



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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ILLINOIS SHATTERS RECORD FOR FILM REVENUES WITH \$630 MILLION IN ECONOMIC IMPACT IN 2021

Film production revenue surpasses pre-pandemic levels in 2019 — signaling a strong recovery and positive economic impact for communities

CHICAGO — Governor JB Pritzker and Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced that projected film production revenue in 2021 hit a record high of \$630 million, shattering pre-pandemic levels in 2019 by \$70 million. Film production revenues are the costs associated with film, television, streaming, and digital media, which have steadily increased over the past 10 years. Additionally, film permits issued by the City of Chicago have also reached pre-pandemic levels.

"Illinois has always played a special role in the zeitgeist of American culture, and as a state, we're proud to be on full display during what has become a golden age of film and television," said Governor JB Pritzker. "The fact that we have surpassed pre-pandemic levels speaks to the strength of our high-quality filming facilities, locations and initiatives like the film Production Tax Credit."

In addition to film revenues statistics, which are collected by the state as part of the Illinois Film Production Tax Credit, the Chicago Film Office at the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) recorded gains in the number of permits administered. Additionally, in 2021, Chicago Film Office launched a new "Chicago Made" initiative to strengthen Chicago's TV and film industry — including a workforce development program and public awareness campaign based on recommendations from the City of Chicago's COVID-19 Recovery Task Force.

"Chicago's TV and film industry is globally renowned and continues to generate significant economic and cultural gains for our city," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "Our forward-thinking Chicago Film Office is building the infrastructure with initiatives such as the 'Chicago Made' workforce program that will continue to open doors for our residents and deepen investments in our communities."



In addition to major prime-time programs such as NBC's "Chicago Fire," "Chicago Med," and "Chicago PD" being renewed for an additional season, 2021 also brought new TV productions like "Shining Girls" from Apple TV+ and "61st Street" from AMC Studios.

Major high-profile TV productions and movies were also filmed in Chicago suburbs and rural areas, including HBO's critically acclaimed series, "Somebody Somewhere," which was filmed in Lockport. Moreover, 2021 brought new studios to the greater Northeast region of Illinois, such as Legendary Television which filmed "Paper Girls" and "Lightyears" for Amazon Studios primarily on location outside of Chicago.

"In addition to film revenue, every filming project spurs economic development in communities by increasing foot traffic to local restaurants to recruiting local extras and bringing recognition to local landmarks — shown to audiences across the globe," said Sylvia I. Garcia, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), which houses the Illinois Film Office.

"Every TV and film project here in Illinois brings a flurry of economic activity to our state," said Sylvia I. Garcia, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, which houses the Illinois Film Office. "Every production creates a multiplier effect by increasing foot traffic to local stores and restaurants, recruiting local extras, and hiring our talented crews — and then by making our incredible Illinois landmarks well known to audiences across the globe."

By-the-Numbers: Illinois' Film Revenues & Chicago Permitting Numbers Rise in 2021

Prior to the year 2020, the Illinois Film Office saw more than 10 consecutive years of growth. With the onset of the pandemic and a pause in filming, 2020 experienced a dip, with revenues reaching record highs in 2021.

	Estimated Expenditures	Estimated Wages	Estimated Hires (non-extras)
2019	\$560 million	\$350 million	15,200
2020	\$362 million	\$230 million	7,800
2021	\$631 million	\$373 million	13,800

"Illinois' film industry production is breaking records, adding millions into the state's economy each year, which is truly a great testament to our crew base, local unions, and piloting health policy precautions for the industry to return production



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levels back to pre-pandemic times,” said Peter Hawley, Director of the Illinois Film Office. “This past year, we were able to expand film production outside of Chicago, showcasing additional opportunities for commercials, film, TV, and location projects to ensure this industry continues to succeed and grow in Illinois.”

“The growth of the film and TV industry in Chicago is a direct result of the hard work, dedication, and creative thinking of the Chicago Film Office team under the leadership of former director Kwame Amoaku,” shared DCASE Commissioner Erin Harkey. “Kwame and his team have built a solid foundation with the launch of the ‘Chicago Made’ workforce development program and many other initiatives that will accelerate the growth and economic gains of the local industry, while supporting residents in every neighborhood.”

The Chicago Film Office’s innovative “Chicago Made” workforce development program aims to transform the region’s TV and film workforce by offering job training and placement to Chicago residents ages 24 to 50, primarily from underserved areas of our city, to help meet the industry’s increasing demand for skilled workers. The “Chicago Made” public awareness campaign showcases the industry’s enormous economic impact, introduces local film workers as neighbors and friends, and highlights the diversity of “reel” jobs available across the city. For more information, visit chicagomade.us.

The Chicago Film Office issued 1,771 permits for projects in 2021 and ranks first in the Midwest region for production. In 2021, the Chicago Film Office generated more than \$300,000 in permit revenue, double the permit revenue from the same months in 2019 and in 2020.

2021 Chicago Permits by genre:

PRODUCTION TOTALS	2021 Projects	2021 Permits
Features	4	119
Television	12	1,331
Commercials	100	212
Stills	70	74
Other Productions	N/A	35
TOTAL:		1,771

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Economic Benefits for Communities in Illinois and Across Chicago



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Film, TV, and media projects provide an economic impact to the state, where communities, residents, and local businesses, benefit with the money spent in the local economy and the jobs created by their projects. Both the Illinois Film Office and Chicago Film Office assist with supporting productions with questions about locations, permits, and tax credits.

In Lockport, the production of HBO's "Somebody Somewhere" between the months of May and June 2021 provided over \$100,000 in fees, rentals, and purchases to the community and businesses in Lockport, including but not limited to: the City of Lockport, Lockport Township High School, Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, Shepherd of the Hill Lutheran Church and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Additionally, 26 Lockport residents were hired as background actors.

More about the Illinois Film Production Tax Credit and State and City Agencies

The Illinois Film Production Tax Credit Act, originally passed in 2008, offers a 30% tax credit for qualified production spending and labor expenditures. Effective July 1, 2022, the program benefits will extend to include a capped credit for resident and nonresident compensation under qualified expenditures, as well as the establishment of a workforce training program. Applicants can also receive an additional 15% tax credit on salaries paid to individuals (earning at least \$1,000 in total wages) who live in economically disadvantaged areas whose unemployment rate is at least 150 percent of the State's annual average. Materials and information on the Illinois Film Office website will be updated following the July 1 changes.

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) supports and maintains a climate that enables a strong economy for Illinois customers - taxpayers, businesses, workers, and communities. For more information, visit illinois.gov/dceo

Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists, and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the City's future cultural and economic growth, via the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan; marketing the City's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors. For more information, visit chicago.gov/dcse.



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Chicago Film Office

The Chicago Film Office is part of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) and leads the City's efforts to attract and enhance the production of feature films, television series, commercials, documentaries, and all forms of local screen entertainment. For filmmakers, it is a one-stop liaison for all City of Chicago production needs, including permits, City services, and logistical support. For more information, visit chicagofilmoffice.us.