

● CHICAGO

# Chicago

## Building Permit Report

January 2026

Monthly analysis of permit volume, project types, community area activity, and construction trends sourced from City of Chicago public records.

Total Permits

New Construction

Reported Value

Demolitions

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## Permit Volume Overview

Chicago issued **1,932 building permits** this month. Express permits — which cover routine electrical, mechanical, and minor alteration work — led volume at **1,161 (60.1%)**. Renovation and alteration permits accounted for **407 (21.1%)**, while ground-up new construction came in at **69 permits (3.6%)**. Demolition activity totaled **58 permits (3.0%)** this period.

| Permit Type             | Count | Share |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| Express Permit Program  | 1,161 | 60.1% |
| Renovation / Alteration | 407   | 21.1% |
| New Construction        | 69    | 3.6%  |
| Signs                   | 121   | 6.3%  |
| Elevator Equipment      | 72    | 3.7%  |
| Demolition              | 58    | 3.0%  |

## Top Work Categories

Chicago's permit data includes detailed work type classifications that reveal where contractors and tradespeople are most active. The table below shows the six most common work categories issued this month.

| Work Type                   | Count | Share |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|
| Electrical Work             | 325   | 16.8% |
| Administrative Change       | 166   | 8.6%  |
| Fire Alarm System           | 101   | 5.2%  |
| Monthly Maintenance Permit  | 98    | 5.1%  |
| Nonstructural Interior Work | 87    | 4.5%  |
| Small-Scale Solar PV System | 76    | 3.9%  |

## Project Valuation

The combined reported cost of all permitted projects this month totaled **\$525.18 million**, with an average project cost of **\$336,867**. Chicago's construction market spans a wide range — from high-value commercial renovations in the Loop and Near North Side to residential infill and rehab work across the city's neighborhoods. These figures represent contractor-declared valuations at time of permit issuance.

**\$525.18M**

Total Reported Value

**\$336,867**

Avg. Project Cost

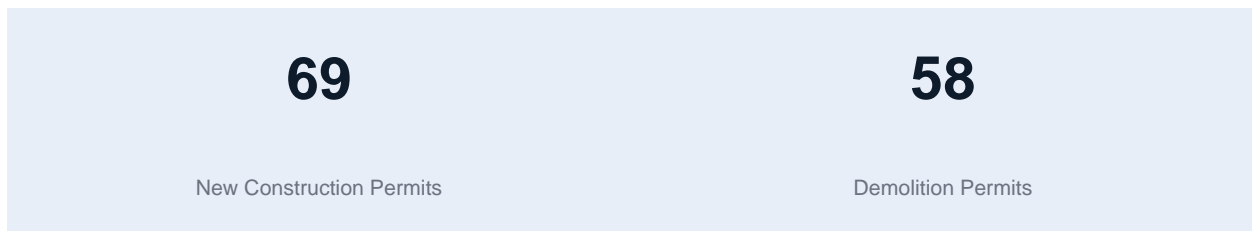
## Community Area Activity

Chicago's 77 community areas offer a clear picture of where construction activity is concentrated. **Loop** led all areas this month with **198 permits** (10.2% of city total). The table below highlights the six most active community areas — a useful guide for contractors targeting specific markets.

| Community Area  | Permits | Share |
|-----------------|---------|-------|
| Loop            | 198     | 10.2% |
| Near North Side | 154     | 8.0%  |
| Near West Side  | 112     | 5.8%  |
| West Town       | 92      | 4.8%  |
| Lake View       | 65      | 3.4%  |
| Austin          | 63      | 3.3%  |

## New Construction & Demolition

New construction and demolition permits signal where Chicago's built environment is changing most rapidly. This month, **69 new construction permits** were issued (3.6% of total), covering ground-up residential buildings, commercial developments, and mixed-use projects. Demolition activity — a leading indicator of upcoming new construction — accounted for **58 permits** (3.0%). Together these segments represent some of the highest-value work available to contractors in the market.



## Get the Full List

This report summarizes the permit landscape for Chicago in January 2026. BCAR DATA's monthly lead lists give you the actual permit records — property address, permit type, project description, and reported cost — delivered straight to your inbox every month.

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