

OAK PARK
RIVER FOREST
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2025

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

AUGUST 2024 - JULY 2025

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EMBRACING CHANGE: OUR COMMITMENT TO THE NEXT ERA OF GROWTH

2025 has been a year of expansion and renewed purpose for the Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce. As the business community continued to evolve and navigate new challenges, so too did our organization - embracing change, strengthening our foundation, and positioning ourselves for the next era of growth and service.

This year marked the launch of major initiatives in partnership with our local municipalities. With the support of the Village of Oak Park, we introduced the First Friday Street Festival Series which activated four of Oak Park's diverse business districts, and Oak Park NEXT, a paid youth internship program connecting local employers with emerging workforce. Additionally, the Chamber collaborated with the Village of River Forest to pilot a Business Bash and networking event series. These programs represent significant new investments in community connection and business support across our Villages.

In October, the Chamber welcomed Yoo-Jin Hong as Interim Executive Director. Her steady leadership has ensured continuity across programs, services, and partnerships. Throughout the transition period, the Chamber's Board of Directors provided collaborative stewardship - reinforcing organizational stability and shared leadership during a pivotal year.

The Chamber continues to deliver a robust calendar of programming – monthly networking meetings, signature events, fairs, ribbon cuttings, and affinity groups – an extraordinary level of activity for an organization of our size. Just as importantly, we remain a central hub where business owners, nonprofit organizations, civic leaders, and community partners come together.

What sets the OPRF Chamber apart is the character and the culture we cultivate: a warm, welcoming environment where business owners know each other, people feel seen, and collaboration thrives from personal relationships.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are focused on strengthening organizational infrastructure, enhancing member engagement and services, expanding partnerships that drive local economic vitality, and supporting a thoughtful transition to long-term executive leadership. Through this work, we remain committed to serving as a catalyst for connection, collaboration, and shared growth.

Thank you to our members, partners, sponsors, and volunteers for your trust and partnership. Together, we look forward to building a resilient, connected, and thriving future for Oak Park and River Forest.

With appreciation,
The Executive Committee

Rob Guenthner, *President*
Esther Grachan, Vice President
Andy Kaczkowski, Treasurer
Aracelis Sanchez, Secretary
Carrie Summy, Director

MEET OUR INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Yoo-Jin Hong brings over 20 years of leadership experience in nonprofit and cultural institutions, and specializes in supporting mission-driven organizations through moments of change with steadiness, collaboration, and care. She will partner with the Chamber's staff, board, and members to ensure continuity and support for our community. We deeply appreciate the trust of our members as we move forward together to continue building a resilient, dynamic, and vibrant local economy.

OPRF 2025

80,696 E-BLAST VIEWS

122 PROGRAMMING EVENTS

945 NEW SOCIAL FOLLOWERS

6,317 REFERRALS FROM MEMBER PAGES

REGISTRATIONS FOR EVENTS **4,533**

23 RIBBON CUTTINGS

21,353 SOCIAL MEDIA VISITS

33.3K SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

SPOTLIGHT AWARD NOMINATIONS **368**

FIRST FRIDAYS ATTENDEES **5,000+**

IMPACT

OVER 100
BUSINESSES SERVED THROUGH VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP

10
SPECIAL EVENTS

EMAIL OPEN RATE 48%

5,185
SOCIAL MEDIA CLICK-THROUGHS

OVER 500
ATTENDEES AT THE HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR

MEMBERS 542

#THRIVINGTOGETHER

259,383
SPONSORED AD IMPRESSIONS

28.6K
STORY VIEWS



HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR

More than 80 organizations • 500+ attendees

The 9th Annual Health & Wellness Fair took place on Sunday, April 27 at the Park District of Oak Park's Community Recreation Center. This high-impact event featured more than 80 vendors from our membership's robust local healthcare providers and wellness services, and drew a strong turnout from the public, connecting attendees with community resources, support and solutions for overall well-being.

FIRST FRIDAYS

4 events • 83 businesses • 5000+ attendees

This new street festival series was a rotating monthly celebration that activated four of Oak Park's diverse business districts with live entertainment, vendor participation, and community-driven activities, fostering neighborhood connections and supporting local economic growth. Events in the Chicago-Austin, Madison Street, Southtown and Pleasant districts featured 83 total vendors, music curated by Robert's Westside, and family fun while boosting visibility and foot traffic for local establishments. The series proved highly successful, generating powerful community impact and contributing meaningfully to Oak Park's economic vitality and cross-neighborhood cohesion.





OAK PARK NEXT

13 businesses • 14 interns

Oak Park NEXT (Navigating Employment and eXperience Training): Youth Internship Program is a workforce development initiative created to support Oak Park businesses by connecting them with local youth residents aged 14-21 for paid, educational internships. The program serves as a vital resource for businesses experiencing staffing shortages while providing students with early career exposure, hands-on skills, and insight into potential career pathways within Oak Park.

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THANK YOU!

To our Gold Sponsor

The Book Loft (1047 Lake St, Oak Park), is a Proud Chamber Member and Winner of the 2025 New & Notable Business Award. We are deeply grateful for your support in bringing this year's Annual Meeting to life!

THE BOOK LOFT



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#THRIVETOGETHER