IIT Institute of Design

welcomeID

a handbook for students, by students
You’ve made a great decision in attending IIT, Institute of Design. ID is in the forefront of a new way of thinking about user-centered design and how design can influence business and social policy. ID is a small, intensive program with outstanding professors who are leaders in the design community. The student body is tightly knit, providing a healthy social balance to the academic rigors of the program.

How to use this document
Students at ID created this guide for you because we know how daunting it can be to move to a new area and start a new school. You probably have a lot of questions, concerns, and thoughts. Use this document and the links contained within as a starting point for your research. This document is passed on from year to year, and it evolves with the student body, ID, and the City of Chicago.

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You will quickly realize that we do things a little differently at ID. We have our own unique culture that takes a little getting used to. Here are a few pieces of advice to help get you started.

**Ask someone**

If there is only one thing that you retain from this entire document, it needs to be that: there is no one that can answer your questions better than your classmates. Ask questions, share answers, and you will be rewarded with a richer ID experience.

Don’t be shy. Everyone around you has been in a similar position, and we are a friendly bunch (even if we look really busy).

**Immerse yourself**

Be prepared to immerse yourself completely at ID. Many students say that this is the most intense academic experience they have had. This is a good thing—it means you are getting your money’s worth.

So, before the immersion begins, be sure to take full advantage of your summer. Spend quality time with your friends and family. If you want to prep for school, start learning new software or brush up on your design reading.

ID is one of the most challenging and one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. Be ready to take it all in.
The welcomeID community was created to provide new and prospective students a direct line to our student body.

Feel free to reach out to any of the students listed for any and all inquiries that you have.

**Current Students**

Jessica Lee  
Foundation + MDes '18  
jessica.lee@id.iit.edu

John Pew  
Foundation + MDes + MBA ‘18  
john.pew@id.iit.edu

Ketshi Bavishi  
MDes ‘18  
kbavishi@id.iit.edu

Megan Gordon Mcclendon  
MDes ‘19  
mgordonmccclendon@id.iit.edu

Renee Albrecht-Mallinger  
Foundation + MDes ‘18  
reena@id.iit.edu

Theresa Lafranchise  
Foundation + MDes ‘19  
tlafranchise@id.iit.edu

Wanying (Wan) Zhu  
MDes ‘18  
wanying.zhu@id.iit.edu

**Alumni**

Asmina Shaikh  
MDes ‘17  
asminas@id.iit.edu

Shilpa Matthew  
MDM ‘17  
smathew5@id.iit.edu

**Part-time MDM**

Michael Sauer  
MDM ‘18  
msauer1@id.iit.edu

Raina Russ  
MDM ‘19  
raina@id.iit.edu

**ID Student Activities Board Co-chairs**

Melissa Cadet  
Foundation + MDes ‘19  
mcadet@id.iit.edu

David Pollack  
Foundation + MDes + MBA ‘19  
dpollack@id.iit.edu
Orientation is an excellent opportunity to glean information and meet other students, faculty, and administration.

Orientation

Main orientation is a week-long event that introduces ID methods and their origins, advising and registration, and all other administrative details. It’s also a chance to meet faculty and hear about upcoming courses and workshops. It is critical in getting your feet wet and preparing you for the first week of class. You will be very busy during this week, but try to attend as much of the orientation as you can.
What to Expect

A day in the life of an ID student can be demanding and stressful, but it’s always rewarding. You live and breathe class projects week after week, fill your head with design knowledge, and engage with your schoolmates in and outside of class. Below is an overview of foundation year and first year, from the student perspective.

Foundation
From the Foundation students

“Our foundation class was 22 people. We spent all of our classes together, in the same classroom. When we started the program we were told ‘by the end of the year, these people will be your closest friends.’ This is definitely true. It’s an amazing way to learn design 101. We critique each other’s work, help each other with projects, bitch about the workload, and celebrate each other’s successes and project completions.”

“The typical week consists of three days of studio, one and a half days off, and half a day for Intro to Design. Don’t be fooled by ‘time off,’ though. In between studio classes, you are busy with class projects. Every hour of your week is accounted for.”

“Every week you produce something new for each of your studio classes. This could result in a bunch of photos, a logo design, a foam core model of a product design, several ideation sketches... ... a 30-second film or animation, or an eight-page brochure. You learn all the methods behind the design, the process goes from analysis to synthesis to ideation, and the techniques to create these things by computer and by hand.”

“Foundation provides you with all the design knowledge you’ll need for the main program. You get to know the school, the students, the classes, faculty, and staff all before you are inundated with the even more intense workload of the main program.”

“An exhilarating and exhausting introduction to the world of design.”

First year
From the MDes students

“As a first year student, your life will go from zero to sixty in a day... ... students take between four and seven classes a week per six weeks, and classes are between two and four hours long. The pace is intense but very rewarding. Most students have said that it takes a good three to four weeks to get into the swing of things.”

“The curriculum is structured in such a way that students take many of the same classes. The classes provide exposure to a battery of user-centered methods, and the focus is on process. How you do things becomes as, if not more, important as what you make. There are also workshop classes, which allow students to explore a design problem in depth. Team projects are a big component of many of the classes. Learning to work together can be hard work, but the teams allow students to gain insight into multiple perspectives and approaches to the design process. Many of the students at ID come from varied backgrounds such as anthropology, psychology, and engineering, and close to half the student body are from countries outside of the US. The faculty, students, and rich academic offerings at the Institute of Design foster a truly unique learning environment and perspective. During your first year at ID, you will learn an enormous amount about yourself and human-centered design methods.”
Materials

You will need materials to prototype and make things! Wait until you get to school to purchase things, as you'll get a complete list from your professors.

Here are some of the popular places that students go for supplies:

Amazon
Students can sign up for free Amazon Prime for free 2 business day shipping. 
[amazon.com/student]

Blick Art Materials
The largest art supply store near school. Sign up for their membership card and get discounts! 42 South State, 312-920-0300 
[dickblick.com]

U-trecht
Art supply store, a little further from school. 332 South Michigan, 312-922-7565

Artist & Craftsman Supply
Locally-owned art supply store. 828 South Wabash, 312-583-9990

Ace Hardware
Tools and supplies for projects. 440 North Orleans, 312-527-4200

Clark and Barlow Hardware Co.
Giant, old-school hardware store with lots of specialty items. 225 W Hubbard St #2, 312-321-5900

Office Depot
352 West Grand, 312-670-8200

Staples
111 North Wabash, 312-641-1213

Printing

You will need to print posters, booklets, and brochures. Here are some tried and trusted places from ID students:

ID
ID has printing services on the 6th floor for medium to large format prints. Large volume print jobs are usually better taken care of at external print shops.

FedEx Office
FedEx is the closest print shop to school. They can be slow. If possible, it's best to send them your layouts overnight and pick them up in the morning. There are two locations; the 24-hour shop is on Jackson.
127 S Clinton St, (312) 559-1324
200 W Jackson Blvd, (312) 341-2925

Concord
Another option downtown.
2 Prudential Plaza, 180 N. Stetson Ave (130 E. Randolph), Lobby Level CL-10, 312-552-3006

ABC Imaging
Located in the South Loop. Good option for quick binding.
161 West Harrison, Suite C101, 312-253-0040

Indigo Digital Printing
Super friendly, family-owned print shop in the South Loop.
900 South Wabash, 312-753-3025

Lazare Printing
Efficient, professional boutique print shop located in Lincoln Park.
709 West Wrightwood, 773-871-2500
Technology is changing constantly, so plan to spend as little money as possible on it before you get to school. Just bring yourself, pen, and paper to take notes.

Computers
Most students have laptops and ID is almost completely Apple/Mac. But it’s not a problem if you want to use a PC, since most of the software you will need is available on both platforms. The only drawback is that it might be more difficult to find someone who can help troubleshoot any PC specific problems.

You will be eligible for student pricing at the Apple Online Store, among other places. Your student ID is needed to prove that you are a student, so you may have to wait until your ID card is issued during orientation week to receive your discount. Sometimes a letter of acceptance and a photo ID will suffice though, so call the store to check the policy.

As far as technical specifications, the Macbook Pro highly recommended over the Macbook Air, with the following configuration:
› 8GB RAM minimum
› 256GB SSD or greater of internal storage
› i5 Intel processor minimum
› 1TB or greater external drive (USB3 or Firewire)
› 2 button mouse with scroll wheel (not Apple Magic Mouse) for use with Adobe CC and Rhino
› Backpack/bag that has protective padding on the sides and bottom
› An extra charger to leave at home or desk is nice.

Wacom has a great series of tablets for drawing, but wait until you get to school to try them out and ask questions of fellow students.

Digital camera
The other major purchase you’ll likely incur is a digital camera. Introduction to Photography, a required course for all foundation students, uses point-and-shoots or dSLRs, which usually run $300–$500. Even if you are not in foundation, a quality digital camera is a good investment for ID because you will use it for courses such as user research, product design, and documentary photography. If you do not have a camera, wait until orientation week when you meet with the photography professor before you purchase one. If you already have a dSLR from Nikon, Canon, or Sony you should be just fine, but check with your photography professor to make sure that the specifications of your camera will meet the needs of the class.

Software
As with hardware purchases, software can be bought with a student discount once you have a valid IIT identification card. We recommend waiting until you get here to purchase software. Most software has a 30-day trial period that can get you through the first month of school.

Software requirements for each class differ by semester. You can get a head start by acquiring and learning some of these programs before school starts:
› Adobe Creative Cloud
  adobe.com/products/creativecloud.html
› Apple Keynote
  Comes installed on new Macs, or can be purchased through the App Store.
› Rhinoceros
  Free for Mac, $195 for Windows
  rhino3d.com
› Cloud Backup Software
  Backblaze for Mac is $5 a month and great.
  backblaze.com
Professional design groups

› **IDSA (Industrial Design Society of America)** holds networking events, student workshops and national conferences [idsa.org](http://idsa.org), [idsachicago.org](http://idsachicago.org)

› **SDN (Service Design Network)** is new to Chicago and making a push for broader education of service design.

› **AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts)** is a great resource for all things 2D. [aiga.org](http://aiga.org), [aigachicago.org](http://aigachicago.org)

› **STA (Society of Typographic Arts)** emphasizes all things typography and sometimes graphic design [sta-chicago.org](http://sta-chicago.org)

› **IxDA Chicago** (Interaction Design Association) hosts monthly events focused on UX design [ixdachicago.org](http://ixdachicago.org)

› **Archeworks** is another local design program, also has interesting lectures and exhibitions [archeworks.org](http://archeworks.org)

Books on design

› *Toothpicks and Logos*, written by ID professor John Heskett, is a good book to get you started in design.

› *The Art of Innovation* by Tom Kelley, is a closer look into IDEO’s design methods and practices.

› *10 Types of Innovation* by ID board member Larry Keeley

› *101 Design Methods* by Vijay Kumar

› *Change by Design* by Tim Brown

› *Design Secrets: Products: 50 Real-Life Product Design Projects* by IDSA;

› *Bauhaus* by Frank Whitford is a good look at the history of ID and its roots

› *The Design of Everyday Things* by Donald Norman

› *The Evolution of Useful Things* by Henry Petroski

› *Rapid Viz* by Hanks and Belliston is a great book to learn sketching

› *Grid Systems in Graphic Design* by Josef Muller Brockman.

If there is a topic you are particularly interested in, ask your professors—they are always happy to give suggestions. For further reading suggestions, ask the administration for the introductory reading list.

Design stores

Many high-end furniture shops are located in the Merchandise Mart, one of the premiere providers to interior designers. The Mart is also home to the showrooms of Knoll, Herman Miller, and others, which you can usually get into if you show your student ID. Go to IKEA (in Schaumburg and Bolingbrook) to furnish your apartment affordably. Design Within Reach (expensive) has classic examples of modern design and is at East Ohio and State a short walk away. You can also check out CB2 at North and Clyborn.

Design web sites

› [core77.com](http://core77.com)

› [designobserver.com](http://designobserver.com)

› [fastcodesign.com](http://fastcodesign.com)

› [coroflot.com](http://coroflot.com)

› [pfsk.com](http://pfsk.com)

› [ted.com](http://ted.com)

› [underconsideration.com](http://underconsideration.com)

› [businessweek.com/innovate](http://businessweek.com/innovate)
Chicago Resources

Newspapers

› Chicago Reader A free monthly guide to Chicago that can be found in many stores and restaurants. chicagoreader.com
› Chicago Tribune. A nationally recognized daily newspaper and Chicago staple for the past 150 years. chicagotribune.com
› Chicago Sun-Times The less sophisticated of Chicago’s two major dailies. suntimes.com
› Red Eye. The Tribune’s entertainment and sports-oriented daily supplement; designed for quick reading. redeyechicago.com
› Windy City Times. A gay and lesbian weekly. Even though the paper’s offices are downtown, it covers the entire country. wctimes.com

Websites

› Metromix Chicago restaurants, bars, entertainment, clubs, and nightlife. metromix.com
› Chicago City Search Overall city guide. chicagocitysearch.com
› Gapers Block gapersblock.com Asks you to slow down and check out all the cool things in the city.
› Chicagostill News and events, restaurants and nightlife, happenings, and photography. chicagostill.com
› Yelp Peer-aggregated reviews of retail, restaurants, salons, and other local businesses. yelp.com
› WBEZ Chicago’s public radio station, a good source for local news. wbez.org

Finding an apartment you like is not as difficult as it is in, say, Manhattan or San Francisco; supply and demand seem to be fairly well aligned in
In Chicago, finding an apartment you like is not as difficult as it is in Manhattan or San Francisco; supply and demand seem to be fairly balanced. Nevertheless, there are many factors to consider in choosing a place to live.

**Mindset**
Keep in mind that your lifestyle is going to change now that you are in graduate school, so your needs for space at home may change too. Many students choose to have roommates from school because they come with the “ID Seal of Approval” and understand the lifestyle and professional interests of a designer. It is also nice to have someone to travel home with after a late night at school, which can be challenging in some areas due to infrequent bus/train schedules. Use the Google Group and student bulletin board to introduce yourself and meet new potential roommates.

**Housing terms**
- **High-rise apartments** are large buildings that can go up to 80 stories, often with a desk staff to receive packages.
- **Walk-ups and Brownstone flats** are free-standing buildings with 2-4 stories that do not have elevators.
- **Studio apartments** are small apartments, often above a shop, with the kitchen, bedroom, and living room all in one room.
- **1, 2, 3 bedroom apartments** have a separate kitchen, bedroom, and living room spaces, usually with 1 (possibly 2) bathrooms.

**Cost of Living**
To get a sense of how Chicago compares to where you live now, try this cost of living calculator:
- **Numbeo** numbeo.com/cost-of-living/

Be aware of some of the facts of Chicago apartment living—the older the building, the smaller the space (including closet space). In places like Ukrainian Village, Bucktown, or Wicker Park, you will most likely pay your own utilities for heating the apartment with gas or electric. With steam heated buildings, more common in neighborhoods like Andersonville and Rogers Park, the landlord usually pays.

To save money, consider finding a roommate—two-bedroom apartment is not much more expensive than a one-bedroom, and a three-bedroom apartment can often be shared for the price of a studio.

**Temporary Housing**
- **Airbnb** airbnb.com
- **Arlington House hostel** arlingtonhouse.com
- **Hosteling International Chicago** hichicago.org
- **Gunsaulus Hall Guest House on the IIT campus:** call 312-567-5075

**Apartment Listings**
- **Craigslist** chicago.craigslist.org/
- **Domu** domu.com/
- **Chicago Reader** classifieds.chicagoreader.com
- **Trulia** trulia.com
- **Zillow** zillow.com

**Apartment search firms**
If you don’t have time, brokers and real estate agents can help you narrow your choice. These services are free to you—the landlord pays the fees. Some of the better known firms include:
- **The Apartment People** apartmentpeople.com
- **Chicago Apartment Finders** chicagoapartmentfinders.com
Rent: 1 Bedrooms

On the following pages, there are maps of the city, with estimated rental rates, for various Chicago neighborhoods.
## Median Rent per Neighborhood – Chicago

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>1 Bedroom</th>
<th>2 Bedrooms</th>
<th>All Beds</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
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<td>M/M %</td>
<td>M/M %</td>
<td>M/M %</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Chatham Crossing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Zumper - apartment rental data* Median rents for all homes available or vacant. Ranking based on median price of 1 bedroom unit.
Chicago Neighborhoods

Chicago is divided into three major parts; the North Side, the West Side, and the South Side (the “East Side” is Lake Michigan). Each of the geographical divisions is a mosaic of neighborhoods divided by ethnicity and income that give Chicago its wondrous diversity and vitality.

Where do most ID students actually live?

**NORTH**

**River North/River West $$$**
PRO: The area has a cool urban vibe and is a popular spot for clubbing and bar hopping.
CON: More and more condos are popping up here, but River North/River West may not have the same neighborhood type feel as other areas (high rises as opposed to houses with front and back lawns). 
“L” transportation: Red and Brown Lines

**Wrigleyville/Lakeview $$$**
PRO: Wrigleyville, so named for its most famous landmark, Wrigley Field at the corner of Addison and Clark, is the neighborhood of choice for many recent college grads because of its proximity to the lake, its relative affordability, and its lively social scene.
CON: Parking can be a problem closer to the lake and when the Cubs play day games. The large number of sports bars and restaurants means that the area tends to be noisy on nights and weekends throughout the year.
“L” transportation: Red and Brown Lines

**Old Town $$$**
PRO: Old Town is the closest neighborhood to the Loop and North Michigan that actually has a neighborhood feel to it. Home to single professionals and young marrieds.
CON: While attractive and convenient to the best things the city has to offer, housing here is not cheap.
“L” transportation: Red and Brown Lines

**Lincoln Park $$$**
PRO: Lincoln Park is the heart of Chicago’s North Side. The neighborhood has almost everything you could want. Housing ranges from high rises to two- and three-flat brownstones to cottages. It’s the preferred address for many Chicagoans.
CON: Unfortunately, there are few, if any, real estate bargains left in Lincoln Park after more than 30 years of gentrification. Parking is also tricky.
“L” transportation: Red and Brown Lines

**DePaul/Lincoln Park West $$**
PRO: DePaul University is the anchor for this multi-faceted neighborhood just to the west of Lincoln Park proper. The area immediately adjacent to the university is young, which makes for a lively nightlife. There’s great shopping along Clybourn and tons restaurants and bars along Lincoln Ave.
CON: There are still some areas that are a bit grimy and somewhat industrial. Parking is hard unless you pay for a permit.
“L” transportation: Red and Brown Lines

**WEST**

**Logan Square $**
PRO: Logan Square has lower rents than its easterly neighbors, and it’s conveniently located for commuters. At street level, there are excellent thrift stores, fruit markets, and restaurants along Milwaukee Ave.
CON: The commute starts to be a bit long.
“L” transportation: Blue Line
Wicker Park and Bucktown $$
PRO: “The hippest neighborhoods in Chicago,” as proclaimed by several magazines, is full of gorgeous architecture, shops, restaurants, and bars. It strikes a nice balance of neighborhood living and hip nightlife. It’s also an easy commute downtown.
CON: You significantly increase your chances of being called a hipster.
“L” Transportation: Blue Line

Ukrainian Village/West Town $$
PRO: Unlike other ethnic enclaves in Chicago, the Ukrainian stamp remains on the neighborhood with its onion-domed churches and signs in the Cyrillic alphabet. West Town, formerly the center of Chicago’s meat and produce markets, has an old-school Chicago feel. Both draw artists and students seeking bargains.
CON: Unfortunately, many areas in Ukrainian Village are far from “L” stops, so be sure to keep this in mind when you’re searching for a place.
“L” Transportation: Blue Line

SOUTH
South Loop $$$
PRO: The South Loop has been developing steadily since the early 1980s and continues to enjoy a construction boom. If you want to be close to the Loop, few locations are more convenient or architecturally attractive.
CON: Being so close to downtown, South Loop is not cheap.
“L” transportation: Red, Green, and Orange Lines

Additional neighborhoods
NORTH
Streeterville $$$
Gold Coast $$$$ 
North Center $$
Ravenswood $$
Lincoln Square $$
Edgewater $$
Andersonville $$
East and West Rogers Park $

WEST
Albany Park $$
Taylor St. / University of Illinois–Chicago $$
Pilsen $$

SOUTH
The Gap $
Bridgeport $$
Hyde Park $$

For more detailed info on neighborhoods, check out explorechicago.org/city/.
Chicago has a rich culinary tradition, and exploring it is one of the best ways to get to know different neighborhoods. Here is a sampling of different offerings to get you started.

**Food**

**Revolution Brewing (Logan Square)**  
Busy local brewery with great food and atmosphere. $$  
2323 North Milwaukee, 773-227-2739  
revbrew.com

**Handlebar (Wicker Park)**  
Cheap and good vegetarian and vegan fare with a good beer selection. $$$  
2311 West North Avenue, 773-384-9546  
handlebarchicago.com/

**Big Star (Wicker Park)**  
Tacos and whiskey rock bar. Savory, affordable, great vibe. $$  
1531 N Damen Ave, (773) 235-4039  
bigstarchicago.com/

**Piece Brewery and Pizzeria (Wicker Park)**  
Pizza and tasty craft beer. $$  
1927 W North Ave, (773) 772-4422  
piecechicago.com

**Iguana Cafe (River West)**  
European coffee house. Crepes, sandwiches, and pasta. $$  
517 N Halsted St, (312) 432-0663  
iguanacafe.com/

**San Soo Gab San (Lincoln Square)**  
Korean BBQ, open 24 hours, serves all Korean dishes as well as sushi from the Japanese restaurant next door. $$  
5247 North Western, 773-334-1589

**The Soupbox (Lakeview)**  
Serving 12 fresh soups every day. $$  
2943 North Broadway, 773-935-9800  
50 East Chicago, 312-951-5900  
thesoupbox.com/

**Sultan’s Market (Wicker Park, Lincoln Park)**  
Best falafel in town. $  
2057 West North Avenue, 773-235-3072  
2521 N Clark Street, (312) 638-9151  
chicagofalafel.com

**La Pasadita (Wicker Park)**  
Awesome tacos, open late night. $  
1141 North Ashland, 773-278-2130  
pasadita.com

**Drink**

**Map Room (Bucktown)**  
More beer than you can shake a stick at. Pool table too. $$  
1949 North Hoyne Ave, 773-252-7636  
maproom.com

**Green Mill (Uptown)**  
A Chicago-must experience. Well appointed with a great list of tequilas. $$$  
1471 North Milwaukee, 773-235-5577  
greenmilljazz.com

**Groceries**

**Stanley’s Fruits and Vegetables**  
Always fresh, always cheap. $  
1558 North Elston, 773-276-8050

**Blommer’s Chocolate**  
This factory store is where River North’s famous brownie smell emanates from and has really good deals. $  
600 West Kinzie, 800-621-1606

**Chicago French Market**  
A variety of small food vendors, produce, pasta, meat, sweets, and coffee. $$  
131 North Clinton, 312.575-0306

**Mariano’s**  
Grocery stores in several locations throughout the city. $$  
40 South Halsted, 312.243-7657
Places to study
Intelligentsia
Famous for its coffee, but go early on weekends because the place packs it in. $  
Various locations, intelligentsiacoffee.com

Argo Tea
Tea, coffee, snacks, and free wifi. $$  
Various locations, argotea.com

Chicago Public Libraries
Downtown main branch has lots of quiet study space and free wifi.  
400 South State, 312-744-1139, chipublib.org

Stuff to do around town
Free Museum Passes
Sign up for a Chicago Public Library Card and you can check out museum passes by the week. You can save a lot, especially if friends or family are in town.

Ravinia
Present your student ID and you can often get into the classical concerts free of charge during the summer. ravinia.org

Discounted Movie Passes
The student activities desk in the IIT McCormick Tribune Campus Center sells movie passes for AMC/Loews Theaters for $5.50 or $6 each—considerable savings. The $5.50 ones are good Monday to Thursday and include a free small popcorn; the $6 ones are good any time as permitted by the theater.  
IIT Main Campus, 3300 South Federal

Nearly Free Plays
If you want to see a lot of plays, sign up to volunteer for the Saints, which offers free admission to theaters all over the city in exchange for serving as an usher. There is a small fee to join, but this is a really nice group if you are into drama. Or visit the Hot Tix booth downtown or online for half-priced tickets.  
saintschicago.org, hottix.org