



# GERMAN AMERICAN EVENTS, LLC

## City of Chicago Issues New Christkindlmarket Capacity Restrictions

Strict limits exceed COVID-era restrictions, will increase wait times, and reduce economic contributions of beloved holiday experience

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**CHICAGO** – Chicago's preeminent holiday experience is now subject to capacity restrictions from the City of Chicago that reduce the number of people who are allowed into the market. Created in 1996 to promote a relationship between Germany and the United States, the family-friendly Christkindlmarket draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to Chicago annually and has an economic impact of over \$190 million, driving tourism and tax revenues during the holiday season.

For 29 years, the Christkindlmarket has maintained an exemplary safety record through extensive emergency planning, trained staff, and close coordination with city departments. Under new rules implemented by the City of Chicago, the Christkindlmarket will now be capped at **1,553 visitors at a time** - less than half of the pandemic-era limit of 3,494 visitors allowed in 2021 with social distancing measures. While we are working to address crowding issues at the Christkindlmarket, this level of restrictions poses an existential threat to the Christkindlmarket and the hundreds of artisans, performers, seasonal workers, and businesses who depend on the visitors it brings to downtown Chicago.

"As a trusted partner to the city, safety remains our highest priority," said Mark Tomkins, President & CEO of the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest. "At the same time, we recognize the importance of maintaining an event experience that is accessible for the community, our vendors, and the millions who have supported us over the years. The pandemic-era capacity levels have already proven to be safe and effective in managing crowds."

These new restrictions present unprecedented operational and economic challenges. Vendors - many of whom already face steep increases in tariffs and operational costs - depend on the Christkindlmarket for their livelihood. International artisans, particularly from Germany, are now confronting additional strain. "I travel from Munich every year to sell my honey products and ornaments," said Sabine Korger of Biene's Honighaus. "With tariffs and now capacity limits, we'll lose significant income. I'm not sure I can afford to return next year, or even if I will survive this one."

The Christkindlmarket is a major economic driver for Chicago, generating **\$196 million in annual economic activity**, supporting **1,700+ local jobs**, and attracting visitors from across the Midwest and around the world. Approximately **75% of visitors come downtown primarily for the market**, with **41% dining at Chicago restaurants** and **40% shopping on State Street and Michigan Avenue**, creating vital income for local businesses and tax revenue for the city.

"The Christkindlmarket is a critical piece of the Loop holiday celebration attracting thousands to the heart of Chicagoland. The Loop, at Christmas, would not be the same without it. We are eager to



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work with City officials to find a way to maintain and strengthen its presence in the Loop for years to come," emphasized Michael Edwards, President & CEO, Loop Alliance.

"Over the past three decades the Christkindlmarket has not only become a cherished holiday tradition, but a significant driver of economic activity and an important source of tax revenue for our city," said Jack Lavin, President and CEO of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. "The Chamber looks forward to supporting the full success of this important event."

"We have been part of the Christkindlmarket for 29 years, now in our second generation, and we are so proud to share our Christmas culture with the American public. However, as a result of the capacity restrictions during the last week, our business has lost around 50% of its revenue," stated Tim and Tom Pilk, owners of German Grill.

Despite these challenges, the Christkindlmarket remains committed to delivering a free, safe, and authentic holiday experience for Chicagoans and visitors. Guests should anticipate longer lines and wait times, especially on weekends and holidays, and are asked for patience and understanding as organizers comply with city regulations.

The Christkindlmarket team extends its gratitude to the community for its continued support and looks forward to welcoming visitors while prioritizing safety and tradition.

### **About German American Events, LLC**

German American Events LLC, a subsidiary of the [German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest](#), is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization that plans and executes the Christkindlmarket Chicago, Aurora and Wrigleyville. All locations are modeled after the classic German holiday market in Nuremberg, Germany, with traditional candy cane striped huts.

The free outdoor holiday markets host international and local vendors who display and sell handcrafted ornaments, toys, and special holiday gifts as well as traditional German foods, sweets, and beverages. The markets are rich in cultural tradition and include special events, entertainment and activities that are fun for the whole family.