



CHICAGO AREA RUNNERS ASSOCIATION
READY TO RUN 20 MILER

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

SEPT. 21, 2025

Chicago, IL - 6:30 a.m.,
20-Mile Run



September 21, 2025 (Sunday)

This Participant Guide is designed to prepare you for a successful experience at CARA's Ready to Run 20 Miler.

The sections of this guide are color coded based on their importance.

Need to Know >> Very important information you need to know before participating. Be sure to review all information.

Good to Know >> Important information good for you to know in order to have a safe and successful experience.

Helpful to Know >> Helpful information for you to know to be fully prepared.



NEED TO KNOW >>

- Start Time
- Finish Cut-Off
- Location
- Start Procedures
- Bib Pick-Up
- Participant Bibs
- Gear Check
- Post-Run Bus Transport
- Strollers / Pets Policy
- Weather Policy and Alerts
- Start Location
 - Notice
 - Travel
 - Parking
 - Public Transit
 - Ride Share
 - Bike
 - Hazardous Weather Shelters
- Finish Location
 - Travel
 - Parking
 - Ride Share
 - Bus Shuttle
 - Hazardous Weather Shelters

- Course Information
- Event Alert System (EAS)
- Aid Stations

GOOD TO KNOW >>

- Choosing Your Pace
- Path Etiquette / Safety
- Spectators
- Photos
- Finisher Shirt
- Post-Run Celebration
- Timing / Results
- Competition Rules
- Voluntary Cancellation
- Refund Policy
- Non-Registered Persons On Course
- ADA Accommodations
- Runner Drop Outs
- Preparedness

HELPFUL TO KNOW >>

- Chicago Area Runners Association
- Volunteer Groups



Start Time:

- The run will begin at 6:30 a.m.

Finish Cut-Off:

- Participants must finish within five (5) hours after the last on-time start (15-minute pace per mile).
- Aid stations, course marshals, and the finish line will support a 15 minute pace per mile at each location.

Location:

- Start Line: Montrose Beach-Wilson Track
- Finish Line: Jackson Park Grove 19a/b
- See page 6 for details on locations and parking.

Start Procedures:

- Participants may self select their starting corral on event morning. Corrals are NOT assigned. Corral choice should be selected by expected pace per mile.
- Signs with paces per mile will be displayed along the track from fastest first to slowest last. Pace signs will include: Under 7:00, 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30, 13:00, Over 13:00.
- CARA Summer Marathon Training Program group leaders will pace their training site groups within each corral. Participants that are not part of a CARA training group may join in with any training site group of their choice. Group leaders will have back bibs indicating their pace. Group leaders are offered from 7:30 to 11:30 paces for run, and from 12:00 to 13:00 paces for run/walk.
- At the start time, the announcer will send off each pace group (all runners for that pace). A short gap between each group will be provided to avoid congestion on the path and at initial aid stations. All participants will begin within approximately 10 minutes of the start time.

Bib Pick-Up:

- Participants must pick up their bib prior to event day. **There is no event day bib pick-up.** Finisher shirts are provided at the event immediately after completing the run.
- Friends and family may pick up for a participant with a copy (printed or digital) of the participant's check-in pass (emailed to participants prior to pick-up beginning) or ID. Persons may pick up for up to four (4) people at a time when there is a line. If picking up for more than four bibs and there is a line, please get back in line for each group of four to allow other persons in line to receive their bibs in a timely manner.
- Mailing: Participants who selected bib mailing (fee applied) will have their bibs mailed by September 12, 2025. Participants can add bib mailing in their CARA [Participant Account](#) until September 4th. The event will not combine bibs for multiple people, or packets for other programs/events to the package.
- Pick-Up Schedule:
 - **Saturday, September 13, 2025**
 - Fleet Feet Lincoln Square (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)
 - Fleet Feet Deerfield (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)
 - **Friday, September 19, 2025**
 - Fleet Feet South Loop (4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.)
 - **Saturday, September 20, 2025**
 - Fleet Feet Old Town (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)
 - Fleet Feet Elmhurst (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

Participant Bibs:

- Bibs must be worn on the front torso or chest.
- Bibs may not be transferred to another person.
- CARA Summer Marathon Training Program group leaders will wear an additional back bib indicating their pace. Back bibs will be provided during Bib Pick-Up or mailed if bib mailing was selected.

Gear Check:

- Gear check will be available at the start area. Please attach the gear check ID tag from the top of your bib to your bag (zip ties will be available). Please be sure you have everything you need for the run before checking your bag.
- Gear will be transported to the finish line for pick-up. Runners will need their race bib as identification to retrieve their checked gear.
- Participants may check any standard backpack or duffel bag size (1 bag limit).
- We are unable to provide a covered gear check. Please plan accordingly in case of inclement weather. If wet weather is forecasted, we recommend using a waterproof bag for your gear check.

Post-Run Bus Transport:

- Buses will transport runners between the finish line (Jackson Park) and the start line (Montrose Beach-Wilson Track) after the run. Buses will go directly to the start line with no stops on the way.
- A limited number of additional buses will provide a route directly to a downtown stop in Grant Park (Near the corner of Columbus Dr. and Balbo Dr.).
- Buses from the finish line to the start line will depart approximately every 15 minutes beginning at approximately 9:30 a.m.
- Buses from the finish line to downtown will depart approximately every 30 minutes beginning at approximately 9:30 a.m.
- The final bus will depart no later than 1:00 p.m.
- Runner transport buses are for participants only. Friends and family will not be permitted to ride buses.

Strollers / Pets:

- Participants are not allowed to participate with baby joggers, strollers or animals.

Weather Policy and Alerts:

- The event will go on rain or shine. However, if there is lightning or other hazardous weather we will cancel or postpone. Our evaluation will include present and probable conditions through the run.
- On event day, all weather alerts and announcements will be posted to our [Facebook event page](#).
- Prior to event day, announcements will be made by email.

Start Location:

- **Montrose Beach - Wilson Track** (southeast corner of Lake Shore Drive and Wilson Drive).
- **Notice:** Due to construction around the event site, free street parking along Wilson Drive is NO longer available (parking info below).
- **Travel:** Address: 4400 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60647. For best results, search "Montrose Beach Wilson Track"
- **Parking:** Free street parking is available within the park on Montrose Ave., and Simonds Dr. Paid parking is available in the Chicago Park District lots at Wilson Dr. and Lakeshore Dr. (Wilson Lot) and at Foster Avenue and Lakeshore Dr. (Foster Beach), and Montrose Harbor Drive.
- **Public Transit:** The following bus lines will get you near the start; 78-Montrose, 81-Lawrence, 145-Wilson/Michigan, and 146-Marine/Michigan. Be sure to check the bus schedule with your desired departure time. The 145 and 146 routes start running later on the weekends. You may also take the Red-Line Train to Wilson and head east about one mile to the start.
- **Ride Share:** Those traveling to the event by rideshare should drop off on Montrose Ave. and walk North to the track. Rideshare drivers should avoid Wilson Dr.
- **Bike:** Bike racks are available near the track entrance for participants who choose to ride to the race. Please bring a bike lock. A Divvy station is located immediately north of the event area.
- **Hazardous Weather Shelter:** Vehicle, Montrose Ave. Pedestrian Tunnel, or Lake Shore Drive underpasses.



Finish Location:

- Jackson Park Grove 19a/b
- **Travel:** Northwest Corner of Hayes Drive and DuSable Lake Shore Drive.
- **Parking:** 63rd Street Beach (east) or Hayes and Cornell Parking Lot (west). The parking lots on the west corners of Hayes and DuSable Lake Shore Drive, near the finish, are not open to participants or spectators.
- **Ride Share:** For those being picked up, ride share is located in the Hayes Drive Parking Lot just south of Hayes Drive.
- **Bus Shuttle:** The post-run bus transportation will be located in the Hayes & Lake Shore Drive Lot to take runners back to the start every 15 minutes and to downtown every 30 minutes beginning at 9:30 a.m.
- **Hazardous Weather Shelter:** Vehicle or Pedestrian Tunnels.



Course Information:

- The Ready to Run 20 Miler features a point-to-point course, starting at the Montrose Beach-Wilson Track on the north end of the Lakefront Trail and finishing on the south end of the Lakefront Trail at Jackson Park.
- An interactive course map is available at <https://www.plotaroute.com/route/2725409>
- The course's 10 aid stations are featured on the interactive course map

Event Alert System (EAS):

- EAS is a color-coded method of communicating to participants the potential for adverse conditions that can impact the event. A series of color codes is used to indicate the increasing severity of adverse conditions. EAS signs will be placed at the start line, at each aid station and at the finish line area.

ALERT LEVEL	EVENT CONDITIONS	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
EXTREME	EVENT CANCELED/EXTREME AND DANGEROUS CONDITIONS	PARTICIPATION STOPPED FOLLOW EVENT OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS
HIGH	POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CONDITIONS	SLOW DOWN / OBSERVE COURSE CHANGES / FOLLOW EVENT OFFICIAL INSTRUCTION / CONSIDER STOPPING
MODERATE	LESS THAN IDEAL CONDITIONS	SLOW DOWN / BE PREPARED FOR WORSENING CONDITIONS
LOW	GOOD CONDITIONS	ENJOY THE EVENT BE ALERT

- If conditions move to less than ideal or dangerous, participants are expected to slow down their pace at least 30 seconds per mile. Group (pace) leaders will adjust their pace as well.
- If conditions are probable to progress into unsafe conditions during the run, even if they are not present at the start, the event may be canceled or altered.

Aid Stations:

- 10 aid stations are located on-course approximately every 1.5 - 2.5 miles.
- Each aid station will have access to public restrooms or portable toilet units nearby.
- Medical support is provided by physicians from Loyola's Sports Medicine Fellowship Program.
- Participants are encouraged to self-carry a hydration bottle or pack. Those that do, please fill your containers prior to arriving as aid stations are not organized to manage filling of large capacity containers.
- Participants are encouraged to bring the fuel type that they'll be using in their upcoming race, if applicable.

<u>Aid Station #</u>	<u>Mile Marker</u>	<u>Offerings</u>	<u>Station Nickname</u>
Aid Station #1 :	Mile 2.1	W, G, M	Foster Beach
Aid Station #2 :	Mile 3.7	W, G, M	Montrose Harbor
Aid Station #3 :	Mile 5.7	W, G, M	Belmont Harbor
Aid Station #4 :	Mile 7.7	W, G, M	North Avenue Beach
Aid Station #5 :	Mile 9.3	W, G, M, U	Ohio Street
Aid Station #6 :	Mile 10.9	W, G, M	Balbo Dr.
Aid Station #7 :	Mile 12.9	W, G, M	McCormick Bird Sanctuary
Aid Station #8 :	Mile 14.9	W, G, M, U	Burnham Park
Aid Station #9 :	Mile 16.6	W, G, M	51st Street
Aid Station #10 :	Mile 18.6	W, G, M	63rd Street Beach

Key: W = water; G = Gatorade Endurance; M = Medical support; U = UCAN Energy Gels

Choosing Your Pace:

- The Ready to Run 20 Miler is a supported training run, and participants using this event as training for an upcoming marathon should pace themselves at their typical long run training pace- not marathon goal race pace.
- Long run pace is typically 1-2 minutes per mile slower than your goal race pace for the marathon. However, as marathon times increase, long run training pace and goal marathon pace tend to merge closer together.
- Example: For a 4:00:00 hr marathon runner, their goal race pace would be 9:09 per mile, while their training pace would be closer to 10:35-10:05 per mile. Thus, a pace group running 10:30 per mile would be the best for this event.
- Racing all out, or running goal marathon pace, for your 20 miler is not advised in most cases, and could have a negative impact on your marathon performance if your race is within 4 weeks.

Path Etiquette / Safety:

- The Lakefront Trail is not a closed course. Please be respectful of other trail users.
- At road crossings, watch for traffic at these points and stop if needed.
- Please follow a 2x2 (no more than two persons side-by-side) running pattern.
- If you need to pass someone on the path or trail, move to single file and pass on the left; avoid "swarming" (passing on both sides).
- Be aware of/avoid using headphones and be cognizant of other runners, bikers, or pedestrians on the paths and trails.
- Look and listen for group leader signals and instructions during the run.

Spectators:

- Friends and family are welcome to attend and spectate at the start, along the course, and at the finish. Please note, there is limited parking near the finish area.

Photos:

- Free digital photos will be available for download within 72 hours of the event.

Finisher Shirt:

- All finishers will receive a shirt post-run. At the Finisher Shirt tent, please provide the tear off from the bottom of your bib.
- Shirts are only provided to finishers of the event and are not available at any other date.
- Shirts will be provided in the size chosen during registration. Size changes are only available if there is extra inventory.



Post-Run Celebration:

- A post-run celebration will include announcing by Dave Kappas, the voice of Chicago running, and music from a DJ.
- Bottled water, Gatorade Endurance, bananas, protein bars, and beer will be available at the finish.

Timing / Results:

- The event is a fully supported training run. Timing, results and awards are NOT provided.

Competition Rules:

- The event expects all participants to respect fair competition, including following the RRCA's Fair Competition Policies: <https://www.rrca.org/resources/event-directors/fair-competition-policies>.

Voluntary Cancellation:

- Should participants voluntarily choose not to participate, or are unable to participate for reasons out of the control of the event (including, but not limited to injury, illness, personal matters, work conflicts, etc.), refunds will not be issued.

Refund Policy:

- In all other circumstances, participants must agree that refunds and deferrals will NOT be issued for any reason, including participant injury, illness, and any other issues out of the control of the event, including, but not limited to cancellation due to weather/lightning.

Non-Registered Persons On Course:

- Non-registered persons may not participate on-course in this event.

ADA Accommodations:

- Individuals may submit a request for an accommodation due to an asserted disability. The request must be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the event. Based upon information provided, the event/race director and/or medical director will then respond to the request.

Runner Drop Outs:

- Should a participant not be able to complete the run, they should proceed to the nearest aid station to request an on-course pick-up. Participants needing a pick-up should expect an extended wait to arrive at the finish.
- If a participant is unable to proceed to an aid station, inform the closest course marshal for support.

Preparedness:

- It is expected that participants are properly trained to complete 20 miles. This includes completing a marathon focused (or similar) training program for at least 12 or more weeks prior to the event, and having completed long runs of 16-18 miles or more during their training.
- Participants should be properly hydrated and have taken appropriate steps to care for their physical needs prior to the event.



The Chicago Area Runners Association, CARA, is a non-profit organization committed to serving and advocating for the local running community. We are Chicagoland's running club, providing accessible opportunities for all runners to train, race, learn, be social and volunteer.

CARA, with over 10,000 members, is the nation's third-largest running club, serving as the voice of local runners, as well as providing over 1,300 dates of programming and events per year. Learn more at www.cararuns.org.



Membership Supports:

- The local running community and empowers CARA to continue its long record of advocacy work.
- Free programming: keeping running accessible to all ability levels (Run Crew, 'Go Run').
- Hydration stations which serve over 1-million ounces of water and Gatorade Endurance to the public.
- Better Races: CARA Race Certification and free race director clinics helping local races improve their safety and operational standards.
- Education: Clinics from top experts to help runners gain the knowledge to take their running to new levels.

Member Benefits Include:

- Community Support & Advocacy
- Supporting Accessible Free Programming
- CARA Training Discounts
- CARA Race Discounts
- Local Race Discounts
- Early Registration Access
- Partner Discounts
- Exclusive Programs & Event Perks

Volunteer Groups:

- CARA's Ready to Run 20 Miler is supported by members and supporters of the Chicago Area Runners Association, as well as several incredible volunteer groups. Please support them on-course and beyond!
- American Cancer Society
- Black Chicago Runners
- CARA 'Go Run
- CARA Lake Shore Park Track Crew
- CARA Racing Team
- Frontrunners Chicago
- GlenGlen Run Crew
- Gold Coast Run Club
- Jim's Bridge to a Brighter Future
- Read and Run Chicago
- UIC Track and Field
- DWRrunning
- Chicago Muslim Run Club
- Family Style RC
- On The 9
- Illinois Institute of Technology





Movement is Medicine

Request an appointment today at injuryhotline@rushpt.com
or visit us online at rushpt.com.

 **RUSH**
Physical Therapy



Exclusive Physical Therapy
Provider for CARA