

Alliance Française

USA
CHICAGO

Chicago's French cultural and learning center dedicated to the study of French language, cultural exchange and friendship between Americans and French speaking people

DID YOU KNOW?

Le saviez-vous ?

The Alliance Française de Chicago is over 100 years old and is part of an international network of over 1,100 Alliances and affiliated cultural centers worldwide.

There are 111 Alliances in the US alone. We are an independently financed 501(c)(3) not for profit institution and must raise 40% of annual operating budget each year through donations.

Although we enjoy an affiliation with the Alliance Française in Paris, and good relationships with all the French speaking consulates and delegations, we receive no direct financial aid from the French government or the Alliance Française in Paris.

Our history includes a long list of prominent Chicagoans who continue to support our mission, dating from our founding in 1897.

Our Mission

Our mission is to be Chicago's center of French language and French speaking cultures—to promote exchange, understanding, and friendship between Americans and French speaking people—including those from Europe, Canada, Africa, the Caribbean and the Middle East—a world of 220 million French speakers. Through study of another language and its associated cultures, we help to develop a global view of the world.

2,000 members and 4,000 students

The Alliance Française of Chicago has nearly 2,000 members and 4,000 class enrollments per year. We have two buildings at Chicago Avenue and Dearborn Street with 17,000 square feet, connected by a garden.

French classes at all levels, for all age groups

We offer French classes at all levels, for all age groups for children, teens and adults. Our audience ranges in age from 1 to 85 and includes those from all groups and cultures in the city of Chicago area. Classes are given in general French at all levels, from beginner to advanced, with specialty courses given in French for business, French for travelers, literature, current events and cinema.

Chez Kids Academy

Our Chez Kids Academy children's center offers classes and activities for kids from 2 years up through teens. Each year, we hold 6 weeks of Summer Camp for ages 6 to 12. Chez Kids operates all day, all week, with specially trained teachers who are experts in early childhood French as a second language.

Research has shown that those children exposed to another language at an early age, develop stronger rational skills. Our young students come from all backgrounds, some with dual nationality parents, but most with parents strongly interested in the best all-around education for their children.

A commitment to quality and an innovative approach

Our instructors are native speakers specially certified in teaching French as a second language, using the latest proven methods, so that learning outcomes are positive and measurable. This is a unique method that is not found in most universities and schools in the United States.

Classes are offered in the daytime, evening and on Saturdays. We also offer off-site corporate classes as well as private lessons.

We are one of eight Alliances in the US to develop a system of library materials that are classified by learning level. We led this project in conjunction with the New York Alliance and the Délégation Générale of the Alliance Française in Washington, D.C.

Cultural programs

Our programs range from talks by well-known authors to musical programs, current event lectures and roundtables on international affairs, jazz concerts, an annual symposium on the Decorative Arts, a series of events celebrating French speaking countries every March, cooking classes and demonstrations, wine tastings and classes, and our ciné-club film series. We also have conversation groups that meet regularly on a variety of topics.

Brown Médiathèque/Library

Our library holds 18,000 volumes including current DVDs as well as periodicals and books. We are the largest private French library in Illinois and have over 19,000 circulations annually. Our Médiathèque is one of the most popular spaces at the Alliance and extends borrowing privileges to members only.

LE SAVIEZ-VOUS ?

Educational Outreach: Partnership with the Chicago Public Schools

Our Awards Towards Excellence program with the Chicago Public Schools (in existence since 1998) brings students from 6 CPS high schools for immersion classes all through the school year.

Of this highly diverse group of 50 students who come each year, 90% go on to attend college, many of them are the first generation in their families to pursue higher education. (The Chicago Public Schools average for college attendance is 46% and the US national average is about 35% for graduating seniors.)

In addition, over 1,300 middle and high school students come to the Alliance each year for Discovery Day Field Trips.

We also hold Professional Development Seminars for teachers of French in the Chicago Public Schools system and other regional school systems. This is training that they would not otherwise receive, as the methods employed are not widely taught in the US. We bring in experts in teaching methods for these seminars.

Some statistics

- The Alliance Française de Chicago is the second oldest in the US and second largest after the Alliance Française in New York City.
- We have nearly 2,000 members, and nearly 4,000 students each year. We are constantly attracting new students—each school term brings about 10% new patrons to the Alliance.
- Our student population is diverse—4% between 25–44, 40% between 45–65 years of age, 75% female, 25% male. 87% are very or extremely likely to recommend us to friends, and 97% say they are likely to return.
- We communicate regularly with more than 14,000 individuals through mailed brochures 5 times per year and bi-weekly e-mail newsletters. Our website has an average of 35,000 individual visitors per month. We advertise throughout the year on National Public Radio, CTA buses, and count over 4,500 fans on Facebook and 3,500 followers on Twitter. Our podcasts of French conversation attract 2,500 listeners.
- Our audience for events and programs numbers over 4,000 people—2,000 for events held at the Alliance and another 2,000 for programs taking place with and at partner institutions. This is a highly educated, globally minded, civically and culturally active group with great interest in international relations and global understanding.
- We have a dedicated corps of over 100 active volunteers for events, enrollment weeks, summer camp and other activities. Volunteers may earn credits toward memberships and classes. We regularly take 10–20 names each week from people who have simply passed by the Alliance Française de Chicago.

Our partner institutions include:

The Art Institute of Chicago and the School of the Art Institute
 The Cervantes Institute
 Chicago Architectural Foundation
 Chicago Botanic Garden
 Chicago Council on Global Affairs
 Chicago Shakespeare Theater
 The Chicago Cultural Center
 Chicago International Film Festival
 Chicago Opera Theatre
 Chicago Philharmonic Society
 The Chicago Symphony Orchestra
 Chicago Human Rhythm Project
 Chopin Theater
 Columbia College — Chicago
 The Consulates of Switzerland, Canada, Haiti, Romania, and Delegations from Belgium, Quebec, Senegal, Morocco, and Cameroon
 Délégation Générale de l'Alliance Française USA
 DePaul University
 Facets Multimedia
 Fondation de l'Alliance Française-Paris
 Forum des Images — Paris
 France-Chicago Center at the University of Chicago
 French Cultural Services of the Consulate General of France in Chicago
 The Goethe Institute
 Harris Theater
 Illinois Institute of Technology
 Institut du Patrimoine Wallon
 International Voices Project
 Lincoln Elementary School-EFAC
 Loyola University and LUMA
 Lycée Français de Chicago
 Lyric Opera of Chicago
 Maison de la Pub - Paris
 Musée des Arts Décoratifs - Paris
 Musée du Louvre
 The Newberry Library
 Northwestern University
 Osmothèque de Versailles
 Rush Hour Concerts and Make Music Chicago
 The Gene Siskel Film Center
 Théâtre du Rond-Point in Paris
 Trap Door Theater
 TV5Monde
 The Sister Cities International Programs
 University of Illinois — Chicago
 University of Wisconsin — Madison