



COUNTY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024

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COUNTIES TOGETHER

ISACo PRESIDENT,
MATT PROCHASKA



A Message from the Executive Director



By: Joe McCoy

The first quarter of 2024 has been full of meaningful activity for ISACo.

As of this writing, we have worked with state legislators to introduce the bills that comprise our 2024 legislative agenda, reviewed over 2,700 introduced bills while listing and categorizing them within our bill tracking system, launched four new policy committees that will serve as a foundation for developing ISACo initiatives at both the state and federal levels of government, published about a dozen *News and Views* e-newsletters to keep counties informed, met with state legislators to discuss various issues, celebrated Black History Month with informational posts on our social media platforms, produced podcasts highlighting people and legislative issues, published information about the Governor's proposed State Fiscal Year (SFY) State Budget, participated in the 2024 National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington, DC where we co-hosted a dinner for Illinois county officials and staff with almost 110 attendees and continued planning for our first County Lobby Day with our partners at the United Counties Council of Illinois (UCCI).

This *County Quarterly* includes a story and photos from the 2024 NACo Legislative Conference, a summary of interim policy resolutions sponsored by Illinois county officials and staff that were approved during the Conference, information about the

Governor's proposed SFY 2025 State Budget that includes the elimination of the sales tax for groceries that would reduce county revenues if enacted into law and an interview with NACo Immediate Past President Denise Winfrey (who also serves on the Will County Board).

ISACo continues to encourage interested county officials and staff to join one or more of our policy committees to assist in shaping our state and federal legislative advocacy efforts. The committees are as follows:

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

Service on an ISACo Policy Committee is contingent upon the county being a member of ISACo or the applicant being a member of an affiliated association. Please contact Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager Nekya Hall at nhall@isacoil.org for more information. Thanks.

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NACo Proposed Interim Policy Resolutions

Sponsored by Illinois County Officials

By: ISACo Staff

The following seven interim policy resolutions sponsored by Illinois County officials/staff were considered and approved during the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference (February 10-13). In total, 37 interim policy resolutions were considered. Each proposal received a hearing before one or more of NACo's 10 Policy Committees.

This article includes the title of each interim policy resolution, the sponsor and a summary of the resolution. The Illinois resolutions are presented in the order they appeared in NACo's 2024 Interim Policy Resolutions document.

Interim policy resolutions provide an opportunity for members to address policy issues at the Legislative Conference that were not discussed at the previous Annual Conference. Interim resolutions may not overturn existing policy resolutions, and will expire at the 2024 Annual Conference in Hillsborough County, Florida (July 12-15).

Additional information about NACo's interim policy resolutions process is available at www.naco.org.

Building Community Through Multi-County "Good Food for All" Initiatives

(Will County Board Chairwoman Judy Ogalla)

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges county-led, sub-regional "Good Food For All" initiatives to attract financial resources needed to: (1) make locally produced, nutritious food more widely available; (2) promote community revitalization; and (3) create jobs that can't be

outsourced. This policy responds to consumer demand that's driving a marketplace redesign to shorten the geographic distance between farm and fork. A "Good Food For All" economy will supply consumer demand for products and practices that are healthy for the body, green for the planet, fair for farmers and workers, and affordable for all.

Proposed Interim Resolution on FY 2025 Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

(DuPage County Director of Community Services Mary Keating)

The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to support the following levels of funding for core U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill: no less than \$4.2 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula funding; no less than \$2.5 billion in formula funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME); \$3.5 billion for Homeless Housing Assistance grants, including at least 20% of funds directed to ESG as allowed by statute, plus an amount to fully fund expiring supportive housing and Shelter Plus Care rent subsidy contracts; expansion of the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program in addition to full funding for existing project-based and tenant-based contracts; \$50 million for HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) and \$500 million in Section 108 Loan Guarantee authority.

Proposed Interim Resolution on HOME Reauthorization

*(DuPage County Director of Community Services
Mary Keating)*

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass HOME reauthorization legislation and allow for increased federal funding assistance to support affordable housing development.

Proposed Interim Resolution in Support of Federal Funding for Doula and Social Support Services and Training

(Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller)

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the Federal Government and Congress to assist counties by providing funding for: 1) Increased Doula services and training and certification; 2) Support community-based organizations in building and diversifying the Doula workforce; 3) Increase education/technical assistance to encourage counties and states to implement Medicaid coverage for Doulas and sufficient reimbursement rates to ensure expanded access to Doula care for Medicaid enrollees, along with the extension of Medicaid postpartum coverage; to ameliorate maternal health outcomes for all women and address racial disparities in maternal health, mortality, and morbidity.

Proposed Interim Resolution on Strengthening and Sustaining the Healthcare Workforce in the United States

(Cook County Commissioner Alma Anaya)

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the federal government to work collaboratively with local and state governments to create a pipeline of healthcare workers to address the national shortage by: (1) funding programs aimed at creating opportunities for high school and post-secondary students to explore career opportunities in the medical field; (2) designating scholarships and grants for students enrolled in degrees and licenses related to the medical field, including dentistry and mental and behavioral health; (3) outreaching to communities of color to encourage multi-lingual and diverse candidates from communities who typically do not have access to health care; and (4) identifying public funded medical systems throughout the nation to create a pipeline of healthcare workers with the goal of expanding and strengthening the healthcare workforce system.

Proposed Interim Resolution in Support of Federal Funding for Social Media Safety Education and Training

(Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller)

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the Federal Government and Congress to assist counties by providing funding for 1) social media safety education to make youth and students aware, in an engaging and age-appropriate way, of some of the most serious social media-related dangers and how to protect themselves from these threats; 2) the provision of evidence-based educational outreach for parents and caregivers focused on raising awareness around the various social media-related dangers and providing practical steps parents can take to protect their children; 3) school administrators and parent associations to develop or enhance in-school and out-of-school social media safety policies and guidelines; 4) high-quality research regarding the evolving social media-related threats to the safety and welfare of K-12 students; and 5) the provision of social media safety education and other interventions for foster youth, who may be at significantly higher risk for social media-related harms.

Proposed Interim Resolution in Support of High-Speed Rail Funding

(Cook County Commissioner Monica Gordon)

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the development of a more comprehensive high-speed rail transportation network and the allocation of appropriate funding for the replacement, repair, upgrade, and development of current and needed infrastructure, and for the acquisition of fast trains to connect urban and rural settings throughout the nation.



An Interview With Denise Winfrey

NACo Immediate Past President Denise Winfrey began her career in government as a member of the Joliet, IL, Township Board. She has been a commissioner of the Will County Board since 2009. She is also, a former ISACo Board Member. Prior to serving as NACo president, Winfrey served as chair of NACo's Community Economic and Workforce Development Policy Steering Committee, as vice-chair of NACo's Large Urban Counties Caucus (LUCC), and as a NACo Ambassador.

She is a member of the Women of NACo, the National Organization of Black County Officials (NOBCO), NACo's Membership Committee and the NACo Board of Directors. She is also a graduate of NACo's High Performance Leadership Academy.

Winfrey is a graduate of the Lewis University School of Business and the American University School of Public Affairs. She is currently the Commissioner for District 6 on the Will County Board.

Q Who and/ or what experiences got you to where you are today?

A I come from a family that has always been active and involved in the community. My lesson growing up was to serve in whatever way you can to improve things. When I was little, people came to our home to learn to read and write. My parents pushed to get the first Black person on the County Board, the seat I now hold.

Q What made you decide to pursue public office?

A I knew that I wanted the second half of my life to be about service. My company bought me out when they sold my division. This freed me up to get involved in several local service boards and organizations. When one of the township trustees passed, a fellow Rotarian reached out to me about joining the board. Being on the township board fit with my life goals, so I agreed. A few years later, my County Board member passed. I agreed to the appointment and to run in the next cycle. That was in 2009, and I'm still there.

Q What are you able to take away each time you're involved in a new position or working with the public? What keeps you going?

A I believe every interaction with others is an opportunity for learning. I also believe that when we stop learning, we die. While we live, we give others a chance to learn from us.

Q What was your initial impression of NACo?

A A fellow board member encouraged me to go to my first conference shortly after I became a member of the board. The annual conference was in Nashville, and I was hooked! He introduced me to people he knew, I introduced myself to several others and joined the Workforce Development Committee. I became the chair. That committee eventually merged with Community and Economic Development to become the Community, Economic and Workforce Development Committee, (CEWD) and I became a vice-chair. While chairing, I was able to showcase the work being done in Will County on community gardens by having a member of our Land Use Department as a speaker on the monthly call, talking to counties across the country. I also joined the Large Urban Counties Caucus (LUCC) and moved into leadership.

Illinois County Officials Attend NACo

Legislative Conference & Illinois Counties Dinner

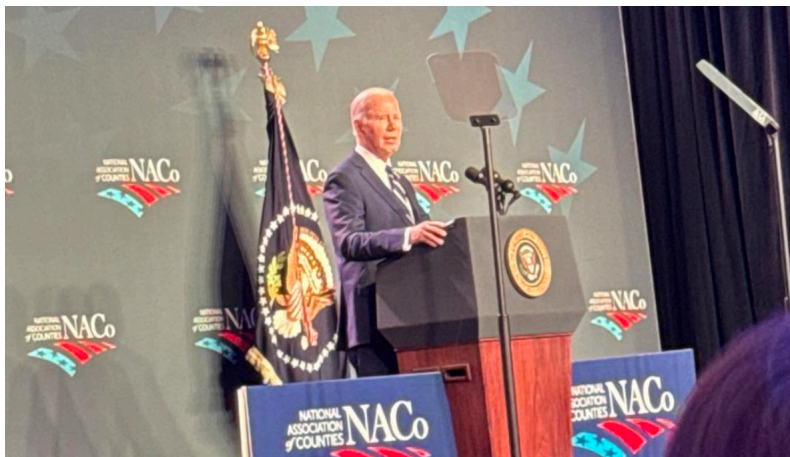
More than 80 Illinois County officials and staff attended the 2024 National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington D. C. from February 10-13, 2024.

Kicking off the conference, on February 10, 2024, ISACo and the United Counties Council of Illinois (UCCI) jointly hosted the Illinois Counties Dinner at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. Approximately 100 people attended the

successful event. Pictures from the event are available below and on the next page.

During the dinner, Illinois attendees were able to hear from the three candidates vying for election as NACo's 2nd Vice President. That election will occur during the NACo Annual Conference in July 2024.

(NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.
February 10-13, 2024



ISACo and UCCI would like to thank our guests for attending the Illinois Counties Dinner.

The NACo Legislative Conference provides a multitude of educational sessions and high-level speakers throughout the event.

On Monday, February 12, President Joe Biden addressed the conference.

During the conference, Illinois county officials and staff sponsored seven Interim Policy Resolutions that were considered and approved by NACo Policy Committees. The resolutions can be found on page 3.

ISACo is proud to report that Illinois is well-

represented within NACo leadership. This affords Illinois county officials and staff with opportunities to influence NACo activities and shape federal public policy.

ISACo looks forward to the upcoming NACo Annual Conference in July, to be held in Hillsborough County, FL.



GOVERNOR PRITZKER STATE OF THE STATE AND SFY 2025 BUDGET ADDRESS



On Wednesday, February 21, 2024, Governor JB Pritzker delivered his combined State of the State and State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025 Budget Address to a joint session of the Illinois House and Senate. The Governor's SFY 2025 budget proposes \$52.933 billion in state revenues and \$52.695 billion in state spending. This represents an increase of \$752 million (2 percent) in spending over SFY 2024 estimated spending.

This was the Governor's sixth State of the State and Budget Address and second proposed budget of his second term.

The Governor touted positive developments in the State's economy and conveyed his belief that the future of Illinois is bright and that opportunity lies ahead.

It should be noted that the Governor's proposed budget does not call for an increase or decrease in Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) revenue for SFY 2025. This is the income tax revenue shared with counties and municipalities. ISACo will continue to work with our coalition partners to pursue an incremental increase in LGDF revenues to a full ten percent share. The current distribution is 6.47 percent of income tax revenues collected.

However, included within the Governor's proposed budget is the elimination of the sales tax for groceries. This proposal, if enacted, would result in a loss of revenue for Illinois counties.

ISACo is requesting that counties share an estimate of the revenue loss with us so that we can communicate the fiscal impact to the Governor's Office and state legislators.

Additionally, Governor Pritzker highlighted several investments included within his proposed SFY 2025 budget. Some of these investments are as follows:

Smart Start Illinois/Early Childhood Education:

In SFY24, the Pritzker administration invested \$250 million in Smart Start Illinois, which impacted thousands of Illinois families. In SFY25, Smart Start will receive \$400 million in new and maintained funding. The SFY25 budget includes over \$170 million in general funds for Smart Start through the Department of Human Services (DHS).

K - 12 Funding: The SFY 2025 budget proposes an additional \$449 million for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Higher Education: The SFY 2025 proposed budget calls for a \$2.55 billion increase for higher education.

Homeless Prevention: The Governor is proposing an additional \$50 million to combat homelessness.

Department of Children and Family Services: The proposed SFY 2025 budget increases the DCFS budget by \$76.6 million.

Department of Human Services: The SFY 2025 proposed budget includes \$2.4 billion (\$940 million increase) for services for people with developmental disabilities in support of the *Ligas* consent decree. Also included is a \$36.5 million increase for the Child Care Assistance Program. Another \$19 million is targeted to increase forensic inpatient and outpatient services and support the *Williams* and *Colbert* consent decrees. An additional \$116 million is in the proposed budget to address growing caseloads with the Home Services Program and \$182 million is budgeted to support asylum seekers arriving in Illinois.



Healthcare and Family Services: The SFY 2025 proposed budget allocates more than \$39 billion in All Funds, including \$9.383 billion in General Revenue Funds (GRF) to the Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS). SFY 2025 Medicaid liability is projected to total \$26.8 billion in All Funds, with a total program enrollment of more than 3.6 million (0.1% increase over SFY 2024). The proposed budget includes an increase of 497.9 million to annualize Medicaid Program rate increases and changes mid-SFY24. The proposed budget includes funding of \$629 million for the Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults and the Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors Program (\$440 million will be covered by State GRF). Also included is a \$40.6 million GRF increase for Child Support Services. The proposed budget provides \$10 million for a program to erase medical debt which is estimated to be approximately \$1 billion in relief.

Illinois Department of Public Health: The proposed SFY 2025 budget includes \$6 million to hire 100 additional staff in the Office of Health Care Regulation. Includes \$45 million to support IT replacement for the Illinois' National Electronic Disease Surveillance Systems and Long-Term Care Systems. Another \$8.5 million is targeted to respond to unexpected public health threats and emergencies; \$2 million for grants for freestanding reproductive health care clinics and maintains \$18 million in funding to support reproductive health initiatives; \$400,000 million for a homelessness Mortality and Morbidity Report and \$500,000 to fund community-based tuberculosis prevention, follow-up, and treatment. The budget also provides capital funding to adopt plans for a Chicago-area Public Health Laboratory and to rebuild the Carbondale Public Health Lab.

Other Funding Increases Noteworthy for Counties:

- ✔ \$30 million for camera grants to local law enforcement.
- ✔ \$200 million to support the Restore, Reinvest, Renew (R3) program.
- ✔ \$20 million in capital funding for new Lead Service Line Replacement Inventory grants.
- ✔ \$70 million to address per-and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) pollution.
- ✔ \$30 million in Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Grants (OSLAD) for local governments.
- ✔ \$10 million in additional funds for the Illinois Grocery Initiative to address food insecurity.
- ✔ \$10 million to expand existing grant programs for individuals and organizations of the arts.

Several resources with additional information about the Governor's proposed SFY 2025 State Budget are available at www.isacoil.org

Please note that the Governor's proposed budget will likely undergo several changes following negotiations with the General Assembly prior to adjournment of the spring legislative session. ISACo will continue to advocate for county priorities and share updates during the budget process.

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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.



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Counties Count!



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