



ILLINOIS STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

COUNTY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2025

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Counties Count!

A Message from the Executive Director



By: Joe McCoy, Executive Director

We are pleased to share the July 2025 edition of ISACo's *County Quarterly Newsletter*, which provides a comprehensive look at recent developments and opportunities impacting Illinois counties. This edition comes on the heels of the adjournment of the 2025 spring legislative session and offers valuable information to help county officials stay informed and engaged.

This edition of the *County Quarterly* includes an article summarizing the conclusion of the spring legislative session. The article outlines the key outcomes of the session, including passage of the \$55.2 billion state budget and several impactful pieces of legislation. It also reviews notable proposals that failed to advance, such as the transit funding and governance package, the omnibus energy bill, and election and pension reform measures—all of which have potential implications for counties and may resurface later this year.

We also share news about a funding opportunity through the National Fitness Campaign and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois. A total of \$750,000 in grant funding is now available to Illinois communities interested in developing outdoor wellness infrastructure. County officials are encouraged to apply and attend an informational briefing to learn more about how to access this support.

This *County Quarterly* also encourages participation in one of ISACo's policy committees, which play an essential role in shaping the Association's advocacy agenda. These committees—covering areas such as agriculture and rural affairs, transportation, public health, environment, and public safety—are open to county

officials and staff from member counties. Participation provides a meaningful way to influence policy, engage with peers, and ensure county priorities are reflected in state legislative discussions.

This issue also features information about ISACo's *Counties Count!* Podcast. Recent episodes have covered topics including the end of the spring session, the State Public Defender Act, federal budget updates, and the importance of tax-exempt municipal bonds. The podcast also features an insightful interview with Representative Curtis Tarver, Chair of the House Counties and Townships Committee. The podcast is a quick, accessible way to stay up-to-date on county-related issues throughout the year.

If your county is not yet a member of ISACo, we invite you to explore the many benefits of joining our growing association. ISACo provides comprehensive legislative advocacy, timely policy updates, grant alerts, educational resources, and opportunities to collaborate with county officials across Illinois. Becoming a member ensures your county has a voice in shaping state policy and access to the tools needed to navigate complex challenges. To learn more about membership and how ISACo can support your county, please contact Member Services and Communications Manager Tiffani Homer at thomer@isacoil.org.

As always, we encourage you to visit www.isacoil.org for the latest updates, resources, and legislative tracking tools. Thank you for your continued engagement and support of county government in Illinois.

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National Fitness Campaign (NFC) and Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Illinois have announced \$750,000 in

2025 Grant Funding for Illinois Statewide Wellness Campaign

We are reaching out today with some exciting news. This year in 2025, **National Fitness Campaign** (NFC) and **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois** have announced \$750,000 in new grant funding to **communities** and schools in the state of Illinois. This funding will be allocated to support communities across the state to join the growing National Fitness Campaign, building healthy infrastructure for smart communities and schools of the future. The campaign has expanded significantly the past few years, with plans to welcome its 750th Healthy Community in America in 2025, fostering a healthier, more active country.

If you are not familiar with the Campaign, the program is designed to bring world-class healthy infrastructure to public spaces, along with consulting, funding, and community programming support. Watch NFC's 3-minute video describing the program: Campaign Video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynkaTYfs0U4&utm_source=ISACo&utm_medium=emailannouncement

The City of Riverdale, along with Parks and Recreation Director Jaime Ijams, celebrated the opening of their Fitness Court at Franson Park in 2022. Ijams expressed enthusiasm for the community, stating, "NFC's initiative lines up well with our mission to make a positive impact in our community by

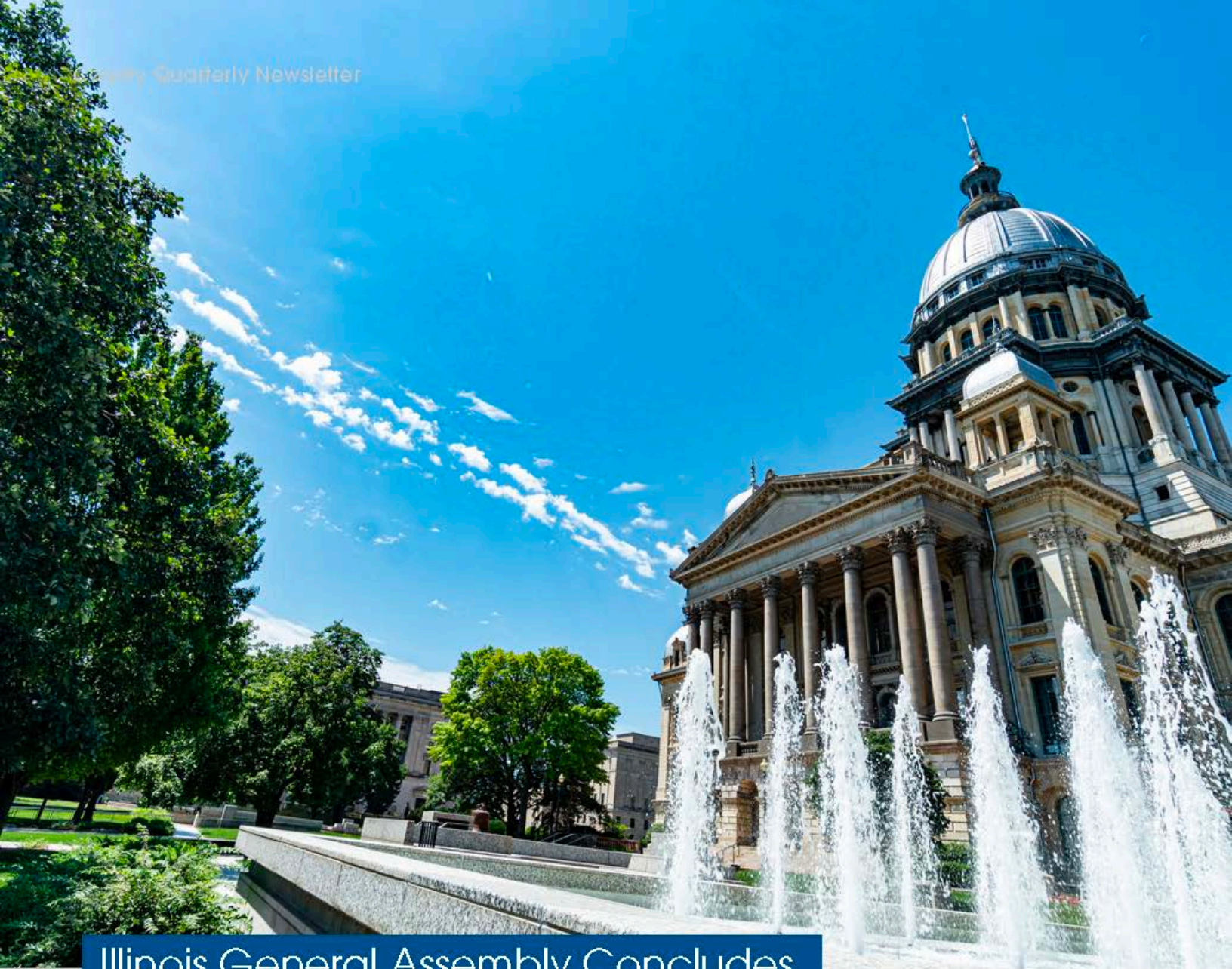
promoting health and wellness through our parks and open spaces and providing access to all." Since then, the campaign has continued to expand throughout Illinois, with Springfield, Gilberts, Keeneyville, and 15 other communities joining Riverdale in this initiative.

In 2025, the program is seeking applications from **counties** of all sizes large and small across the state of Illinois, interested in building accessible outdoor wellness infrastructure to support the health and wellbeing of their residents. Funding is now available for 2025 applicants and is projected to be allocated over the next 60 days.

If you would like to join a 30-minute virtual briefing to learn more about the NFC - BCBSIL wellness campaign in Illinois and how to qualify for funding, please fill out a short contact form at the link below. The briefings with NFC require the Park Director, and/or **County Board Chair**, and/or Administrator, to qualify for funding.

Link to sign up for Briefing for Funding Confirmation:

https://www.nationalfitnesscampaign.com/illinois-contact?utm_source=ISACo&utm_medium=emailannouncement



Illinois General Assembly Concludes

2025 Spring Session

By: ISACo Staff

The Illinois General Assembly concluded its 2025 spring legislative session in the early morning hours of June 1, 2025. During the session, lawmakers introduced nearly 6,800 bills, though only 432 were passed by both chambers—an approval rate of just 6.4 percent.

The Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) tracked approximately 2,000 of these bills, taking formal positions 339 times. This article highlights key developments from the session and looks ahead to what may come next.

One of the most significant outcomes of the spring session was the passage of a \$55.2 billion state budget designed to close a projected \$1 billion shortfall through targeted tax increases and spending reductions. State revenue is projected to total \$55.4 billion. The budget closely mirrors Governor JB Pritzker's initial proposal, though it includes approximately \$200 million in additional cuts. Importantly, there are no increases to income or sales taxes, in line with the governor's pledge.

To generate revenue, the state will rely on increases in gambling, tobacco, and vape taxes, along with a tax amnesty program expected to bring in \$228 million—\$30 million more

than originally projected. Spending reductions include a \$400 million cut to the Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults program and the transfer of \$100 million from special state funds with no repayment plan.

The budget also features \$8.2 billion in capital investments, \$118 million in grants to support safety net hospitals, and \$75 million to ensure Tier Two pensions comply with federal Social Security standards. Legislators also approved a 5 percent pay raise, bringing their salaries to just over \$98,000.

Counties should note that the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) will remain at 6.47 percent of state income tax collections in FY 2026, the same level as the prior fiscal year. ISACo continues to advocate for the restoration to the pre-2011, 10 percent share. Additionally, more than \$389 million in Personal Property Replacement Tax (PPRT) revenue will be diverted to state uses, continuing a trend from recent years.

Governor Pritzker, in remarks following session adjournment, acknowledged the use of one-time revenues in the budget, but emphasized that these were offset by one-time expenditures. He also noted continued progress toward eliminating the structural deficit that stood at \$3.2 billion when he took office. The governor defended the transparency of the budget process and stressed the importance of economic stability, particularly in light of possible revenue disruptions linked to federal policy changes.

Several major bills were enacted before adjournment. Among them were the State Public Defender Act, which overhauls the state's public defense system, an omnibus Medicaid reform bill, the Prescription Drug Affordability Act, and the Gun Safety Storage Act.

However, a number of high-profile proposals failed to reach the finish line. Chief among them was a comprehensive transit funding and governance reform package championed by Senator Ram Villivalam. The bill cleared the Senate but stalled in the House, falling short of the three-fifths majority required for passage after May 31. The proposal included a controversial \$1.50-per-delivery fee, branded by some as an "environmental impact fee" but criticized by opponents as a "pizza tax" disproportionately affecting working families. It also sought to expand real estate transfer tax and rideshare fees into suburban counties.

The legislation would have generated over \$1 billion to avoid service cuts and improve regional transit. It also allocated approximately \$200 million to downstate systems. With federal relief dollars expiring in 2026, agencies warn of a \$770 million deficit that could result in 40 percent service cuts and mass

layoffs. The bill also proposed establishing a new Northern Illinois Transit Authority to unify oversight and planning across the CTA, Metra, and Pace. However, opposition from suburban county officials regarding board representation helped derail the measure. A similar House proposal, lacking the funding provisions, also failed to advance.

Additional bills that did not pass include an omnibus energy bill that would have curtailed county zoning authority over energy storage and solar facilities, and a sweeping election bill with numerous county-level impacts.

The election legislation proposed changes to filing deadlines, curbside voting access, online vote-by-mail systems, election judge staffing flexibility, and expanded voter registration efforts for high school students. It would have also required real-time election result updates and permitted email delivery of objections to candidate nominations. A pilot program for universal vote centers was also included.

Also falling short was a pension reform bill aimed at improving Tier 2 benefits across retirement systems. The proposal included a cost-of-living adjustment for Tier 2 employees, changes to retirement age and salary calculations, and expanded eligibility for Sheriff's Law Enforcement Personnel (SLEP) status under IMRF to include county correctional officers and probation officers. The reforms were not accompanied by state reimbursement, raising cost concerns for local governments.

Other notable bills that failed to pass include legislation banning mobile phones in classrooms, the Clean Slate Act, the Medical Aid in Dying Act, and the Statewide Innovation Development and Economy Act.

Many of these proposals could resurface during the fall veto session, for which dates have not yet been announced. Legislative leaders have indicated that lawmakers may return earlier if federal budget developments necessitate adjustments to the state's financial plan.

ISACo will continue to provide updates, tools, and resources to help counties stay informed and engaged throughout the remainder of the legislative calendar. Please visit our website at www.isacoil.org to review our 2025 post-session materials, which include a comprehensive report with all legislation approved by both chambers that affects or is of interest to counties.

Please feel welcome to contact Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager Nekya Hall at nhall@isacoil.org with any questions.

ISACo Participates in Successful 2025

NACo Annual Conference

By: Tiffani Homer

The 2025 NACo Annual Conference was held July 11–15 in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. ISACo, in partnership with the United Counties Council of Illinois (UCCI), hosted another successful Illinois Counties Dinner with 120 attendees on Friday, July 11.

Speakers included ISACo President Matt Prochaska, UCCI President David Meyer, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Nationwide Vice President of Retention and Sales, Suzanne Ricklin and ISACo Executive Director Joe McCoy. Attendees also heard from the two impressive candidates running for NACo 2nd Vice President.

During the NACo Annual Business Meeting on July 14, the Honorable J.D. Clark (Judge – Wise County, TX) was elected NACo President, succeeding the Honorable James Gore (Supervisor – Sonoma County, CA). ISACo congratulates President Clark and thanks Immediate Past President Gore for his outstanding service.

The race for NACo 2nd Vice President was joined by two distinguished candidates. The Honorable Bob Dixon, Presiding

Commissioner from Green County, Missouri, and the Honorable Alisha Bell, Commissioner from Wayne County, Michigan. Alisha Bell was ultimately elected NACo 2nd Vice President, bringing her valuable experience and leadership to the NACo Executive Committee. ISACo congratulates both candidates and thanks them for their accessibility and desire to make NACo an even stronger organization.

ISACo staff and Illinois attendees took full advantage of the conference's rich opportunities for networking, collaboration and professional development through meetings, workshops and NACo-hosted events.

Illinois counties continue to be well-represented in NACo's leadership. For a list of Illinois county officials and staff serving on the NACo Board of Directors, policy steering committees and standing committees, please visit our website at www.isacoil.org.

We look forward to the next NACo Conference—the Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., scheduled for February 21–24, 2026. ISACo will share registration details as they become available.




 Join an ISACo

Policy Committee Today!

ISACo Policy Committees have been hard at work in 2025. Meetings are held virtually and committees meet four times per year unless committee members desire to meet more frequently. ISACo created the following committees for members to serve on to discuss issues and shape state policy:

Committees

- ✔ Agriculture and Rural Affairs Policy Committee
- ✔ Community, Economic & Workforce Development Policy Committee
- ✔ Environment, Energy and Land Use Policy Committee
- ✔ Public Health Policy Committee
- ✔ Justice and Public Safety Policy Committee
- ✔ Transportation Policy Committee
- ✔ Arts and Culture Policy Committee

The following quotes from committee chairs highlight the importance and value of the policy committees.



"As chair of the ISACO Justice & Public Safety Committee, the meetings offer county to county discussions on topics in need of attention or change, said Gustin."



"The committee allows a free flow of information providing guidance to ISACO on important county issues to the state. ISACO is blessed to have such a hardworking and diligent team to implement the work to be done. The work that help keep our counties safe and desirable places to live."

-Patty Gustin, Former Chair of the Justice and Public Safety Committee



"The Community, Economic, and Workforce Development Policy Committee has met twice, Reneau said." "I am encouraged by the engagement of each member and their enthusiasm to exchange ideas and collaborate towards common goals. We are eager to identify policies that will benefit our communities and the people we serve."

-Rob Reneau, Chair of the Economic and Workforce Development Committee

Please email Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager **Nekya Hall** at nhall@isacoil.org to learn more about joining a policy committee. It's not too late to sign up!

Call For

Legislative Proposals

ISACo invites county officials to submit ideas for legislative proposals to be considered for inclusion in the Association's 2026 legislative agenda. The Legislative Committee and Board of Directors will review submitted proposals to identify initiatives that align with ISACo's mission and the shared priorities of Illinois counties.

We encourage submissions that address policy challenges, improve county operations or enhance service delivery to residents.

County input is essential to ensuring our agenda reflects the real needs and experiences of local governments. Proposals can be submitted to Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager Nekya Hall at nhall@isacoil.org.



Please send along your ideas by
August 22, 2025.

Tune In to ISACo's Counties Count! Podcast



Stay informed on the latest developments in Illinois politics and policy with the Counties Count! Podcast, brought to you by the Illinois State Association of Counties. This podcast delivers timely insights,

legislative updates, and occasional interviews—all focused on issues that matter most to counties.

Recent episodes have covered a wide range of timely topics, including the conclusion of the 2025 spring legislative session, legislation to create a State Public Defender Act, a federal budget update, and proposals for

transit reform. Other episodes have explored the importance of preserving tax-exempt municipal bonds and featured an interview with House Counties and Townships Committee Chairman and State Representative Curtis Tarver.

Whether you're a county official, staff member, or policy enthusiast, Counties Count! is your go-to source for in-depth coverage of the Illinois General Assembly and county priorities. Episodes are short, informative, and designed to fit your busy schedule.

Subscribe today and never miss an episode.

Visit www.isacoil.org/counties-count-podcast to learn more and access the latest content. Let's make counties count—together.

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Veto Session in Illinois



The General Assembly will return to Springfield from October 14-16th and October 28-30th for the 2025 Veto Session.

Follow ISACo on online!



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e-Newsletter Subscription

Are you receiving our e-newsletter?

If not, please check your spam folder to make sure our newsletter is not being blocked. Otherwise, please e-mail Tiffani

Homer at thomer@isacoil.org with a request to be added. Don't miss out on these valuable ISACo updates!



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Associate Member Program

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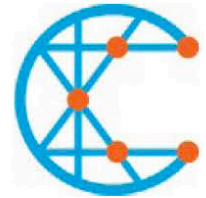
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National Fitness Campaign



Nationwide®



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Join the ISACo Associate Member Program!

ISACo's Associate Member Program was established to provide a forum for companies and organizations to build relationships with county officials while supporting the important work of ISACo.

The program offers five options for corporations and organizations to become associate members of ISACo while receiving benefits for this status.

Please contact the ISACo Member Services and Communications Manager, Tiffani Homer at thomer@isacoil.org to learn more.

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Counties Count!



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