



COUNTY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2022

ISACo ADVOCATES for Counties in 2022

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Counties Count!

A Message from the

Vice President



By: Matt Prochaska, Kendall County Circuit Clerk

On behalf of myself and the rest of the ISACo team I want to wish each of you a Happy New Year with the knowledge that 2022 brings new opportunities to make Illinois counties stronger and better-positioned to address the challenges ahead.

This upcoming year looks to be a unique year for legislative challenges due to COVID-19, a truncated session by the General Assembly, and a late Primary Election, which have all combined to make this one of the more distinctive years in memory for many of us in county government. Fortunately for ISACo, our Legislative Committee has been charged with the responsibility to review legislative proposals submitted to ISACo as well as propose and explore ideas for statutory changes that will benefit counties. As Vice President of ISACo I have the honor to serve as chair of the Legislative Committee.

The Legislative Committee met several times during the summer and fall of

2021 to develop ISACo's 2022 *Illinois County Action Program* (ICAP). During these discussions, the Committee reached a consensus that the 2022 ICAP should be limited to a small number of issues. This decision was predicated on the reality of a legislative session with an early adjournment date of April 8, as well as the likelihood that COVID-19 positivity rates could result in canceled session days.

The Legislative Committee completed its work for 2021 and forwarded legislative proposals to the Board of Directors for consideration. The Board approved these proposals and directed ISACo staff to secure sponsorship for each proposal and pursue passage during 2022. Information about these proposals is available in this edition of the *County Quarterly*.

In addition to adopting the 2022 ICAP, the Legislative Committee also suggested several amendments to ISACo's *County Platform*. These proposed amendments were adopted by the Board

of Directors. The ISACo *County Platform* conveys the views of the Association on a myriad of issues and is used by staff when evaluating positions on bills introduced for consideration by the General Assembly. The *County Platform* is intended to be an evolving document that reflects the views and sensibilities of ISACo member counties. Over time, this document will continue to grow as ISACo addresses new legislative issues and receives feedback from Illinois county officials and staff. The ISACo *County Platform for 2022* is included within this *County Quarterly*.

The Legislative Committee looks forward to continuing our service to counties in 2022 by reviewing ongoing and potentially fast-changing legislation that impacts counties, looking over our strategies to get our legislative proposals adopted and watching to see what can be done to further our *County Platform* and the *Illinois County Action Plan*. Please contact staff at 217/679-3368 or at info@isacoil.org if we can be of service.

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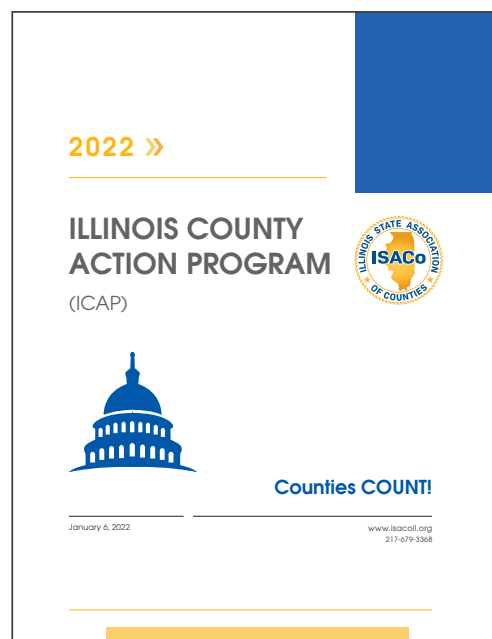
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2022 Illinois County Action Program

The following legislative proposals have been approved for introduction and pursuit in 2022 by the Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) Board of Directors.



SB 1595 (Senator Holmes / Representative Evans)

ELECTION OF COUNTY BOARD CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

PROBLEM

In counties where the position of chairperson and vice chairperson are elected by county board members and not voters, each position is elected by a majority or plurality of those present at the time of the vote. If there is a vacancy in the office of county board chairperson, the vice-chairperson is permitted to serve as chairperson for the duration of the departed chairperson's two-year term.

PROPOSAL

Require the chairperson and vice-chairperson to be elected by a majority of those elected to the board instead of among those present at the meeting during which the election is held. Permit the vice-chairperson to fill a vacancy left by a departed chairperson only until a new chairperson is elected and not automatically for the remainder of a two-year term.

HB 1949 (Representative Sosnowski)

COLLECTING UNPAID TAXES RESULTING FROM ERRONEOUS HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS

PROBLEM

The Illinois Revenue Code creates homestead exemptions and establishes a mechanism for erroneously granted homestead exemptions to be recouped by counties for distribution to the various taxing bodies within the counties. Cook County has a stronger enforcement mechanism than the other 101 counties as a result of being able to look at prior years' property tax payments to determine if an erroneous homestead exemption led to underpayments. These unpaid taxes are collected and interest payments are permissible.

PROPOSAL

Authorize all counties to review the past 3 years of property taxes paid by a taxpayer when the taxpayer is found to have improperly claimed a homestead exemption. Unpaid taxes would be collected and the county may impose interest on the amount of the unpaid taxes.

SB 3868 (Senator Curran)

EXPAND ELIGIBLE USE FOR STATE FUNDING OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN WAYS

PROBLEM

A new law enacted in 2021 (P.A. 102-0660) provides that, in or within one mile of a municipality with a population of over 1,000 people, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) shall establish and solely fund bicycle and pedestrian ways in conjunction with the construction, reconstruction or other change of any State transportation facility. The new law does not allow for some unincorporated areas within counties to benefit from state funding for eligible bicycle and pedestrian ways.

PROPOSAL

Amend the statute to allow the expenditure of state funds on eligible bicycle and pedestrian ways within one mile of an urban area (rather than within one mile of a municipality with a population of over 1,000 people). This will allow counties to benefit from state funding of projects in certain unincorporated areas.

HB 5061 (Representative Davis)

CLARIFY THAT NON-HOME RULE COUNTIES MAY ESTABLISH CERTAIN PROCUREMENT CRITERIA

PROBLEM

State law is unclear as to whether counties have the authority to establish procurement processes that could favor contracting with women and minorities, small disadvantaged, veteran or persons with disabilities-owned businesses and the use of business enterprise programs.

PROPOSAL

Amend state law to clearly state that counties may establish procurement processes that could favor contracting with women and minorities, small disadvantaged, veteran or persons with disabilities-owned businesses and the use of business enterprise programs.

Illinois County Officials And Staff Attend NACo Legislative Conference

Approximately 40 Illinois county officials and staff members attended the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference held from February 12-16, 2022, in Washington, D.C.



President Joe Biden, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and cabinet secretaries and administrators from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), U.S. Department of Commerce and Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) addressed the attendees and highlighted issues confronting counties. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was among the topics discussed.

The Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) and the Rural Action Caucus (RAC) discussed the opioid and fentanyl crises, mental health funding diversions and the need to accommodate electric vehicles.

As usual, the conference offered a multitude of valuable breakout sessions covering an array of policy matters critical to counties.

ISACo partnered with our friends at the United Counties Council of Illinois (UCCI) to host a well-attended networking dinner for Illinois attendees.

NACo's Annual Conference is scheduled for July 21-24 in Adams County, Colorado.



ISACo

County Platform for 2022

ISACo's County Platform is reviewed by the Legislative Committee and Board of Directors on an annual basis. The County Platform articulates the views of ISACo and provides staff with guidance when evaluating what, if any, position to be taken on introduced legislation. Amendments to the County Platform are suggested and considered for adoption each year. Suggested amendments to the County Platform should be submitted to info@isacoil.org.

CORE TENENTS

- Preserve and Expand Local Control
- Protect County Revenue Sources
- Oppose Unfunded Mandates
- Promote Ethical and Responsive Governance

LEGISLATIVE POLICY STATEMENTS

County Authority

- Supports legislation to expand the authority of counties to address local issues.
- Opposes the federal and state abrogation of rights and responsibilities more appropriately vested with counties.

County Revenue and Taxation

- Opposes legislation reducing state-shared revenues received by county governments.

- Supports the restoration of Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) revenues to a full 10% of the State Income Tax.
- Opposes the continued diversion of Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT) revenue.
- Supports repeal of the 1.5% administrative fee assessed by the state for the collection of locally-imposed sales taxes.
- Opposes enactment of property tax exemptions that reduce local revenues.
- Opposes reductions to county taxation authority.
- Supports the continued federal tax exemption for municipal bonds.
- Supports federal enactment of legislation allowing for the collection of taxes on out-of-state sales transactions.
- Supports legislation authorizing all counties to impose a local Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) for transportation funding purposes.

Courts

- Opposes legislation removing or reducing court fees that does not include provisions to make the removal or reduction cost neutral to counties

Elections

- Opposes mandates expanding the duties and responsibilities of local election authorities without the inclusion of funding to offset additional costs created by the mandates.
- Supports legislation that creates efficiency and cost savings for the administration of elections while protecting the right of eligible citizens to vote.

Environment

- Supports preservation of county interests in Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) regulations.

General Governance

- Supports changes to the statutes governing the dissolution of townships to provide counties with the authority to accept or reject the absorption of township duties and obligations while addressing essential policy considerations that arise following a county accepting the duties and obligations.

Health and Human Services

- Supports legislation to restore Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Benefits (CHIP) for local jail inmates awaiting trial.
- Supports increased state and federal funding of public health departments.
- Opposes unfunded mandates requiring counties to collect used or unused pharmaceuticals and supports policies requesting that counties work in cooperation with the state and pharmaceutical companies for safe disposal.

Labor and Personnel Benefits

- Supports local control over county employment matters.
- Opposes legislation that increases public employee benefits or expands eligibility for benefits without providing state money to offset increased costs.
- Supports legislation authorizing county board participation in collective bargaining negotiations when the county board is responsible for appropriating money to fund the wages and benefits agreed to by the parties.

Public Records and Notifications

- Supports legislation that allows for statutory reporting requirements and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to be fulfilled through the availability of information on a county website.



- Opposes notification requirements that are duplicative and superfluous.
- Opposes legislation that increases penalties and consequences for unintentional violations of FOIA or the Open Meetings Act (OMA).
- Supports legislation authorizing county boards to establish remote meeting participation policies.

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Supports inclusion of county priorities in federal infrastructure package or surface transportation reauthorization.
- Supports preservation of local zoning authority in the deployment of next generation telecommunications and opposes federal limitations of such authority.
- Supports federal efforts to improve the accuracy of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Broadband Mapping Data.
- Supports reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- Supports legislation intended to prevent escalating infrastructure project costs resulting from delays caused by utilities with facilities within the project area that need to be relocated in a timely manner.



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ARPA INVESTMENT TRACKER

The Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker Launches to Provide a Detailed Local Investment Picture of American Rescue Plan Act Funding

The Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker Launches to Provide a Detailed Local Investment Picture of American Rescue Plan Act Funding

This article was published on February 3, 2022, on the National Association of Counties website and is of interest to counties seeking information regarding how other counties are spending American Rescue Plan Act funds.

Washington, D.C. — Brookings Metro, the National League of Cities (NLC), and the National Association of Counties (NACo) have partnered to launch the Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker, an online resource that compiles information from local governments to offer a detailed picture of how large cities and counties are deploying the American Rescue Plan Act's (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) dollars.

The Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker currently captures recovery plan data from 41 large cities, 104 large counties, and seven consolidated city-counties, collectively representing \$18.4 billion in planned investment. Additionally, the Tracker categorizes more than 2,300 SLFRF-supported projects across these communities at two levels:

- ✔ **Seven overall spending groups** (community aid, economic and workforce development, government operations, housing, infrastructure, public health, and public safety)
- ✔ **More than 40 spending sub-groups** that provide further detail on intended use of funds

The Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker adds to other important efforts to understand local ARPA implementation and will be updated as more information becomes available from large city and county governments.

Among initial analyses of the Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker's data, research teams find:

Large cities and counties have planned projects representing about half of their total allocation of flexible dollars. Together, the 152 large cities and counties in our Tracker have set aside funds for more than 2,300 named projects. Those projects collectively represent \$18.4 billion in planned investment—a little less than half of the total SLFRF allocation for these cities and counties.

A significant portion of funding is being used to replace lost revenue. While large cities and counties are planning investments across a host of critical services, supports, and projects, they are dedicating the largest share of their funds to government operations. The share of SLFRF dollars dedicated to government operations is expected to decline, as stabilization priorities give way to larger-scale, longer-term efforts.

Project types reflect local government functions and economic circumstances. Many counties are using their funds to strengthen local health departments and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, while many cities are using the funds to augment services and supports for young people negatively affected by the pandemic.

The Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker can be accessed via the following web address: www.naco.org/resources/featured/arpa-investment-tracker

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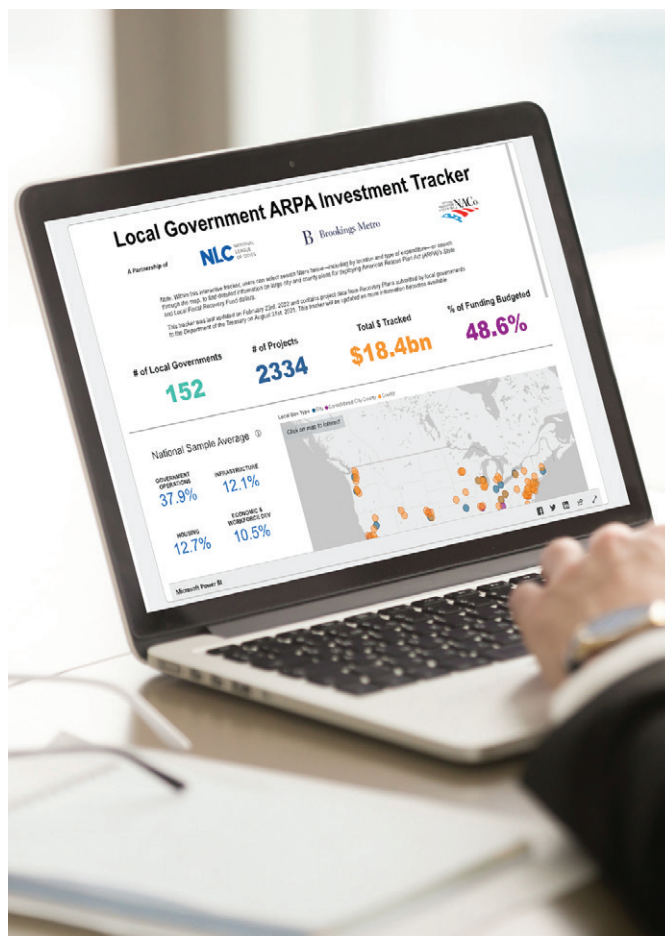
ABOUT THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

The National League of Cities relentlessly advocates for, and protects the interests of cities, towns and villages by influencing federal policy, strengthening local leadership and driving innovative solutions.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

The National Association of Counties (NACo)

strengthens America's counties, including nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to advocate for county government priorities in federal policymaking; promote exemplary county policies and practices; nurture leadership skills and expand knowledge networks; optimize county and taxpayer resources and cost savings; and enrich the public's understanding of county government.



Acknowledging State Graduates from NACo Leadership Academy

Eight Illinois county staff members participated in the National Association of Counties (NACo) Leadership Academy, a 12-week online program that empowers front-line county government employees with fundamental leadership skills. The eight graduates were part of a cohort that ran from September 13 - December 18, 2021.

The Illinois County staff members who completed the Academy are as follows:

- ✔ Sandy Ceci, Administrative Assistant, Will County
- ✔ Sheila Santos, Information Management Office Director, Dekalb County
- ✔ Kerri Wisz, Assistant Finance Director - Budgeting, McHenry County
- ✔ Rachael Parker, County Clerk, Peoria County
- ✔ Dustin Currin, Network Support Specialist, McLean County
- ✔ Matt Meins, McLean County
- ✔ Margaret Tyson, County Board Member, Will County



"This is a transformational leadership program that has proven to be the most scalable, cost effective, and efficient way to make your leaders better."
-General Colin Powell

Across the country, 4,500 county employees participated in the NACo Leadership Academy.

Congratulations to these leaders for completing the program! To learn more about the Academy, visit [NACo.org/Skills](https://www.naco.org/Skills). Enrollment is now open for 2022.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

12-week online leadership development made for entry- to mid-level county professionals.



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Become an ISACo Corporate Partner!

ISACo's Corporate Partner 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.

Contact us for additional information about how your company or organization can become a part of ISACo.



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