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2026

MISSION HIGHLIGHTS

Navy Pier is the People's Pier, Chicago's lakefront treasure, offering welcoming experiences through programs and partners that inspire discovery, wonder, and fun. Since its revitalization in 1995, more than 245 million guests have enjoyed the Pier's 50 acres of unparalleled experiences and attractions. From engaging cultural experiences to serving as a vital economic anchor for our region, Navy Pier enriches the lives of millions of guests, artists, employees, and partners each year.

8.5M+

Guests Welcomed Annually

500+

Free & Ticketed
Events Each Year

73

On-Site Businesses

3,075

Jobs Sustained

15,000

Free Tickets Provided To Local
Community Groups Annually

200

Local Schools &
Nonprofits Served Each Year

3,000+

Local Performing Artists
Presented Annually

425

Arts & Cultural
Partner Organizations

BRAND HIGHLIGHTS

Few destinations in Chicago capture the imagination like Navy Pier. Welcoming more than 8 million guests each year, Navy Pier offers organizations a unique opportunity to align with the Midwest's premier leisure destination, a leading platform for arts and cultural experiences, and a mission-driven nonprofit committed to supporting small businesses and serving the community.

52%

of Guests are from the
Chicagoland Area

11M

Annual Website Views

509K+

Followers Across Social
Media Platforms

165K+

E-Newsletter Subscribers

4.5 HRS

Average Guest Stay Time

\$216M

Annual On-Site Guest Spend

100K

Peak Daily Attendance

242K

Annual Business Event
Attendees

THE EXPIERIENCE GALA

OCTOBER 15, 2026

2026 ExPIERience Co-Chairs

Laura and Craig Martin

Honoring Jennifer W. Steans, Immediate Past Chair

Jennifer Steans has been a driving force behind Navy Pier's strategic growth and community impact. Serving as Board Chair from 2023 to 2025, she championed efforts to strengthen the Pier's long-term sustainability, elevate the guest experience, and expand opportunities for local entrepreneurs and small businesses. Through her leadership, philanthropy, and advocacy, Jennifer has helped advance Navy Pier's mission as a vital civic and economic asset for all of Chicago.

Honoring U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin

As he concludes a remarkable career in public service, Senator Dick Durbin is recognized as one of Illinois' most influential leaders and steadfast champions of civic institutions. Throughout his decades in Congress, he has helped secure investments that strengthen communities, expand opportunity, and support the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Illinois. A longtime advocate for Navy Pier, Senator Durbin has supported the Pier through federal leadership and investment, recognizing its role as both a treasured public space and a driver of economic activity, tourism, and community engagement. His enduring commitment to public service has left a lasting mark on Illinois and helped create opportunities that will benefit generations to come.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

VICE CHAIR

\$100,000

Benefits include 20 premium tickets, prominent recognition in fundraising initiatives, event collateral, digital materials, and verbal recognition during event, a full-page color gala program book ad, and logo recognition on the gala website

LEAD SPONSOR

\$50,000

Benefits include 20 tickets, priority listing in fundraising initiatives, event collateral, and digital materials, a full-page color gala program book ad, and logo recognition on the gala website

HOST COMMITTEE

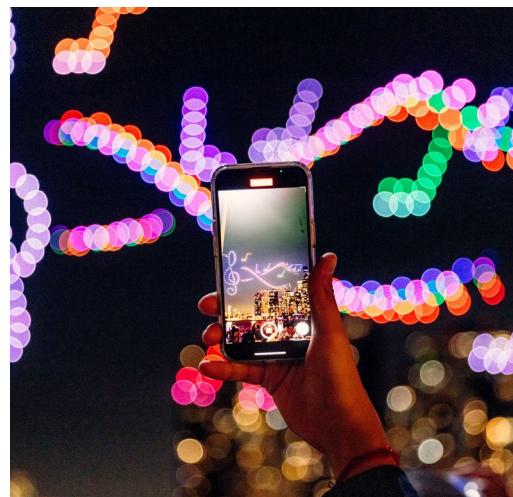
\$25,000

Benefits include 10 tickets, name and logo listing in fundraising initiatives, event collateral, and digital materials, a half-page color gala program book ad, and logo recognition on the gala website

EVENT PARTNER

\$12,000

Benefits include 10 tickets, name listing in fundraising initiatives, event collateral, and digital materials, name and logo listing in gala program book, and logo recognition on the gala website



NAVY PIER BOARD

OFFICERS

Eric Smith, Chair

Vice Chairman
BMO Bank

Jill Griebenow, Vice Chair & Treasurer

Chief Financial Officer
Cboe Global Markets

Dean M. Harrison, Vice Chair

Former President and CEO
Northwestern Memorial HealthCare

Jorge Ramirez, Secretary

Managing Director,
Infrastructure Investments
Labor & Government Strategies
GCM Grosvenor

DIRECTORS

James Blair

President and CEO
F.H. Paschen

Gery Chico

Partner
Chico & Nunes, PC

Eileen Chin

President
RM Chin and Associates

Michelle L. Collins

President
Cambium LLC

Nora Daley

Chair
Illinois Arts Council Agency

Scott Goodman

Principal
Farpoint Development

Sandra P. Guthman

Chair Emerita
Polk Bros. Foundation

Jake Henry

Senior Partner, Chicago
McKinsey & Company

Travis Hunter

Partner
KPMG

Laura Keidan Martin

Partner
Katten

Steven Koch

Managing Partner
Bowline Group

Aarti Kotak

Suzet McKinney, DRPH MPH

President & CEO
Chicago Loop Alliance

Brandon Neal

Chief Legal Officer
Walgreens

Richard S. Price

Executive Chairman and CEO
Mesirow

Bridget Reidy

Former EVP and COO
Exelon

Smita Shah

Founder & CEO
SPAAN Tech

John H. Simpson

Partner
Broadhaven Capital Partners

Jennifer Steans, Immediate Past Chair

President & CEO
Financial Investments Corporation

Emily Heisley Stoeckel

Chairman of the Board
The Heico Companies and Heico Holdings

Syreeta Harris Strickland

Head of Investment Banking Marketing
William Blair

Melissa Y. Washington

SVP, Government, Regulatory, & External Affairs
ComEd

Kelly R. Welsh

Managing Director
Crabtree Advisory

Phil Wilmington

Former Vice-Chairman
Workday

Amy Yuhn

EVP, Chief Brand, Engagement, & Impact Officer
Wintrust

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Jeff Bethke

Chairman
Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority

Larita Clark

CEO
Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority

Marilynn Kelly Gardner

President & CEO
Navy Pier

Terrance B. McGann

Board Member
Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority
Partner
McGann, Ketterman & Rioux

LIFE TRUSTEES

Norman Bobins

Founder
Norman Bobins Consulting LLC

William J. Brodsky, Chair Emeritus

Chairman
Cedar Street Asset Management

Donna La Pietra

Executive Producer
Kurtis Productions

Jim Reilly*

Former CEO and Trustee
Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority

John R. Schmidt

Senior Counsel
Mayer Brown

** in memoriam*

CONTACT

Elizabeth Halajian
Chief of Advancement

PHONE
(312) 595-5152

EMAIL
ehalajian@navypier.org

ADDRESS
600 East Grand Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611

WEBSITE
navypier.org

