

December 1, 2021

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

savechicagomedia.org

@ChiIndyMedia



Chicago
Independent
Media Alliance

ABOUT CIMA

In 2020, Gallup polls found that 60% of Americans have “not very much” or “none at all” trust in mass media. Yet simultaneously, 81% of people believe that independent media is “critical” or “very important” to democracy. Funding to independent, local, and community-driven media outlets is a small fraction of total media funding, especially when it comes to advertising dollars. Additionally, community, neighborhood, and ethnic media outlets reach vital communities in Chicago that have long been ignored or misrepresented by mainstream media.

In response to these challenges, the Chicago Reader founded the Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA) in 2019 to foster the collaboration and self-guided solutions necessary to ensure the survival of Chicagoland’s independent media outlets.

CIMA operates within the Reader and is a partnership of independent, local, and community-driven media entities that come together to share resources and collaborate on editorial and revenue-generating projects.

The project began simply by sending a short survey to **103** Chicago independent media outlets ranging from small all-volunteer nonprofits to large independent newspapers. Now two years later, current members include **69** media outlets that produce **81** media entities in total. Membership is free and CIMA members represent every ward in Chicago, as well as some suburbs, producing content in **six** languages.

Members share resources through peer-to-peer training and also participate in professional development workshops curated by CIMA staff. CIMA members have also raised **\$332,500** through two annual joint fundraisers.

As a group, we are also advocating for more funding from foundations, more equity in the way government agencies spend money in media, and for more corporate advertising through authentic community media.

CIMA MEMBERS

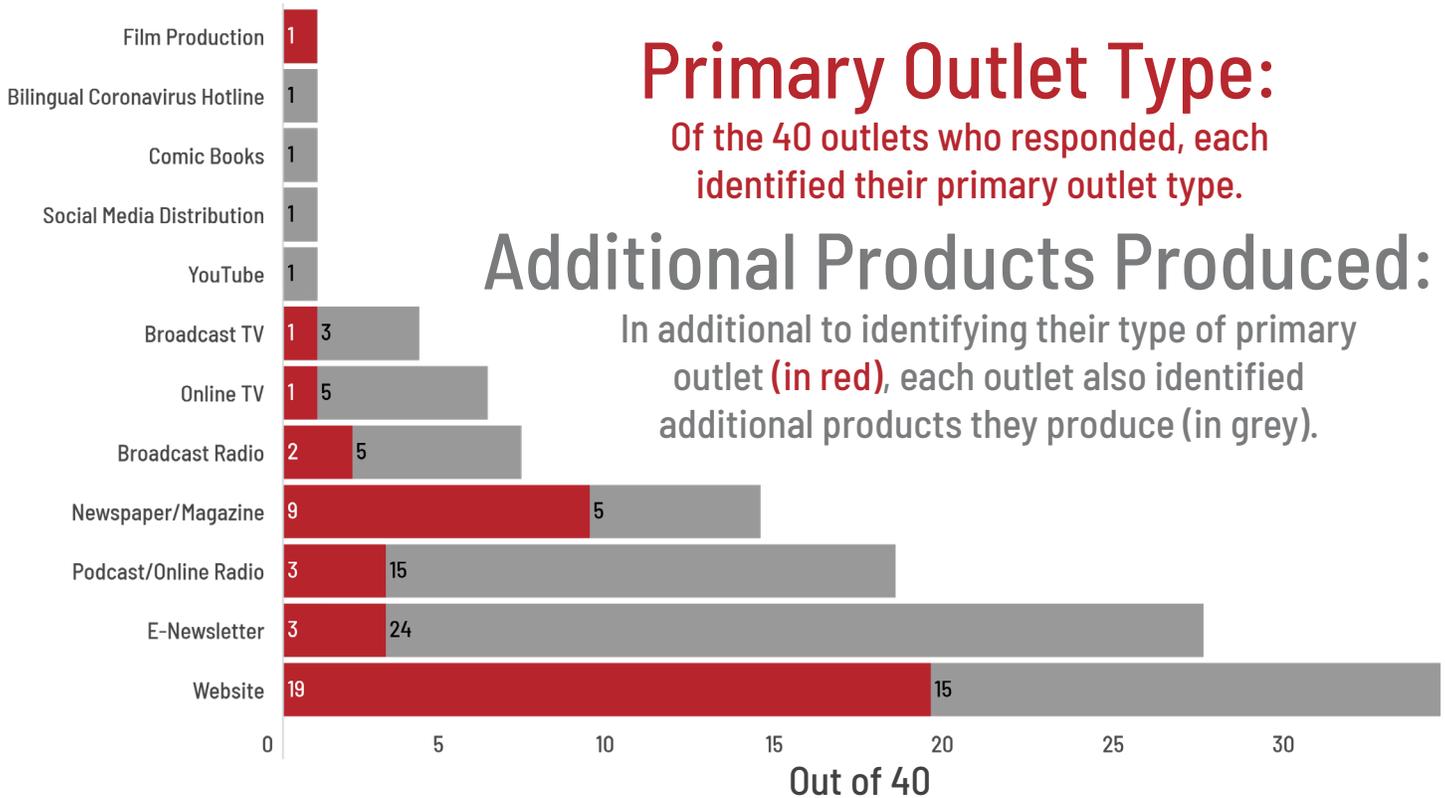
1. AirGo Radio
2. Arab Daily News
3. Better Government Association
4. Beverly Review
5. Black Youth Project
6. Block Club Chicago
7. Borderless Magazine
8. Bronzecom
9. Bronzeville Life
10. Chalkbeat Chicago
11. Chicago Crusader
12. Chicago in Arabic
13. Chicago Defender
14. Chicago Music Guide
15. Chicago Parent
16. Chicago Public Square
17. Chicago Reader
18. Chicago Reporter
19. Chicago Sun-Times
20. CHIRP Radio
21. Cicero Independiente
22. Citizen Newspaper Group: Chatham-Southeast, South Suburban, South End, Hyde Park, Citizen Suburban Times Weekly, Chicago Weekend Citizen, Conversations with the Citizen Podcast
23. City Bureau
24. Contratiempo
25. Current Magazines: South Shore Current, West of the Ryan Current, West Side Current
26. Daily Line
27. Dziennik Związkowy | Polish Daily News
28. E3 Radio
29. Evanston Roundtable
30. Free Spirit Media
31. Gazette Chicago
32. Gozamos

**69 outlets representing
81 media entities**

33. Growing Community Media: Austin Weekly News, Forest Park Review, Riverside-Brookfield Landmark, Wednesday Journal of Oak Park & River Forest
34. Hi India
35. Hyde Park Herald
36. IL Latino News
37. Injustice Watch
38. Inside Publications
39. Invisible Institute
40. Juneteenth Productions
41. Kartemquin Films
42. La Raza
43. Left Out Magazine
44. Loop North News
45. McKinley Park News
46. Midway Minute
47. N'Digo
48. NewCity
49. North Lawndale Community Newspaper
50. OTV | Open Television
51. Paseo Podcast: Highlighting Puerto Rican Stories
52. Pigment International
53. Public Media Institute: Lumpen Radio, Lumpen Magazine, Quarantine Times
54. Public Narrative
55. Public Road Productions: Arm and a Leg Podcast
56. Rebellious Magazine for Women
57. Rivet
58. Sixty Inches from Center
59. Soapbox Productions & Organizing
60. South Side Weekly
61. StreetWise
62. Third Coast Review
63. TrueStar Foundation & Media
64. Urban Gateways: Mild Sauce
65. Via Times Newsmagazine
66. Village Free Press
67. Vocolo Radio
68. Windy City Times
69. Win-TV

CIMA works to uplift a wide range of diverse voices to ensure that media is inclusive of— and accessible to— diverse communities. As a result, CIMA has expanded what it means to be a “media” entity in order to ensure that organizations of all varieties—including traditional, non-traditional, legacy, and brand new organizations—are included in the alliance.

OUTLET TYPES



FREQUENCY

The **14** outlets with newspapers/magazines as their primary or an additional product had print frequencies between **daily** and **2-3 times per year** with runs per issue between **3,000** and **80,000**.

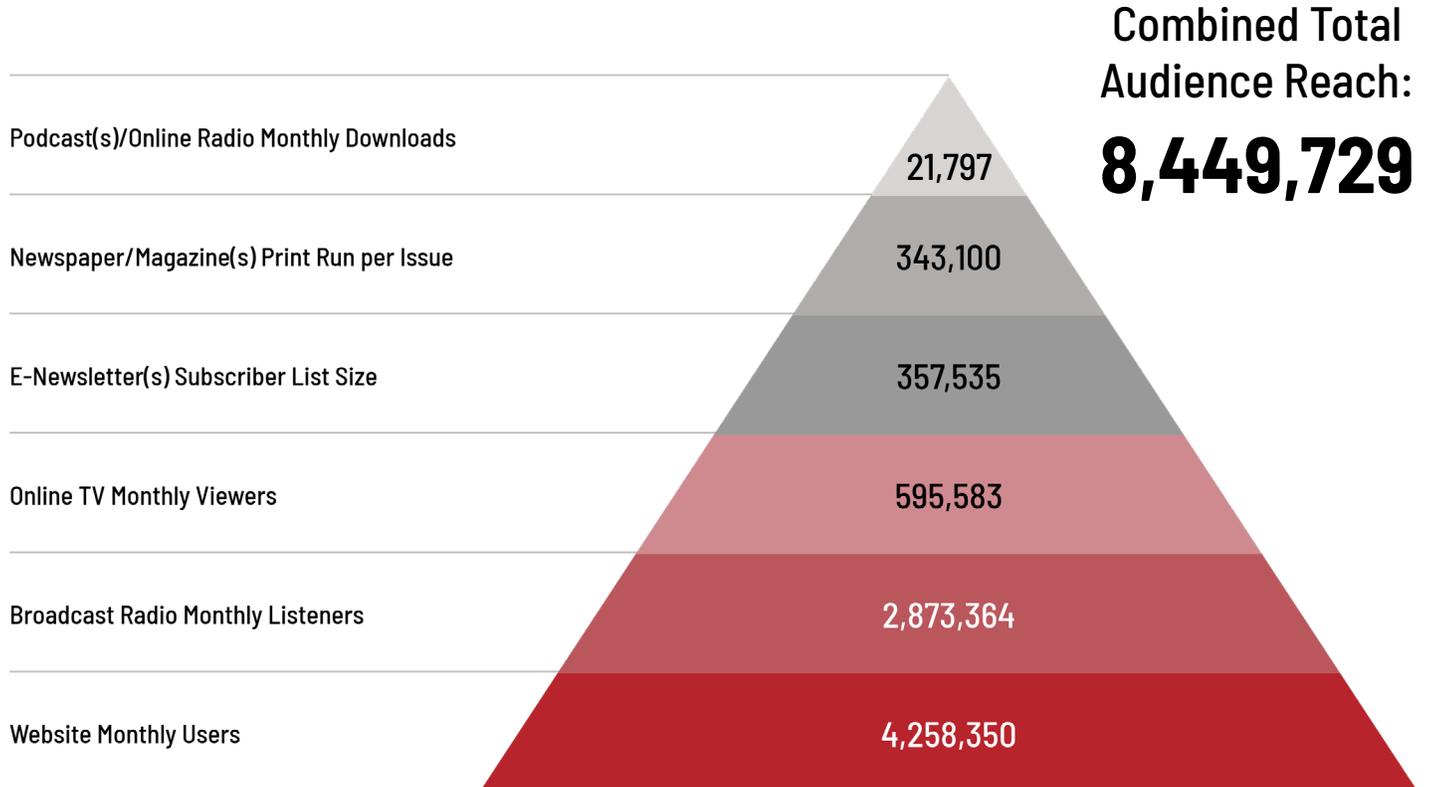
Of the **34** outlets with website(s) as one of their products, **13** of them uploaded **1-10** articles per day. These outlets had between **460** and **3,000,000** monthly website users.

REACH

The **7** members with broadcast radio as one of their products reached audiences between **360** and about **2.3 million** listeners.

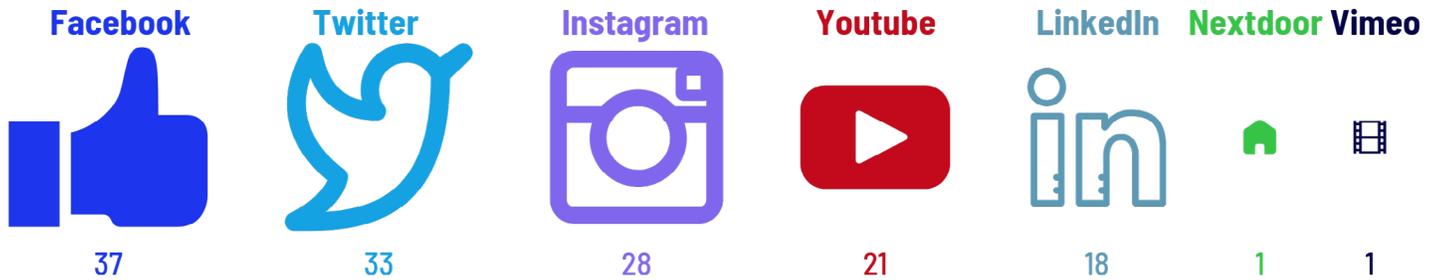
The **27** members with e-newsletter(s) as one of their products reached audiences between **175** and **157,700** readers.

Total Reach of 40 CIMA Outlets (Primary & Additional Products Combined)

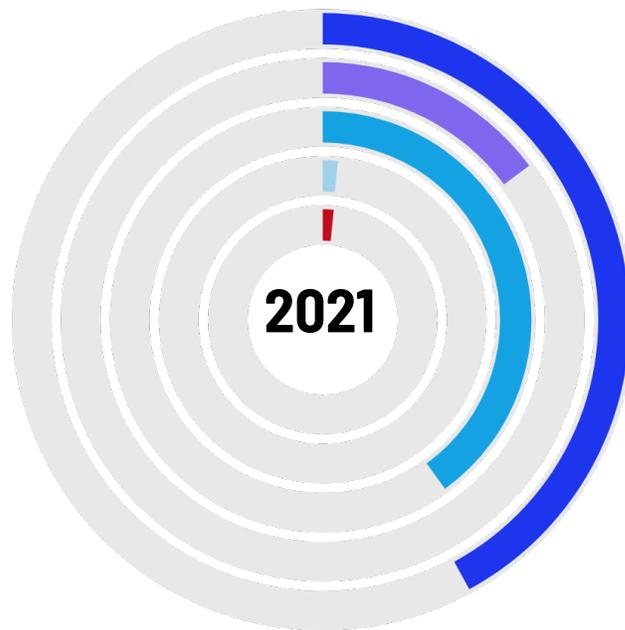


SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2021, 39 outlets utilized the following social media channels:



With a Combined Follower Count of...

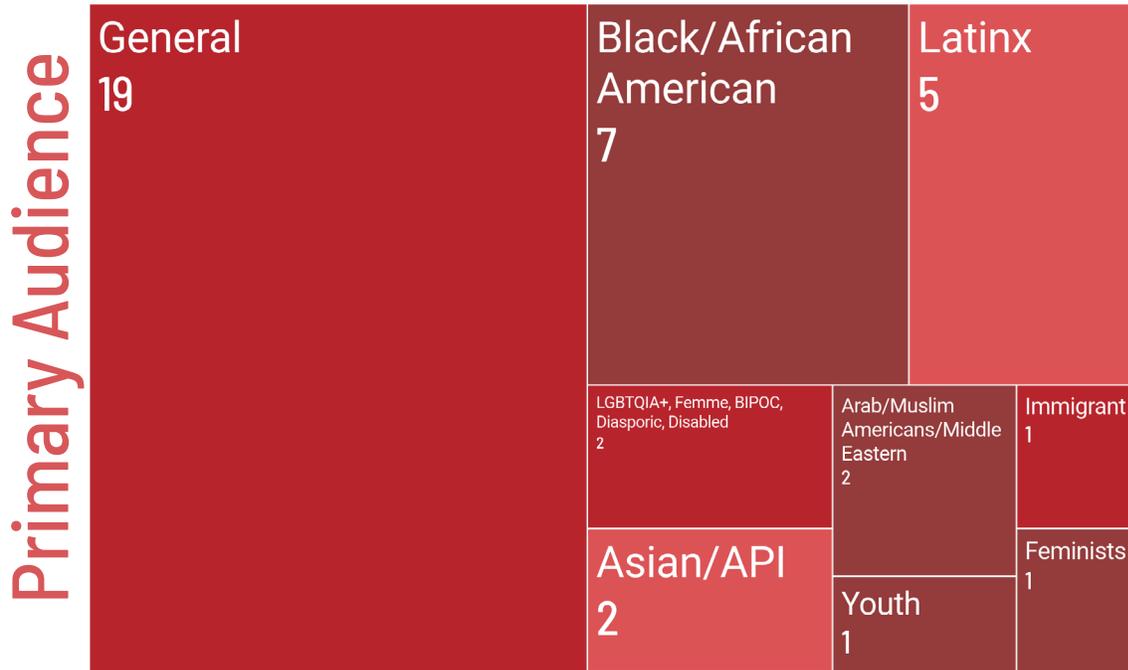


Facebook: **608,970**
Instagram: **213,976**
Twitter: **579,479**
LinkedIn: **21,796**
Youtube: **23,013**

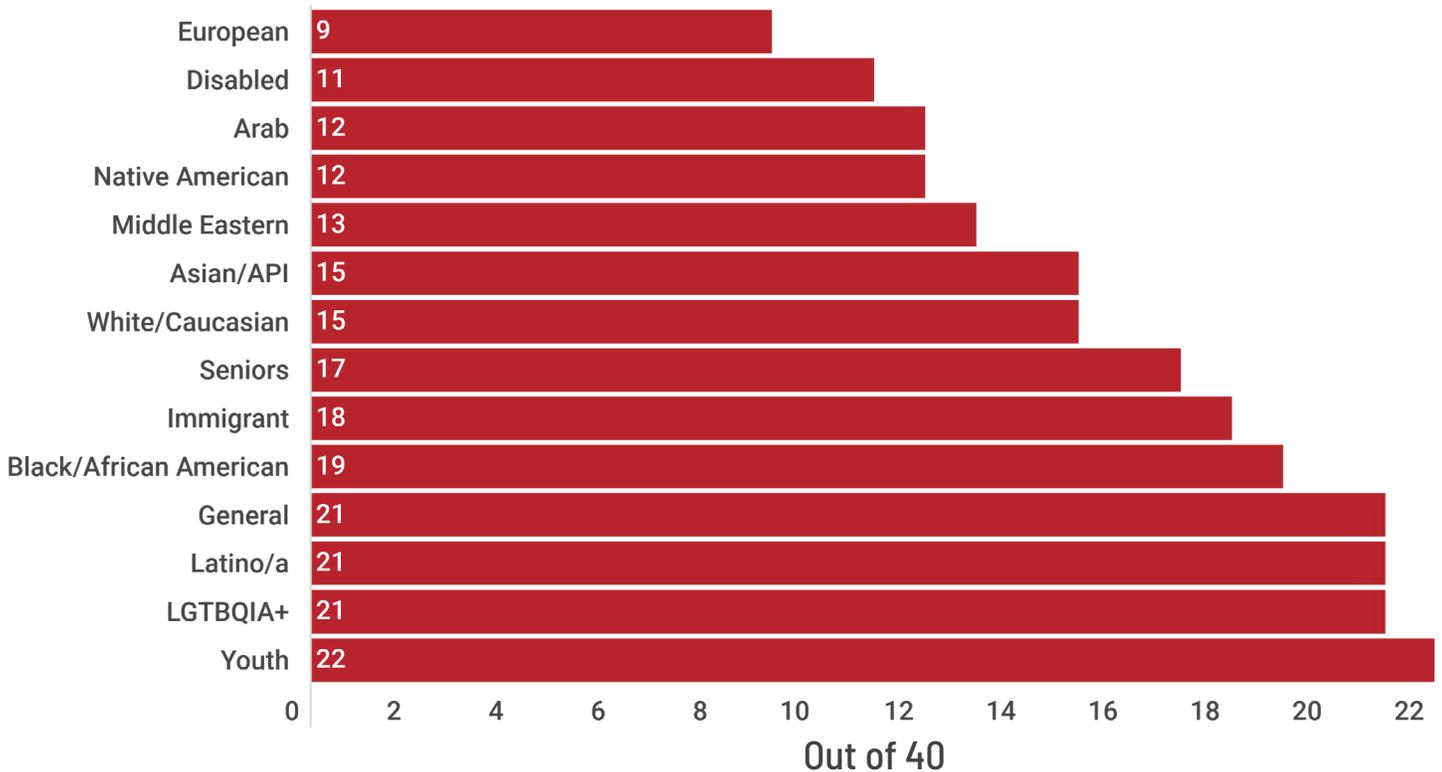
Combined Total
Social Media Reach:
1,447,234

● Facebook ● Instagram ● Twitter ● LinkedIn ● Youtube

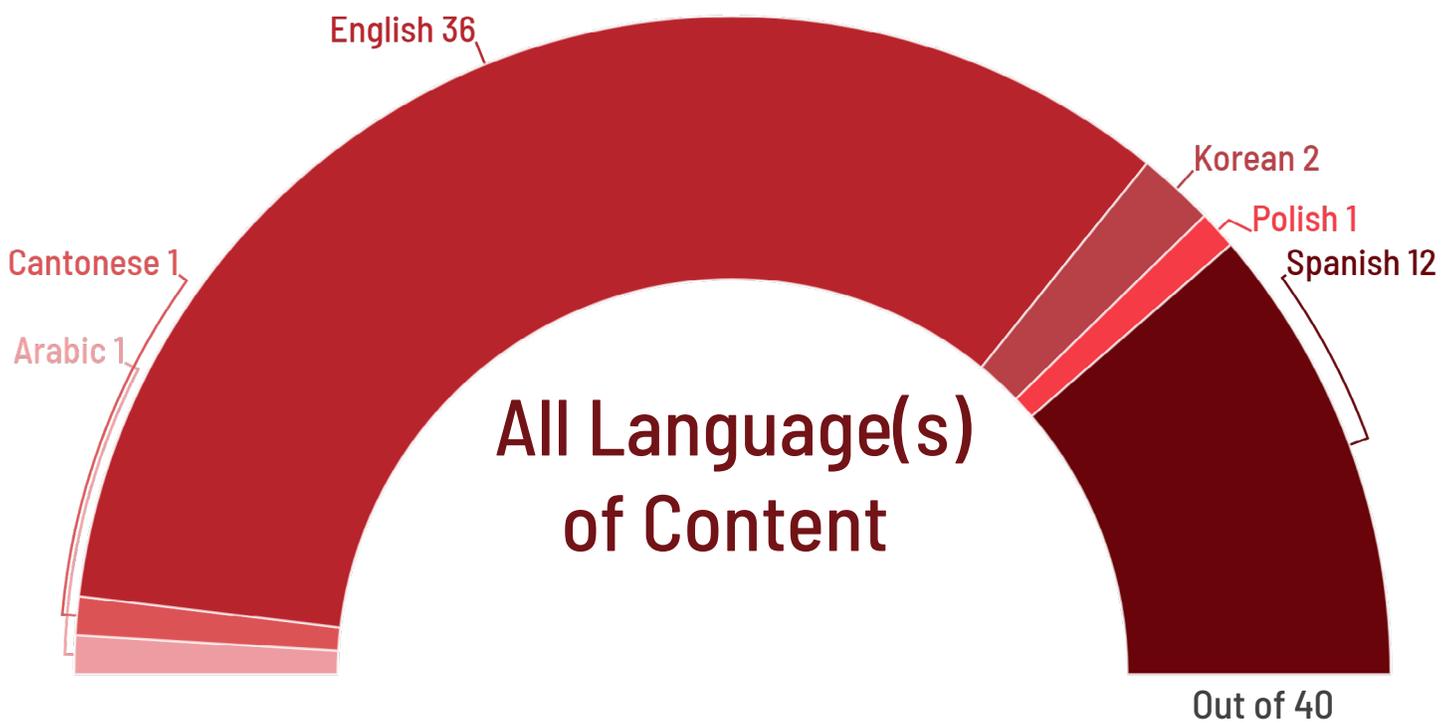
AUDIENCE



All Additional Audiences Reached



LANGUAGES



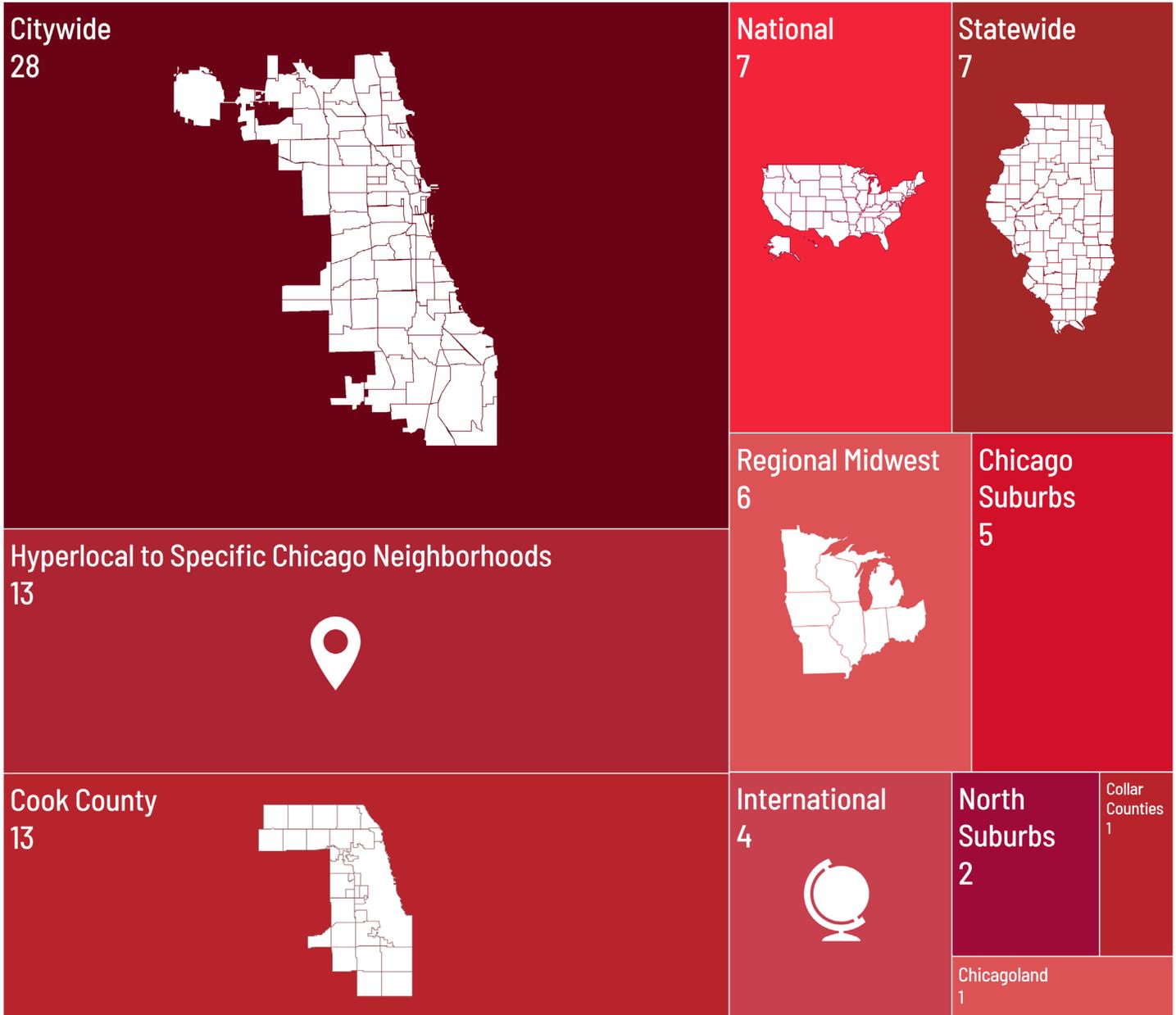
COVERAGE



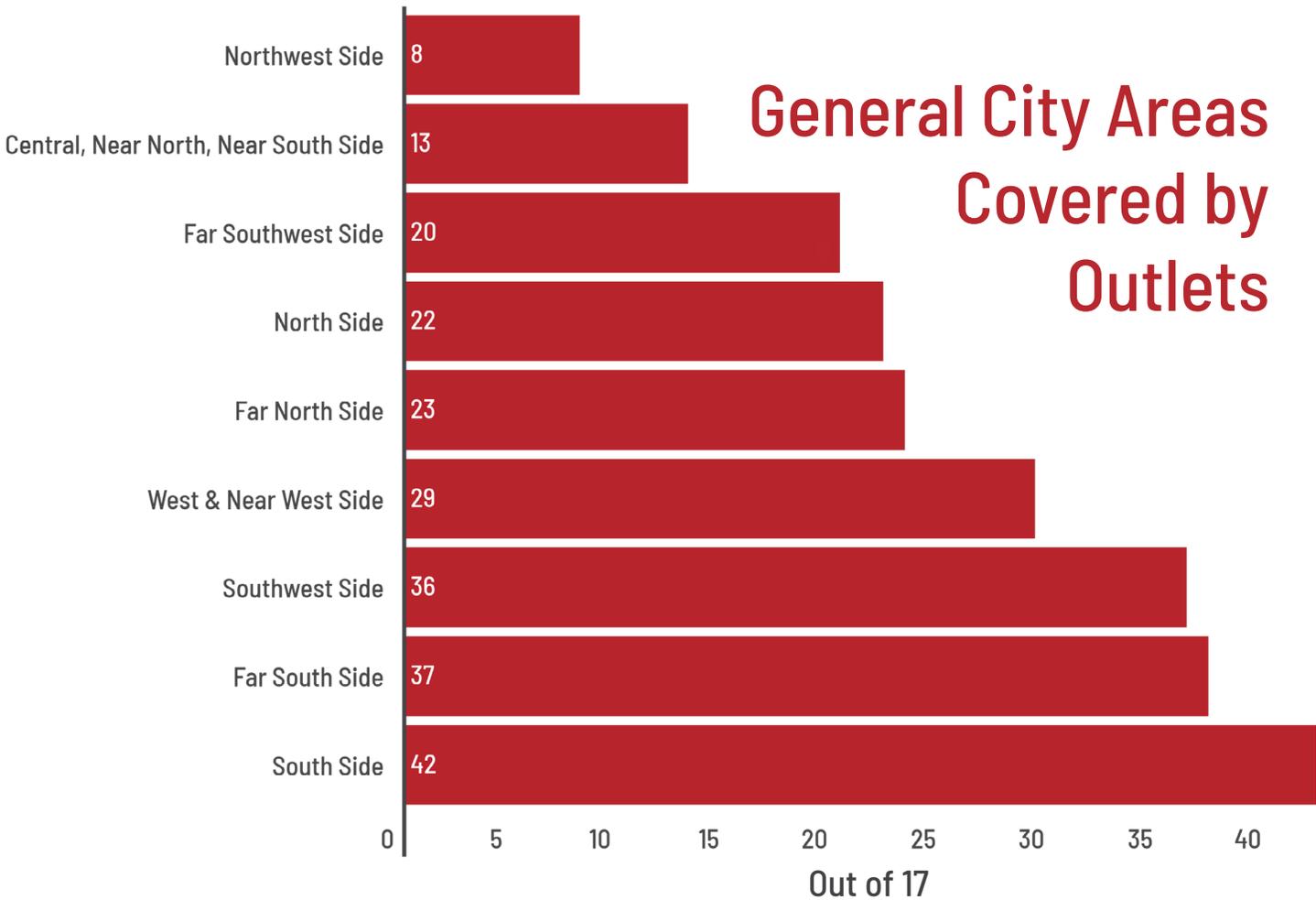
Beats reported by 40 outlets.

Outlets were able to choose more than one beat.

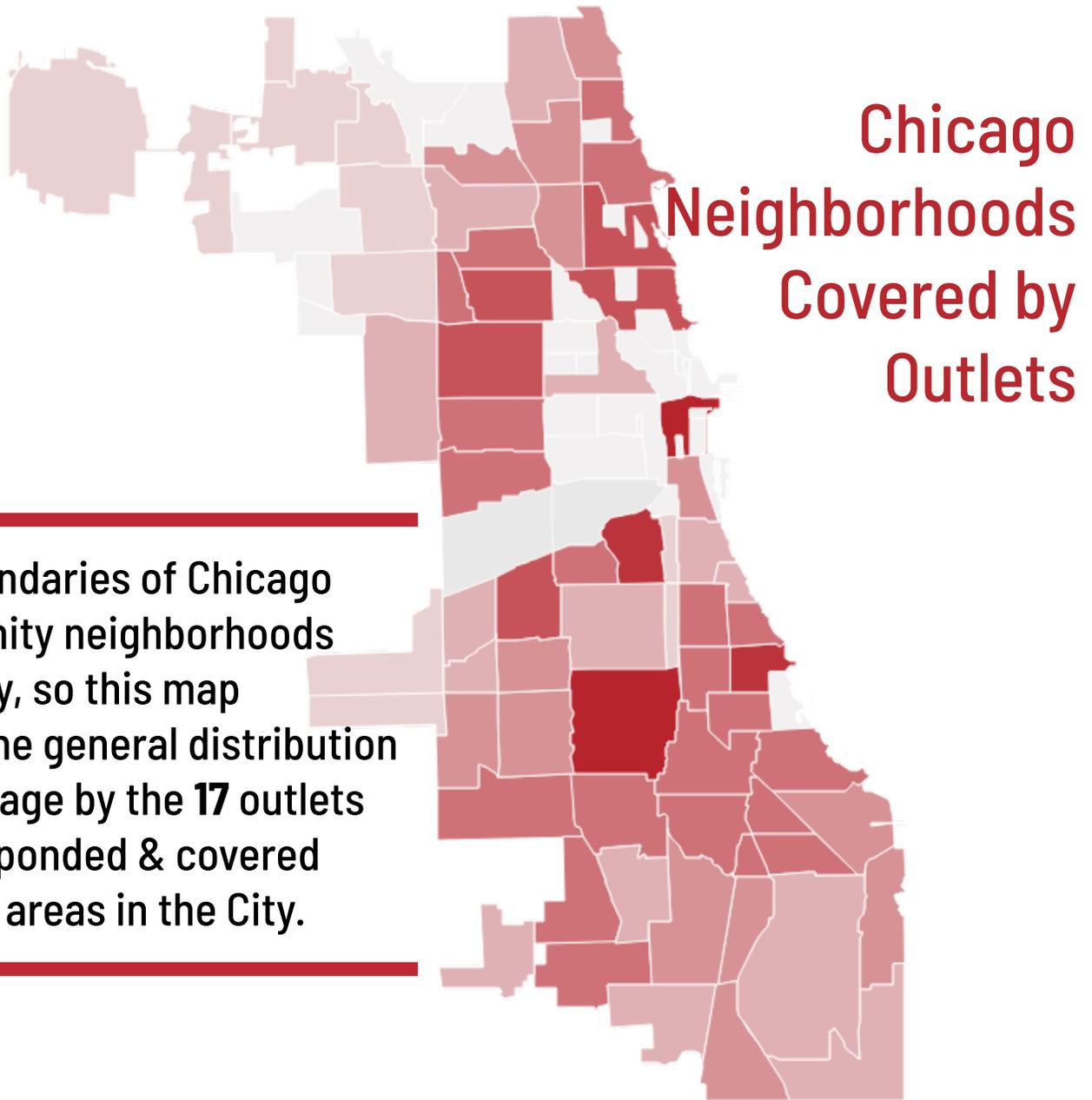
40 outlets reported coverage of these geographic areas:



Out of **36** responses...
19 outlets cover all of Chicago &
17 outlets cover the following
9 community regions:



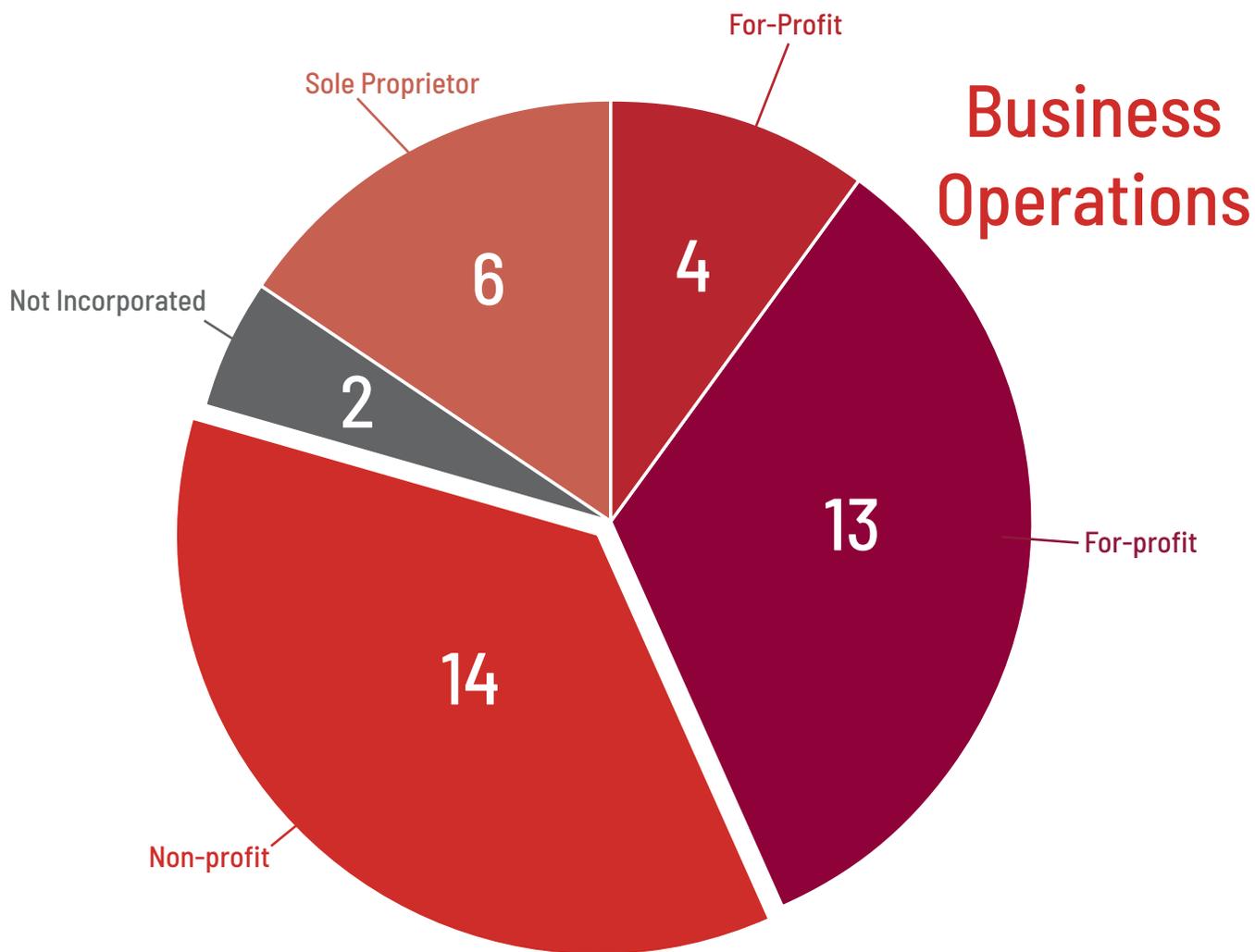
Within those general community regions,
the **17 outlets** (pg. 12) cover these
75 specific Chicago neighborhoods:



The boundaries of Chicago community neighborhoods may vary, so this map shows the general distribution of coverage by the **17** outlets who responded & covered specific areas in the City.

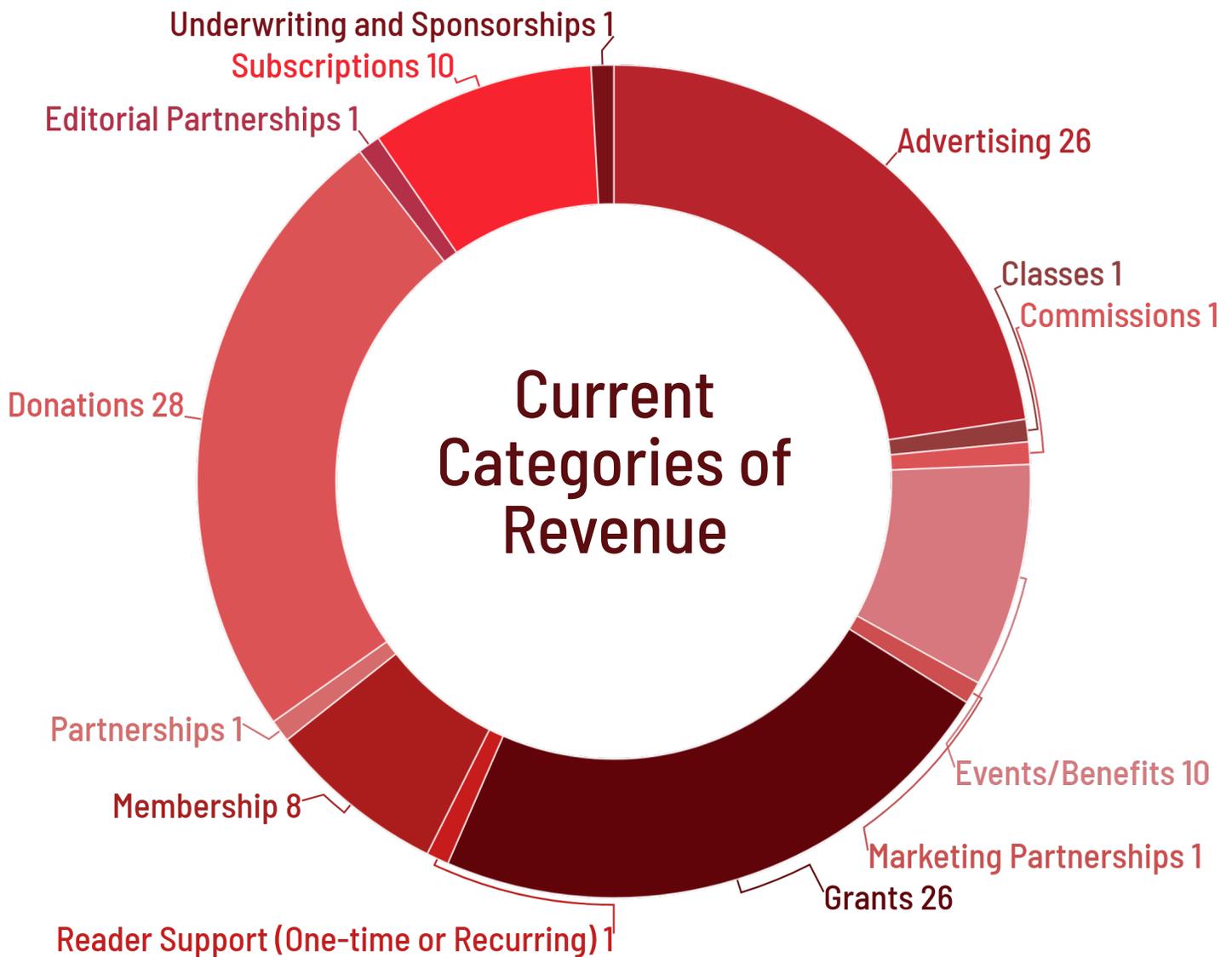


MEMBER OPERATIONS



40 outlets responded with their business operations

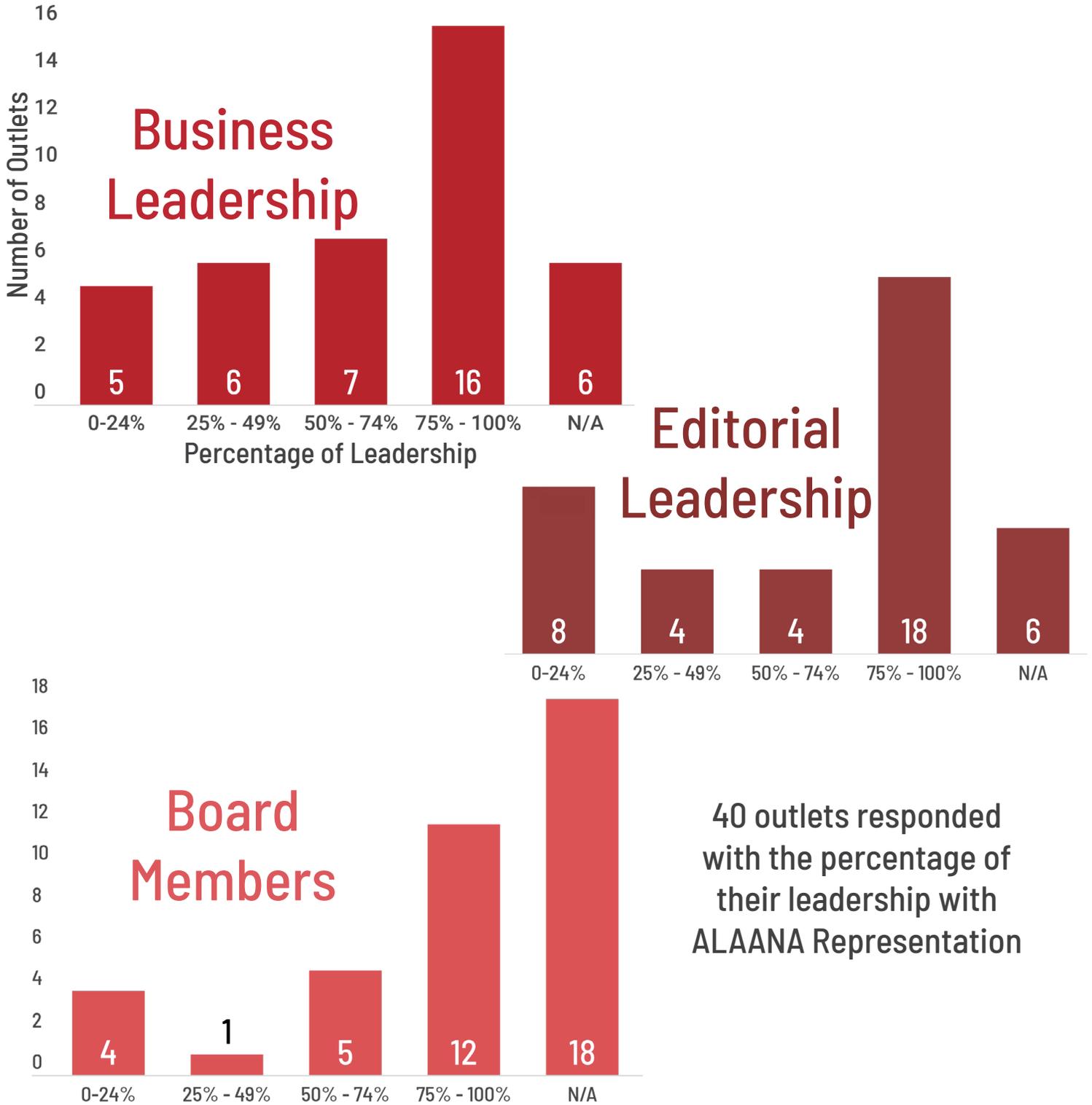
40 outlets had varied sources of revenue:



In 2021, CIMA coordinated **6** ad buys for members that totaled about **\$70,000**.

ALAANA

Percentage of Leadership with ALAANA
(African, Latino, Asian, Arab, and Native American) Representation



What has CIMA done for you?

“It’s helped us keep the lights on, in short! Without CIMA we would not have been able to afford the necessary subscriptions to publish our content for the year.”

“The annual fundraiser has been very important to us. Also, I believe that our visibility has increased because of our affiliation with CIMA.”

“It has provided wonderful context and connection to other media-makers. It has also been an effective fundraising tool, as well as an example of collective fundraising that we want to build for social movement organizations.”

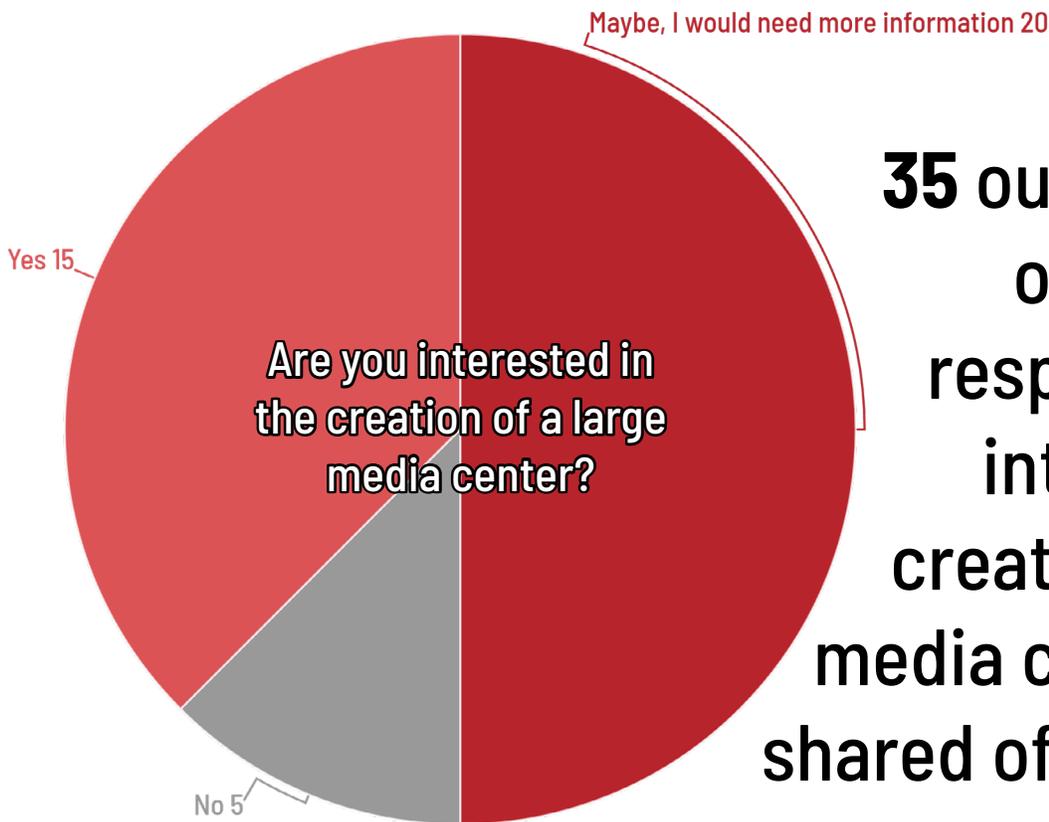
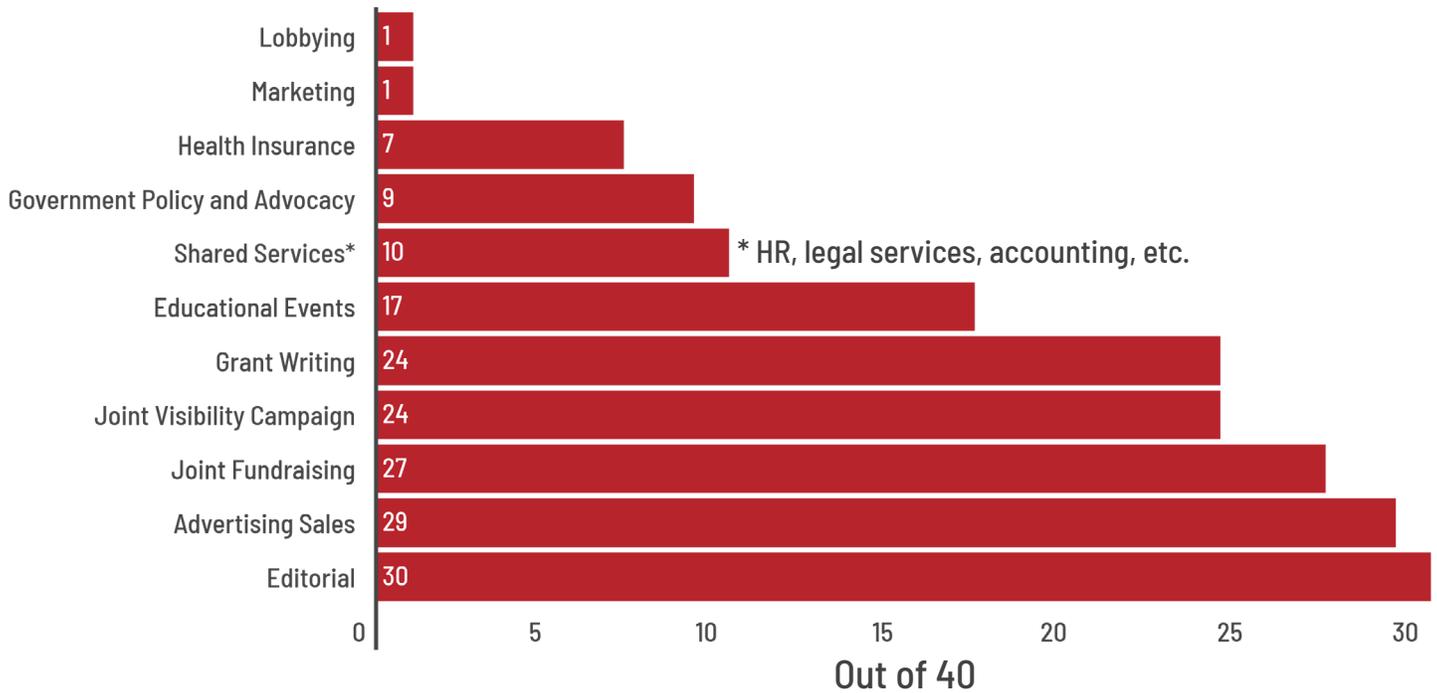
“The joint fundraisers have been excellent, as have the group media buys that have been offered to members.”

“Allowed us to network with other media outlets to share experiences.”

“CIMA membership has been nothing short of transformative... The money and awareness we raised in the two joint fundraisers has kept us afloat, allowed us to launch a new website, and to expand our coverage.”



As CIMA grows, members want to continue to work on these collaborative areas:



35 out of the **40** outlets who responded are interested in creating a large media center with shared office space

CIMA in 2021 & Beyond

Media Directory

CIMA is partnering with Public Narrative to create a Chicago Media Directory. Featuring outlet statistics and audience demographics, we intend for this free media directory to feature all of Chicagoland's independent and local media outlets in one central website. Our intended audiences include businesses, government, foundations and other entities that are looking to advertise in, give grants to—or support in other ways—local outlets.



FOIA Project

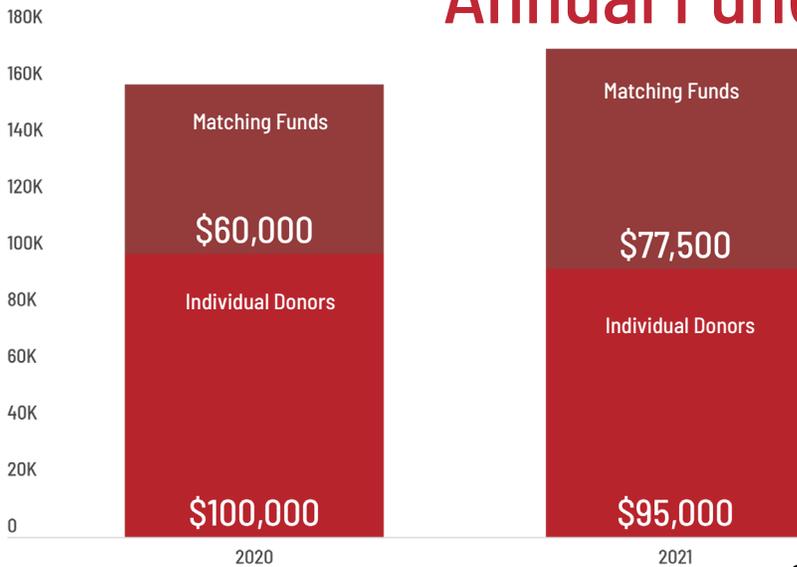
With grant funding from CUNY, CIMA hired a local journalist to implement Phase 1 of our FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) project to investigate how Chicago, Cook County, the state of Illinois, and their respective government agencies spend allotted marketing dollars for everything from job postings to public program announcements. Phase 1 involved a six-month FOIA research project that gathered data from more than **125** government offices and agencies.

Media Kit Project

CIMA hired a media kit consultant with a background in advertising for local media. With the consultant's assistance, **25 outlets** reviewed their rates & media kits and **5 outlets** established their rates & media kits.

CIMA's long-term goal is to have a media kit consultant— and a demographic audience data & research consultant— continually available for outlets.

Annual Fundraiser



Each year, CIMA hosts the annual fundraiser for community media.

From May 12 to June 14, 2021, **43** CIMA members collaborated to get more than **900** individual donations, with two-thirds choosing to have their donation evenly split between all 43 outlets.

CIMA raised about **\$95,000** in public donations with **\$77,500** in matching donations from local foundations. The grand total that CIMA brought into Chicago's local media ecosystem in **2021** was **\$170,000**.

This means CIMA raised **\$332,500** in the 2020 and 2021 fundraisers combined.

We see a path forward in which media entities, along with supporting foundations, work together to strengthen the ecosystem and incite systemic change. CIMA's long-term goal is to develop and support a self-sustaining media ecosystem that is more equitable and financially stronger than the existing climate allows. This stability will then allow media entities to turn their energy and creativity to what matters most—sharing the stories and voices of their communities.

CIMA needs partnerships, new ideas, collaborations, and financial support to ensure that these voices are not allowed to atrophy.

Independent media outlets are trusted, venerated, and well-funded parts of our democratic society.
