

**ULI Chicago 9th Annual Vision Awards
July 11, 2024**



Program Finalist: Sundays on State | Chicago Loop Alliance

Program Implementation Team:

- Brendan Reilly, City of Chicago
- Cindy Roubik, Chicago Department of Planning and Development
- Official partner of Sundays on State, Jamey Lundblad, Chicago Department of Special Affairs and Cultural Events
- Ariella Gibson, Chicago Loop Alliance

Program Description: Sundays on State began as an effort to encourage Chicagoans to return to the Loop, delivering a positive and inclusive atmosphere that enticed people to enjoy downtown on a regular basis following the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 civil unrest. Chicago Loop Alliance conceptualized Sundays on State as a program that transformed Chicago's most iconic street, State Street, into an open street full of surprises that allowed residents, visitors, and tourists to fall in love with the city's downtown again. Neighbors from every area of the city and beyond were invited to come together for a free, interactive city-wide block party, while safely enjoying art, culture, active recreation, food, drinks, shopping, and local attractions in the heart of everyone's neighborhood—the Loop. Throughout the event series, Chicago Loop Alliance has partnered with Chicago's mayoral office under both the Lightfoot and Johnson administrations; 4th, 34th, and 42nd Ward Aldermanic offices; the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; key representatives from other neighborhoods; State Street businesses and property owners; and a variety of business organizations throughout the city. Over the course of the last four years, Sundays on State has achieved monumental success; over one million attendees have visited Sundays on State since 2021; attendees represent all ages and backgrounds and come from every single zip code in Chicago and beyond; over 3,000 jobs were supported by the events in 2023 alone; pedestrian traffic nearly doubled from pre-pandemic levels during the August 2023 event; and underrepresented business owners exceedingly represent participants. Each year, Sundays on State has met and exceeded the campaign's primary goals by accelerating the economic recovery; uniting the community; creating joy; and restoring the public's perception of downtown. In 2024, Sundays on State 91% of participants represented diverse business owners, primarily women-owned, minority-owned, and LGBTQ+-owned, with additional representation in veteran-owned and disability-owned businesses. Since 2021, the event helped positively shape the perception of the Loop, with over 99% of attendees reporting feeling safe during the event in 2023. Every event features on-street programming, diverse vendors from throughout Chicago, flexible seating options, accessible public way infrastructure, and a variety of experiential elements. Sundays on State represents viable options for rethinking the public realm. The concept also serves as a successful example of initiatives that propel the future of State Street forward, as evidenced in ULI Chicago's Technical Assistance Panel report re-envisioning State Street.