

WRF7

91.5

CHICAGO



OUR MISSION

To nourish the public conversation by telling the stories that matter—the stories that provoke thought, entertain, capture emotion and inspire action.

WBEZ TELLS THE STORIES THAT COUNT.

In the midst of uncertain times, we live by a firm commitment to enduring values.

**TRUTH | CIVILITY | RESPECT | INDEPENDENCE | FAIRNESS | ACCURACY
COURAGE IN THE FACE OF POWER | THE WILL TO UNDERSTAND IN THE FACE OF DIFFERENCE**

These values drive our in-depth news coverage, our creative storytelling, and the many inventive ways we engage with our community of listeners. Meeting the future with rigor and determination, we rise to the moment in order to preserve and strengthen our mission for the next generation of audiences.

Thanks to the incredible team featured in these pages—and the entire WBEZ staff—Chicagoans have a reliable source of information for holding public officials accountable and for improving our communities.

WE LOOK AROUND OUR CITY, OUR REGION, AND OUR STATE,

and we see new opportunities for powerful stories that engage people and move them to action. We are committed to being a talent hub for the next generation, to taking risks, to doing more than just keeping up with technology, but to breaking new ground.

Whether you catch us on 91.5 FM, listen online, download our app and podcasts, or tune in any other way, we work constantly to live up to your expectations. And to our supporters, we never ever forget to appreciate your commitment to our mission.



Goli Sheikholeslami
President & CEO



Matt Moog
Board Chair

**Nourishing the
Public Conversation**

**IN OUR POLARIZED SOCIETY,
CIVIL CONVERSATION HOLDS
US TOGETHER.**

We may disagree, but as long as we're still talking, there's hope for the collaboration required to advance our common interests. Not all these conversations are easy. Whether it's opposing views of government policy or conflicting interpretations of a past event, emotions can flare. The temptation can be strong to build walls between our ideological opponents and us. WBEZ bridges gaps.



The **Morning Shift**

Every weekday at 9 a.m., the **Morning Shift** sparks fresh dialogue and meaningful exchange. In 2017, **Morning Shift** started a monthly feature called **Ask the Governor**. Each month Governor Bruce Rauner joined the show for an in-depth exclusive interview, as well as answering questions from listeners. This feature has reinforced

the sense among Chicago newsmakers and politicians that **Morning Shift** is a “must-do” destination.

When the daily conversation often seems driven by tweets and sound bites, only WBEZ devotes the time and resources to delve into nuance.



The view from room 205



Linda Lutton went in-depth in a fourth-grade classroom at William Penn Elementary School, on Chicago’s West Side, in the North Lawndale neighborhood. This powerful example of immersive reporting chronicled a full year with the students.

One small moment stayed with Lutton. It was the fourth-graders’ struggle with comprehending the word ripe. “That moment said so much,” she recalls.

“It’s a commentary on food deserts and the fact that many of the fourth graders have very little exposure to fresh fruit or vegetables in their neighborhood. It’s a commentary on hunger. It alludes to education research that finds big vocabulary gaps between low-income children and their higher-income peers.”

Laura Newland Lukens, Sounding Board member, describes a public discussion



on the audio documentary: “In a packed auditorium, members of the community learned about the making of the piece and engaged in a meaningful discussion about the intersection of poverty and education. It was special to get a behind-the-scenes look at WBEZ’s programming and see the impact of effective storytelling.”



Worldview, which airs weekdays at noon, offers vivid glimpses into global topics. Brazilian music in New York City, a U.K. climate change envoy in Chicago, the United Nation’s little-known Alliance of Civilizations, and Cirque Du Soleil’s *Waking Dream Of Mexico* have all come under consideration.

**Telling the Stories
That Matter**

**RESPECT FOR OUR AUDIENCES
DRIVES US TO PRESENT ROBUST STORIES
ON COMPLEX TOPICS.**

WBEZ's reporters never settle for pre-scripted talking points or received wisdom. Their painstaking research and genuine compassion go into stories that undermine stereotypes and disturb assumptions about our city or our world.



Every other Hour

In 2016, Chicago reported 4,331 people shot—that’s an average of one shooting victim every other hour. WBEZ’s editors and reporters embarked upon an unprecedented, multifaceted series to help us and our listeners better understand the crisis in our midst. **Every Other Hour** breaks through entrenched assumptions to shape the conversation about gun violence in Chicago. It digs deep into the pressing question: In Chicago, who picks up a gun and why?

» **The Laquan Effect**, by Chip Mitchell, combined enterprising data analysis and expert interviews to examine the question: Did the release of the video from the police shooting of Laquan McDonald exacerbate violence in Chicago?

» For **Why We Shoot**, Patrick Smith spent several months “talking to every contact I’ve ever made” in order to reach Alex and Jaime, two young men who committed acts of deadly violence. Reflecting on the story,



Smith says that while he understands how listeners might be shocked at the shooters’ stark admission that they enjoyed the violence, he also urges consideration of the circumstances that put them in a position to be handed a gun at a young age and faced with choices most of us never have to make. “Empathy is a human good,” he says, “and if more people take the time to understand the nuance, then the story was worth doing.”



» On June 1, 2017, Tony Sarabia moderated a conversation on a raw subject: **Is Chicago’s Violence a Learned Behavior?** with Dr. Kimya Barden, professor at Northeastern Illinois University, and Reverend Pervis Thomas.

Journalism Local



WBEZ listeners don't just accept the truth handed to them on a silver platter. They prefer to educate themselves on a topic and come to their own conclusions. Respect for our audiences drives us to present robust stories on complex topics.

» “When you know your neighbors, people don't die. That's how that works,” Tamar Manasseh, founder of Mothers Against Senseless Killings (MASK), told Natalie Moore. **One Block, Zero Shootings: How One Mom Is Building Community in Englewood** aired August 22, 2016 and

went unexpectedly viral. The hopeful video of neighborhood activists reached more than a half a million people on Facebook, exposing WBEZ's storytelling sensibility to a new audience.

» Odette Yousef's **Chicago Homeless Create, Enforce Own Rules** (January 2016) shed light on the humanity and intricacies of a homeless encampment on Chicago's North Side. This multimedia portrait follows Louis “Abdul” Jones on a tour of organizational systems that have arisen in the community.



» Sarah Karp and Becky Vevea's **How Chicago School Construction Furthers Race and Class Segregation** (July 7, 2016) presented a disturbing finding that emerged from WBEZ's analysis of the \$650 million in new school construction. In recognizing WBEZ's coverage, the Education Writers of America praised us for “add[ing] to the audience's understand of how and why segregation persists.”

» Michael Puente's **East Chicago Residents Fear for Their Health** (October 17, 2016) started with



lead-contaminated soil in one section of the city called the West Calumet Housing Project, but concern has now grown about lead in the drinking water of the entire city. Months of diligent reporting on lead contamination in Northwest Indiana ignited a public conversation and spurred a visit from the chief of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

We are a beacon of civil discourse and inclusion. The conversation is—and remains—open.

Trusted National Resource

Thanks to the commitment of our community of donors and listeners, we are moving forward with a great sense of purpose and a commitment to impactful, quality journalism.

» As Chicago's only **NPR** member station, WBEZ is proud to serve as a conduit to the number 1 and number 2 most-listened-to news talk radio programs

in the country—**Morning Edition** and **All Things Considered**. Public radio audiences have been growing across all demographics. In April, NPR was named the 2017 Harris Poll EquiTrend News Service Brand of the Year. On the 50th anniversary of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, one thing is even more important than audience size: trust. We strive to earn it every day.



» Described as “the vanguard of a journalistic revolution” by the *American Journalism Review*, **This American Life** is one of WBEZ's most provocative programs—and one of the most popular podcasts in existence. The show has won numerous awards, including the Peabody, the duPont-Columbia, the Murrow, and the Overseas Press Club. Ira Glass, the host



of the show, was named best radio host in the country by *Time Magazine* and received the highest individual honor in public broadcasting, the Edward R. Murrow Award.

**Leading with
Innovation**

**WE STAY NIMBLE TO ENGAGE
THE NEXT GENERATION OF LISTENERS.**

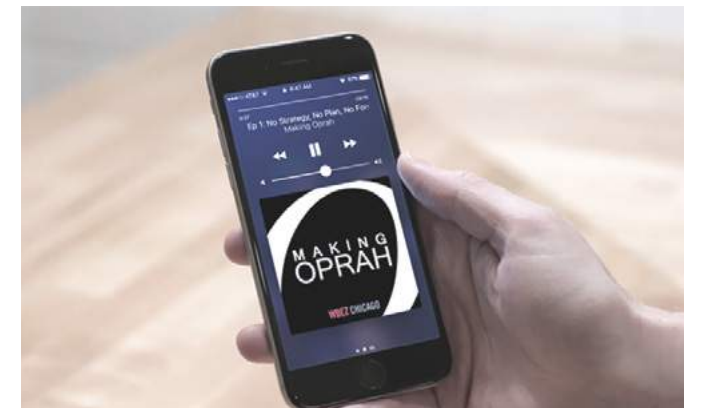
Every generation consumes stories its own way. WBEZ is adapting to the shifting landscape to reach younger and more diverse audiences. Podcasts, music, and multimedia are just some of the ways we feed the voracious media appetites of millennials.



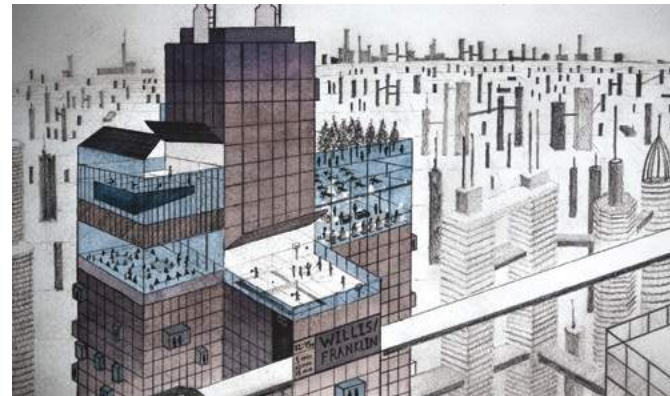
Making Oprah

“What seemed like a story of one woman reaching new heights in television turned out to be a story of a major evolution in the medium itself—a height that will never be reached again.” That’s what surprised Jenn White about **Making Oprah**, the podcast she and Colin McNulty launched in November 2016. Part entrepreneurial profile, part cultural history, the podcast exemplifies WBEZ’s ability to tell compelling stories in innovative ways, winning acclaim from *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, and *Essence*.

The documentary aired on more than 60 public radio stations nationwide, and



more than 860,000 listeners downloaded the podcast. It was never just another story for White. “I was a chatty kid,” she says. “My mother always pointed to Oprah as an example of what was possible.”



Hosted by nationally respected rock critics Greg Kot and Jim DeRogatis, **Sound Opinions** zeroes in on what makes us passionate about popular music. The show has featured exclusive performances by local favorites like Mavis Staples and legends like Steve Earle, along with plenty of listener-driven attitude.



The mission of **Curious City** is to include the public in editorial decision-making, make journalism more transparent and strengthen multimedia coverage about Chicago, the surrounding region and its people (past or present). In December, the team partnered with the Chicago Architecture Foundation to produce **Curious City: The Willis Tower in 150 Years**, which envisioned three possible fates for the former Sears Tower: adapting it for the needs of 2166, abandonment, and demolition.



NERDette

Because everybody is a little nerdy about something, **Nerdette Podcast** ranges from Tom Hanks's typewriter obsession to "Orthodox Sex Guru" Dr. Bat Sheva Marcus and comedian Jenny Slate's affection for houseplants.



Vocalo 91.1

Vocalo Radio 91.1 FM ventures into the Urban Alternative format. **Vocalo** uses the power of hip-hop, R&B, and indie rock to bring people together. Vocalo's morning show **Morning AMP**, hosted by Jesse Menendez and Jill Hopkins, inspires listeners to think and talk about the issues that matter to them.

Awards

WORK BROADCAST IN 2016

NATIONAL

Edward R. Murrow Awards

Excellence in Writing
Shannon Heffernan
The Gross Gatherings: A Climate Fight on Chicago's South Side

PRNDI (Public Radio News Directors) Awards

Best Writing, 1st Place
Shannon Heffernan
Gross Gatherings: A Climate Fight on Chicago's South Side

News Feature, 1st Place

Patrick Smith
Sudden Move: Father and Son Join Rising Number of Forced Evictions in Cook County

National Association of Black Journalists Salute to Excellence Awards

Best Feature
Natalie Moore & Andrew Gill
One Block, Zero Shootings: How One Mom is Building Community in Englewood

Best Investigative Reporting
Chip Mitchell
Police Data Cast Doubt on Stop and Frisk

REGIONAL

RTDNA Region 7 Murrow Awards

Excellence in Video
Andrew Gill & Natalie Moore
One Block, Zero Shootings

Excellence in Writing
Shannon Heffernan
The Gross Gatherings: A Climate Fight on Chicago's South Side

STATE

Chicago Headline Club Peter Lisagor Radio Broadcast Awards

Best In-depth News Story or Series
WBEZ Staff
Caught In The Middle

Best Investigative Reporting
Chip Mitchell
Police Data Cast Doubt on Chicago-Style Stop-And-Frisk

Best Reporter
Chip Mitchell

Best Feature Reporting
Patrick Smith
Sudden Move: Father and Son Join Rising Number of Forced Evictions in Cook County

Best Public Affairs Programming
WBEZ Staff
Heat of the Moment

Best Health or Science Reporting
Shannon Heffernan

Excruciating Choice: Trading Parental Custody for Mental Health Care

Illinois Associated Press Awards

Best Spot News, 2nd place
Tony Arnold
Bolingbrook Fundraiser Met With Boos, Tubas.

Best Light Feature, 2nd place
Natalie Moore
One Block, Zero Shootings: How One Mom is Building Community in Englewood

Best Hard News Feature
 1st place
Patrick Smith
Father and Son Join Rising Number of Forced Evictions

2nd place
Shannon Heffernan
Trading Parental Custody For Mental Health Care

Best Series or Documentary
 2nd place
WBEZ Staff
Caught In The Middle

Best Investigative Report
Chip Mitchell
Stop and Frisk

Best Use of Sound
Monica Eng / John Fecile
The Union Stock Yards Through the Eyes of an Eighth Grader

Best Digital Presence
WBEZ FM, Chicago

Best Newswriter
Miles Bryan

Best Reporter
Patrick Smith

Indiana Associated Press Awards

Best Reporter
Michael Puente

Best General News
Michael Puente
East Chicago Not Sure How to Oust Councilman Accused of Murder

Best Continuous Coverage of a Single Event
Michael Puente
Lead Contamination in Northwest Indiana

Indiana Society of Professional Journalists

Radio Election and Campaign Coverage, 2nd Place
Michael Puente
Indiana Election Coverage

Radio Feature Story, 2nd Place
Michael Puente
East Chicago Not Sure How to Oust Councilman Accused of Murder

Radio Sports Reporting
Michael Puente
A Little Bit of Wrigley in Northwest Indiana

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Financials

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

FY2017

FY2016

ASSETS

Cash	\$ 6,415,135	\$ 5,232,432
Investments	33,617,835	31,045,987
Underwriting, Grant & Pledge Receivables, Net	3,174,795	3,719,460
Property and Equipment, Net	13,732,215	14,478,393
Other Assets	1,645,520	1,682,358
Total Assets	\$ 58,585,500	\$ 56,158,630

LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 1,871,362	\$ 2,210,947
Revenue Bonds Payable, Net	21,798,081	21,789,409
Promissory Note Payable	1,111,090	1,277,758
Other Liabilities	259,617	808,201
Total Liabilities	\$ 25,040,150	\$ 26,086,315

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$ 31,786,465	\$ 26,661,691
Temporarily Restricted	1,758,885	3,410,624
Total Net Assets	\$ 33,545,350	\$ 30,072,315
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 58,585,500	\$ 56,158,630

OPERATING STATEMENT*

FY2017 **FY2016**

REVENUE

Membership Contributions	\$ 11,228,276	\$ 9,079,985
Program Underwriting	5,917,074	5,310,856
Contributions and Other Grants	5,589,814	4,775,620
Corporation for Public Broadcasting	1,568,485	1,565,949
In-Kind Services	1,399,096	1,002,401
Special Events and Other Revenue	1,835,883	1,553,688
Total Revenues	\$ 27,538,628	\$ 23,288,499

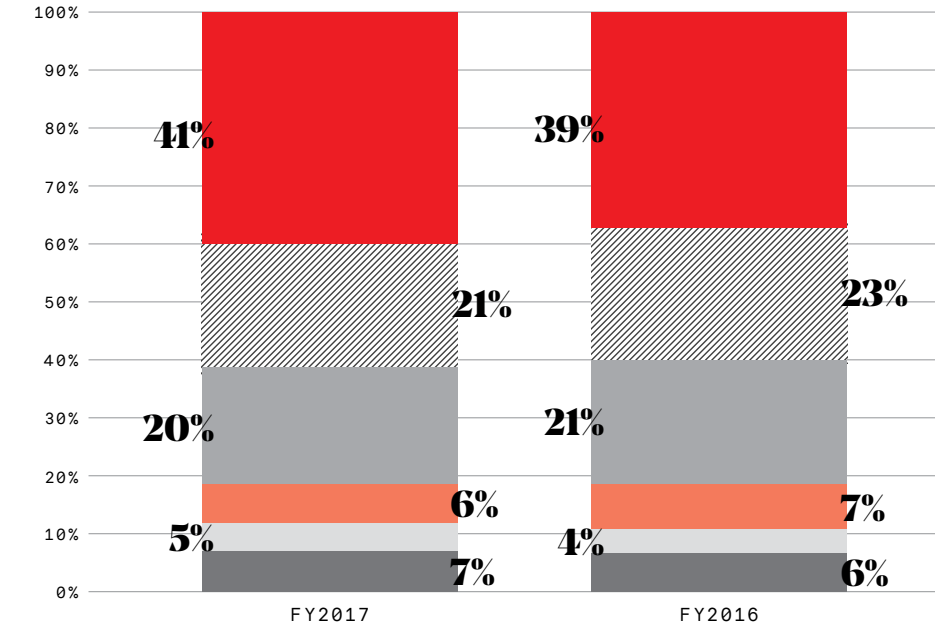
EXPENSES

Program Services	\$ 17,503,226	\$ 16,215,170
Fundraising, Membership and Administration	7,670,548	6,515,693
Total Expenses	\$ 25,173,774	\$ 22,730,863
Increase in Net Assets from Operations	\$ 2,364,854	\$ 557,636

*Includes unrestricted revenue only

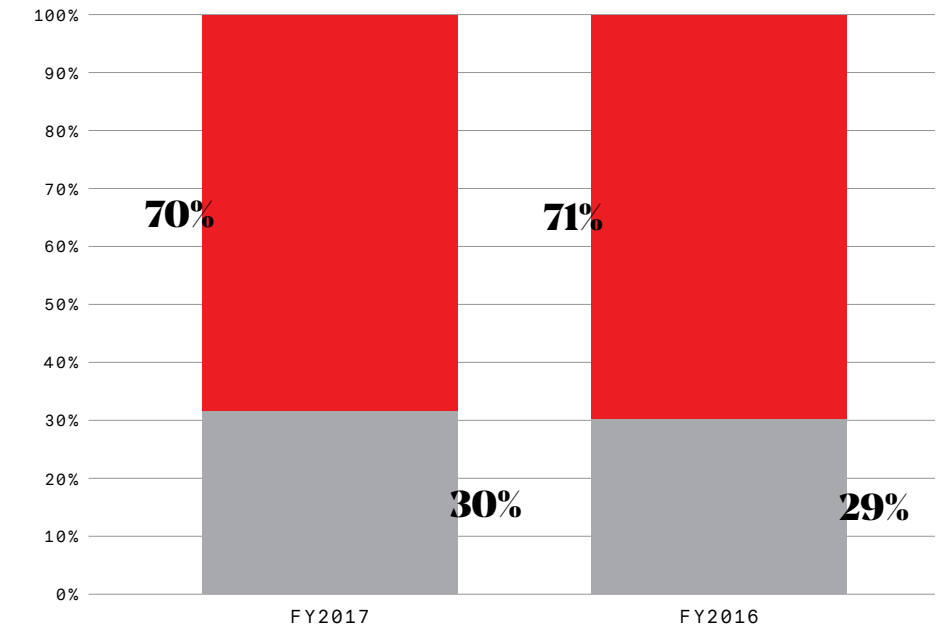
SOURCES OF REVENUES

- Membership Contributions
- ▨ Program Underwriting
- Contributions & Other Grants
- Corporation for Public Broadcasting
- In-Kind Services
- Special Events & Other Revenue



SOURCES OF EXPENSES

- Program Services
- Fundraising, Membership & Administration



Listener Support

FISCAL YEAR HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 | Individual support keeps WBEZ independent and vital. Our membership base—86,000 listeners strong—provides nearly 60% of our funding.

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Northlight Theatre

Northwestern University Center for Communication & Health
Northwestern University School of Communication
Northwestern University Arts Circle
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
Northwestern University School of Professional Studies
Northwestern University Master in Product Design & Development
Northwestern University School of Healthcare Quality & Patient Safety
Northwestern University Masters of Information Technology
Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
Natural Resources Defense Council
The Orchard
The Old Town School of Folk Music
One Beat Found Sound Nation
Oliver Wyman
Onion AV Club
Organic Theater Company
The Oriental Institute
Outback Concerts
Ozinga Ready Made Concrete
Paladin
Pastoral Artisan
PBS
Pearson Education
The People Speak
Peterson Garden Project
Petite Opera

Phillip's Flowers & Gifts
Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America
Physical Fest Chicago
Piece Pizza
Pitchfork Music Festival
Pivot Arts
The Plagarists
Plante Moran
Podcast Movement
The Poetry Foundation
The Polk Brothers Foundation
Porchlight Music Theatre
Porter Airlines
Potter & Potter Auctions
Pritzker Military Library
Purdue Convocations
RAM Art Studio
Ranquist Development Group
Ras Dashen Restaurant
Raue Center For The Arts
Red Orchid
RedLegg
ReedSmith LLP
Reggae Fest Chicago
Related Midwest
Remy Bumpo Theatre
Replay Lincoln Park
Restoration Division
The Driehaus Museum
River North Business Association
Riverside Art Weekend
Roadside Attractions
Roosevelt University
Route 66 Theater Company
Royal George Theatre
Roycemore School
Rush University Medical Center
Sacred Heart Schools

The Sacred Ways	Squarespace	The University of Chicago	Wisconsin Farmers Union
Sahaja Yoga Meditation	St. Augustine College	Graham School	Found
Saint Ignatius College Prep	St. John's College	The University of Chicago	Woodlands Academy
Salesforce, Inc	St. Martin's Press	Institute of Politics	World's Best Cat Litter
Salo LLC	St. Olaf College	The University of Chicago	Writers Theatre
Salon Echo	Stamps.com	Laboratory Schools	WTTW
Schafer Condon Carter	Star Gate Music Productions	The University of Chicago	Zakat Chicago
School of the Art Institute	Star Plaza Theater	Logan Center for the Arts	Zakat Foundation of America
Schubas	Starved Rock Area Businesses	The University of Chicago	Zanzibar
Second City	State Ballet of Russia	Medicine	Zip Fit Jeans
Second City Training Center	Steppenwolf Theatre Company	The University of Chicago	Zoom
Second Glass Incorporated	Subtext Theatre	Presents	
Secular Jewish Communication and School	Tapman Theatre	University of Illinois at Chicago	
SFX-React Operating LLC	Tekkeez Tech Repair	College of Engineering	
Shattered Globe Theatre	Ten Thousand Villages	University of Illinois at Chicago	
Shaw's Crab House	Evanston	College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs	
Sheppard Mullin	Terrapinn Inc	University of Illinois at Chicago	
Shout! Factory	Theatre Oobleck	College of Business	
Shriners Hospitals for Children	Theatre Wit	University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System	
Siemens	Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre	UP Comedy Club	
Signature Bank	Thompson Coburn LLP	Urban Education Institute	
The Silver Room	Tiny Room Studio	Urban Expositions SOFA	
Silverwrapper Productions	Toast Hotel Group	Chicago	
Simple Truth	Uncle Dan's Outfitters	US Bank	
Simply Insured	Uncommon Ground	Vern & Vera	
Southern Illinois University	Union for Reform Judaism	Victory Gardens Theatre	
College of Communication	Universal Music Group	Village of Schaumburg	
Smart Museum of Art	The University of Chicago	Visit Denver	
Smith Senior Living	The University of Chicago	Weber Furniture Service LLC	
Soliant Consulting	Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture	WEBEX	
Something Marvelous	The University of Chicago	West Town Art Walk	
SomPriya Fine Spirits LLC	Chicago Project on Security & Threats	WETA Productions	
Sonia Shah Organization	The University of Chicago	Whole Foods	
Sony Music	Department of Astronomy & Astrophysics	Wisconsin Images for Conservation	
Sony Music Nashville	The University of Chicago	WildClaw Theatre	
Sony Pictures Classics	Division of the Humanities	Windy City Playhouse	
Spartan Theatre	The University of Chicago	Wintrust Financial	
Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies	Folklore Society	Wiring Inc.	
Spot Hero			

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