



ISACo ANNUAL REPORT

Overview of ISACo Activities - 2021

2021



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The Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) eagerly embraced its third full year of operation in 2021. The year saw continued membership growth along with state and federal legislative successes for counties.

The year began under the continued cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic, but with a newfound optimism resulting from anticipation of vaccines promising to reduce the most severe impacts of the virus on individual health, the national economy and social life.

The General Assembly was able to convene for a full legislative session with COVID-19 mitigations in place.

We enjoyed the first full year in our new office space located in downtown Springfield and were able to conduct meaningful business and welcome visitors. ISACo staff worked remotely during the month of January but returned to the office in early February 2021.

The year was consequential for counties recovering from the economic shutdown brought about to combat the pandemic. ISACo worked closely with the National Association of Counties (NACo) and our Congressional delegation to support the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that allocated \$65.1 billion in direct, flexible aid to counties throughout the country. Illinois counties collectively received almost \$2.5 billion of these federal recovery dollars.

Illinois counties also found themselves charged with the immense responsibility to disseminate COVID-19 vaccines to residents electing to receive the shot while continuing to offer testing services to their residents.

ISACo took on noteworthy state legislative endeavors to help Illinois counties. First and foremost, we successfully fought to prevent a proposed cut to state income tax revenue shared with counties. We also prioritized and successfully advocated for a later statutory date for finalizing new county board district maps to account for a COVID-related delay in the receipt of federal census data. Illinois county leaders joined us in these efforts and our counties benefited from both policy outcomes.

ISACo's financial condition remains strong and we will continue to be good stewards of the financial resources entrusted to us by our member counties and corporate partners.

Illinois and the larger world will continue to navigate a course through the pandemic as COVID-19 variants cause increases in positive cases, hospitalizations and death. I'm confident that counties will persist in their critical mission to protect public health and provide essential services to their residents during such a tragic and challenging point in world history.

Through it all, Illinois counties can continue to call upon ISACo to aid them in their important mission. Thanks.

Joe McCoy,
Executive Director



LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

During the 2021 spring legislative session, 7,003 bills were filed by state legislators and 653 were ultimately approved by both chambers for a passage rate of just over 9 percent. This excludes resolutions and constitutional amendments. ISACo staff reviewed each introduced bill and amendment, tracked over 800 bills of interest to counties and took public positions on approximately 150 of these tracked bills during the spring. Additional amendments were filed for consideration during the Fall Veto Session.

In total, ISACo and its contract lobbyists worked with members of the Illinois House and Senate to introduce a dozen bills as part of our Illinois County Action Program (ICAP).

ISACo had a great deal of success in advocating for our top two legislative priorities in 2021. These priorities were protecting county revenues allocated through the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) and altering a statutory deadline to facilitate the use of federal census data for the formulation of new county board district maps.

Counties currently receive 6.06 percent of total state income tax collections and one of our top priorities was to fight against a proposed 10 percent cut to LGDF. Due to the advocacy of ISACo and our local government partners, the county share of LGDF revenue as a percentage of state income tax collections in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 remains the same as it was in SFY2021. It remains an advocacy goal of ISACo to see the current 6.06 percent share increased to 10 percent - the percentage counties received prior to a reduction in 2011.

ISACo aggressively advocated for a solution to the problem confronting county board reapportionment caused by the delay in receiving federal census data during the pandemic. This much needed "fix" to assist counties seeking to reapportion their county board districts using delayed federal census data was included in an omnibus election amendment filed at the end of May and ultimately enacted into law. The new law allowed county boards outside of Cook County until December 31, 2021, to reapportion county board districts.

Another piece of ISACo's legislative agenda concerning the county role in renaming townships was enacted into law as well.

ISACo published a *Public Acts: Legislation of Interest to Counties Approved in 2021* report that includes ISACo tracked bills enacted into law by the Governor. We also published a *2021 State Mandates Report* that listed newly created mandates imposed on counties in 2021.

In addition to our state advocacy program, ISACo worked with NACo and Illinois' Congressional delegation in support of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Passed by the United States Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden, ARPA allocated \$65.1 billion in direct, flexible aid to counties throughout the country. Illinois counties collectively received almost \$2.5 billion of these federal recovery dollars intended to assist with financial challenges presented by the pandemic.



EVENTS & MEETINGS



ISACo held four meetings of our Board of Directors in 2021. Each was held virtually to reduce risk of transmitting COVID-19.



The Large County Caucus met for a legislative update and to solicit ideas for ISACo's 2022 Illinois County Action Program (ICAP). The Cook and Collar County Caucus met four times.



ISACo's Legislative Committee met three times during the summer and fall to consider and formally recommend issues to the Board of Directors for inclusion within the 2022 ICAP. ISACo will pursue introduction of Board-approved issues during the General Assembly's 2022 legislative session.



ISACo hosted a dinner during the July NACo Annual Conference in Prince George's County, MD. This event, sponsored by our corporate partner Nationwide, was enjoyed by almost 60 conference attendees.



ISACo welcomed members of the Illinois Association of County Auditors (IACA) to our office in June for a reception and overview of our new website.



ISACo held an Annual Meeting luncheon at the Thatcher Woods Pavilion in Cook County on December 17, 2021. The luncheon was well-attended and ISACo appreciates the assistance of Cook County Commissioner and ISACo Board Member Pete Silvestri in securing the venue.




ISACo COMMUNICATIONS

ISACo published 44 *News and Views* e-newsletters in 2021 and later in the year launched a *Federal Legislative Update* e-newsletter as an additional service to our members. Two of these *Federal Legislative Updates* were published.

We also published four *County Quarterly* newsletters in 2021. The *County Quarterly* is mailed to county officials and interested parties throughout Illinois. It is also available on ISACo's website.




WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

ISACo launched a new website toward the end of 2020 and continued to refine this website throughout 2021. Our new website was designed to become an indispensable source of information for county officials, their professional staff and other interested parties. The website features news stories, alerts, legislative information, resources for counties, a blog, archived newsletters, various reports prepared by ISACo, our social media content and much more.

The new website includes a specially designed bill tracking feature that identifies all ISACo tracked legislation and allows ISACo staff to add value to the tracked bills by including our position, whether a bill would create a state mandate or preempt local authority and/or reduce county revenues. This additional information will expand knowledge about each bill and strengthen our legislative advocacy efforts.




PARTNERSHIPS

ISACo continued to develop its corporate partner program, adding three new corporate partners in 2021 (United Health Care, T-Mobile and Mahoney, Silverman and Cross).

During the fall, ISACo entered into the partnership agreement with the law firm of Mahoney, Silverman and Cross to provide training opportunities for ISACo member counties beginning in 2022.

ISACo had nine corporate partners at the conclusion of 2021 and appreciates their generosity and commitment to our mission.




MEMBERSHIPS

ISACo added four additional member counties in 2021 (Jackson, Macon, Montgomery and Williamson Counties). This brings ISACo's total membership to 30 counties where almost 80 percent of Illinois residents reside.



ISACo membership has almost tripled since our first full year of existence in 2019!




BY-LAWS CHANGE

The ISACo Board of Directors endorsed a change to ISACo’s By-Laws to create two additional seats on the Board of Directors (11 to 13) to allow for additional representation beyond Cook and the Collar Counties. The proposed change was submitted to and approved by ISACo member counties during the fall. This was the second time ISACo’s By-Laws were amended since the inception of the Association in 2018. As a result, ISACo’s Board of Directors will better reflect the rapid growth of ISACo’s membership.



NACo INVOLVEMENT

ISACo continued to facilitate the involvement of Illinois county officials and staff in key influence roles within NACo. More than 50 Illinois county officials and staff members serve as NACo officers or on standing and policy steering committees. Included among these officials and staff are six members who serve on NACo’s Board of Directors. ISACo is responsible for most of these appointments. A list of these individuals along with their NACo leadership role is available on our website.

ISACo Board of Directors member Denise Winfrey was elevated to the role of NACo First Vice President during the July NACo Annual Conference. A Will County Board Member, Denise will begin her term as NACo President during the July 2022 NACo Annual Conference in Adams County, CO.

Kendall County Circuit Clerk Matt Prochaska, who also serves as ISACo Vice President, chairs the important NACo Membership Committee. This Committee is responsible for growing and retaining NACo membership. ISACo President Deborah Sims serves on NACo’s Deferred Compensation Committee. Since its inception in 1980, NACo’s Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement income program available to county employees.

