



COUNTY

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ISACO HOSTS 2024 ANNUAL LUNCHEON



Executive Director's 2024 Annual Report



By: Joe McCoy, Executive Director

ISACo's bylaws mandate the creation of an annual report—a vital tradition that allows us to spotlight the achievements, milestones, and advancements of the past year. This report serves as a comprehensive record, showcasing our programs, events, financial health and exciting new developments.

Each annual report is more than just a document—it's a testament to the collaboration and dedication of our team and member counties.

We extend our gratitude to our member counties for their partnership and support. ISACo remains steadfast in our mission to empower Illinois counties and elevate their role in shaping the state's future.

2024: A Year of Progress and Reflection

This year marked ISACo's sixth full year of operation, a milestone underscored by both progress and poignant loss. We mourned the passing of Vice President Dennis Deer, Cook County Commissioner, whose dedication and leadership profoundly impacted his community and counties across Illinois. Commissioner Deer's legacy of public service and compassion continues to inspire us.

In September, the ISACo Board of Directors appointed Cook County Commissioner Stanley Moore to complete the remainder of Commissioner Deer's term, ensuring continuity in leadership.

By year's end, ISACo proudly represented 31 member counties, reflecting steady growth and increasing influence.

ISACo's financial condition remains robust, empowering future growth and accomplishments.

Legislative Advocacy: Building Influence and Addressing Challenges

The General Assembly convened in January and adjourned on May 29 after initially scheduling adjournment for May 24, 2024.

During the 2024 spring legislative session, almost 3,000 bills were filed. ISACo tracked almost 800 of these bills. This excludes resolutions and constitutional amendments. ISACo took official positions of support or opposition on legislation more than 200 times during the 2024 spring session.

One major focus was the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF). Partnering with a coalition of municipal organizations, ISACo advocated for increased LGDF revenue. Although the local share remained at 6.47% of total state income tax collections for State Fiscal Year 2025, our collective efforts have yielded modest gains in recent years, showcasing the power of collaboration.

The legislative session resulted in the passage of several ISACo-supported bills that included but were not limited to, county public health department authority to distribute fentanyl test strips at no fee, county authority to use transportation funds

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to assist people with rides to attend problem-solving courts, grant money for counties to restore forests, wetlands and prairies and a new law creating the opportunity for counties to access state loans to finance the acquisition, construction or improvement of new or existing clean energy infrastructure.

Several ISACo policy committees continued to gain new participants and met frequently to discuss issues and hear from guest presenters about topics of interest. ISACo has the following policy committees:

- ☑ 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

In 2023, ISACo created a Wind and Solar Facility Task Force to identify and discuss policies to make the law more palatable for counties and their residents. This Task Force met several times in 2024 to consider and develop proposals for future legislation. Those proposals were drafted into legislative form and approved by the Task Force and ISACo's Board of Directors for introduction in 2025.

As with previous years, ISACo published a complete report with all new Public Acts that either affect or are of interest to counties. For the sixth consecutive year, ISACo also published a report on new Public Acts that imposed unfunded mandates on counties. Both reports are available on ISACo's website.

In preparation for 2025, ISACo's Legislative Committee met to develop the Association's 2025 legislative agenda and consider amendments to the 2025 ISACo County Platform.

Federal advocacy partnerships are critical as well, and ISACo actively maintains a strong collaboration with the National Association of Counties (NACo). As a partner with NACo, ISACo appoints Illinois county officials and staff to a plethora of NACo standing and policy committees. These appointments ensure that Illinois has a powerful voice in shaping critical federal policies that impact counties.

There are currently six county officials and staff members on NACo's Board of Directors along with the dozens of Illinois county officials and staff who are active participants on NACo committees.

Events and Meetings: Collaborating for Success

ISACo held four meetings of the Board of Directors in 2024. Each was held remotely.

ISACo policy committees met throughout the year to discuss issues and participated in formulating ISACo's 2025 legislative agenda. Several meetings of ISACo's Wind and Solar Facilities Task Force also occurred and resulted in policy recommendations to improve the wind and solar facilities law.

ISACo's Legislative Committee met in November to consider and formally recommend issues to the Board of Directors for inclusion within the 2025 legislative agenda. ISACo will pursue introduction of Board-approved proposals during the General Assembly's 2025 legislative session.

On April 10, 2024, ISACo and the United Counties Council of Illinois (UCCI) launched the first Illinois County Lobby Day in Springfield—a powerful platform for county officials to champion their needs. The day began with a dynamic legislative briefing at the historic Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, featuring insightful presentations from Illinois' legislative leaders including House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch, Senate President Don Harmon, House Republican Leader Tony McCombie and Senate Republican Leader John Curran.

Attendees then engaged directly with lawmakers at the Illinois Statehouse, advocating for county priorities. The evening concluded with a vibrant networking reception, fostering connections between officials from across the state.

ISACo and UCCI further collaborated with two dinner events.

The Associations co-hosted a dinner during the February National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. ISACo also co-hosted a dinner with UCCI during the July NACo Annual Conference held in Hillsborough County, Florida. Both dinners were well-attended by Illinois county officials and staff in attendance at the NACo conferences. ISACo is appreciative of our corporate partner Nationwide for their generous sponsorship of the July dinner.

ISACo will benefit from the continued partnership with UCCI in 2025.

ISACo held its Annual Luncheon in Cook County on December 13, 2024, at the Union League Club of Chicago. We appreciate the assistance of former Kendall County Board Chair Scott Gryder in making the venue available for county officials and staff to build relationships with each other.

Communications and Resources: Connecting, Informing, and Empowering

In 2024, ISACo strengthened its role as a leading voice for Illinois counties by expanding our communications and resources:

Staying Connected: We published nearly 50 editions of our *News and Views* e-newsletters, along with four *County Quarterly* newsletters, ensuring our members were always informed of the latest developments.

Exploring New Frontiers: The *Counties Count! Podcast* continued to share news and perspectives with audiences, while we laid the foundation for an exciting new venture—informative video content production on our YouTube channel.

Resource Expansion: We launched the Transit Reform Resource Page, consolidating vital information for Cook and Collar Counties' transit systems. Additionally, our Paid Leave for All Workers Act Resource Page provided crucial compliance guidance for counties navigating this new law.

ISACo's active social media presence, particularly on Facebook and X, kept members engaged and informed in real time. As we look ahead to 2025, we're committed to leveraging these platforms even further to strengthen our connection with member counties and stakeholders across Illinois.

Building Bridges: Strengthening Partnerships

In 2024, ISACo welcomed five new corporate partners to our growing network: The Illinois Funds, Constellation Telecom, Intergovernmental Personnel Benefit Cooperative, Linebarger Attorneys at Law, and ClearGov. By year's end, our partnership roster expanded to include 11 valued collaborators whose generosity and excellent service continue to drive our mission forward.

Together, these partnerships empower ISACo to innovate, expand and provide even greater support to counties across Illinois. We are excited to build on this momentum in the years to come!

Illinois 2025-2026 104th General Assembly

The Illinois General Assembly convenes each year in January and remains in session until May 31st. The General Assembly reconvenes for two weeks in the Fall to consider the Governor's vetoes. At other times, special sessions may be convened by the Governor or a joint proclamation by the presiding officers of both chambers.



2025 Important Dates

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|----------------|--|----------------|---|
| Jan 8: | Inauguration of the 104 th General Assembly | Apr 11: | Deadlines to Advance Bills Out of Originating Chamber |
| Feb 19: | Governor's State of the State and Budget Address | May 9: | Second Committee Deadline for House and Senate Bills |
| Mar 21: | First Committee Deadlines for House and Senate Bills | May 31: | Adjournment |

Join an

ISACo Policy Committees

Help shape state policy affecting counties by joining an Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) Policy Committee! Participation is virtual and occurs four times per year unless the members of a committee desire to meet more frequently. These committees play a vital role in shaping the policies that impact our counties. As we navigate the complex landscape of governance and policy, it's crucial to ensure the voices of our county officials and staff are heard and actively shaping decisions that affect counties.

Why Join?

1. **Community Empowerment:** Your county's needs and concerns deserve attention. Joining a Policy Committee allows you to actively contribute to the creation and improvement of policies that impact your operations.
2. **Informed Decision-Making:** Stay at the forefront of policy discussions and decisions. Your participation ensures that policies are crafted with a comprehensive understanding of local realities.
3. **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with like-minded individuals who share a passion for positive change. The committees offer a platform for networking, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas.
4. **Educational Resources:** Stay informed and educated on crucial issues affecting counties. The committees provide access to valuable resources and educational materials to enhance your understanding of policy matters.

Committees Overview:

1. **Justice and Public Safety Policy Committee:** Addresses issues related to justice, law enforcement and public safety within local governments.
2. **Community, Economic and Workforce Development Policy Committee:** Addresses and promotes initiatives and policies that contribute to the well-being and growth of counties and local economies.

3. **Environment, Energy and Land Use Policy Committee:** Addresses and oversees matters related to environmental protection, energy policy and land use planning within local governments.
4. **Agriculture and Rural Affairs Policy Committee:** Addresses and formulates policies related to agriculture and rural development. This includes examining issues such as farming practices, agricultural sustainability, rural infrastructure and the overall well-being of rural communities.
5. **Public Health Policy Committee:** Addresses various health issues that promote and safeguard the health and well-being of residents through the development, evaluation and advocacy of policies.
6. **Transportation Policy Committee:** Focuses on formulating and overseeing transportation policies within counties. This committee addresses aspects such as infrastructure development, traffic management, public transit and sustainability.
7. **Arts and Culture Policy Committee:** Recommends policies related to arts and culture within counties. Its purpose is to provide a platform for discussing, developing and implementing policies that support and promote the arts and cultural activities.

How to Get Involved:

Joining is easy! Visit our website www.isacoil.org and explore the Policy Committees section. Choose the committee that aligns with your interests and expertise and fill out an application form. Return the form to Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager, Nekya Hall at nhall@isacoil.org.

Your participation matters. Together, we can build a future where policies are reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of counties. Join an ISACo Policy Committee and be a catalyst for positive change!



Legislative Update

By Nekya Hall

As Illinois transitions from the 103rd to the 104th General Assembly, critical legislative efforts are underway. The “lame duck” session, scheduled for January 4-8, 2025, offers the final opportunity for the 103rd General Assembly to address key issues before the 104th General Assembly convenes for the 2025 Spring Legislative Session on January 8, 2025.

This article recaps the November 2024 Veto Session, offers an initial preview of the “lame duck” session scheduled for the early days of January, and looks ahead to the convening of the 104th General Assembly on January 8, 2025.

Following the Veto Session recap, readers are made aware of an ISACo report summarizing the new laws taking effect in 2025.

Lame Duck Session Days

The “lame duck” session refers to session days when a legislative body meets after an election but before the newly elected members take office. The “lame duck” session, scheduled for January 4-8, 2025, provides an opportunity for the outgoing 103rd General Assembly to finalize key measures, possibly including an anticipated Energy Omnibus Bill, which aims to address critical issues in energy policy.

These will be the final days of work for the 103rd General Assembly prior to the seating of the 104th General Assembly.

2024 Veto Session

During the November 2024 Veto Session, legislators worked on finalizing adjustments to the state budget. This included changes to spending levels for various programs, including those concerning healthcare, social services and education. The adjustments were necessary to align the state’s budget with revenue projections for the fiscal year. Other bills approved by both chambers included, but were not limited to, TIF extensions, tax credits and permissible expenditures of municipal sales tax revenue.

2025 Spring Legislative Session

A major issue looming over the 2025 spring session is how the General Assembly and Governor will close an estimated \$3 billion budget deficit for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026.

The General Assembly is also expected to consider amending the Illinois Pension Code to adjust Tier 2 benefit levels toward benefit levels under Tier 1. Two bills (HB 5909 and SB 3988) would impact several pension statutes, including the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF). This legislation will likely be re-filed in 2025.

Another significant issue to be addressed by the Illinois General Assembly in 2025 is the looming \$730 million budget shortfall confronting the Chicago-area transit agencies. This effort is likely to include proposals exploring additional funding for, and consolidation of, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, and Pace—into a single entity. Transit reform legislation may also be expanded to affect counties throughout the state. Two identical transit reform bills filed in 2024 were HB 5823 and SB 3937. ISACo has reviewed these bills and prepared an Executive Summary as well as an 11-page index of their various provisions. Both documents are available on the Transit Reform resource page at www.isacoil.org.

ISACo will provide additional information about these bills and carefully monitor developments going forward.

New Laws Taking Effect in 2025

Dozens of new laws will take effect on January 1, 2025. ISACo has compiled a list of tracked bills that were enacted into law with 2025 effective dates. This report is a resource for county officials and staff to ensure that counties are in compliance with those laws that prescribe new duties or responsibilities.

Visit www.isacoil.org to read the report.

ISACo Honors Board of Directors Dave Zimmerman and John Finrock at Annual Luncheon

Two awards were presented to ISACo Board of Director Members David Zimmerman (Tazewell County Board Chair) and John Finrock (Ogle County Board Chair-not in attendance). Each Board Chairman retired from public service in 2024 after choosing not to seek re-election. ISACo President Prochaska thanked them for their dedication and service to ISACo and their counties.



David Zimmerman
Tazewell County Board Chairman



John Finrock
Ogle County Board Chairman

Annual Luncheon

The 2024 ISACo Annual Luncheon took place on Friday, December 13, at the Union League Club of Chicago. ISACo President Matthew Prochaska presided over the meeting.

The Annual Luncheon provides an opportunity to bring county officials, staff and corporate partners together to network and celebrate the Association's milestones.

The Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) Annual Luncheon event had a special dedication this year for Cook County Commissioner and ISACo Vice President, Dennis Deer. The ISACo family was heartbroken to learn that Commissioner Deer passed away on June 23, 2024. ISACo Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager, Nekya Hall presented a resolution to the Deer Family in his honor.

ISACo was grateful to the Deer family for being able to attend and receive the resolution. Dennis' wife, Barbara Deer, thanked ISACo and spoke on behalf of the Deer family. Dennis' three children were also in attendance (sons Kaleb and Kanaan Deer and daughter Trinity Deer).

Commissioner Deer served on the ISACo Board of Directors from January 2023 until his passing. He was a dedicated and compassionate servant leader whose contributions benefited his community, Cook County and other counties throughout the state and nation because of his work with ISACo and NACo.

Commissioner Deer will be greatly missed.

Additional speakers for the event included Cook County Board of Commissioners President Toni Preckwinkle, ISACo Past President Deborah Sims and Executive Director Joe McCoy.

ISACo thanks all who were able to attend the event and looks forward to hosting the 2025 Annual Luncheon next year.

ISACo also honored deputy Board members David Zimmerman (Tazewell) and John Finfrock (Ogle).







2025

NACo Legislative Conference

The National Association of Counties (NACo) 2025 Legislative Conference is fast approaching! The conference will take place on March 1 through 4, 2025, in Washington D.C.

Attendees will have the opportunity to engage in second-to-none policy sessions, interact with officials of the new Administration and meet with members of Congress. This is a one-of-a-kind advocacy opportunity to strengthen our intergovernmental partnerships for years to come.

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

ISACo and the United Counties Council of Illinois (UCCI) will also host an Illinois Counties dinner by invitation for guests to network at the National Press Club in Washington D.C.

During the conference, Illinois county officials and staff will have the chance to sponsor Interim Policy Resolutions that will be considered and approved by the NACo Policy Committee.

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.

To register for the conference, please visit naco.org/events scroll down to the 2025 NACo Legislative Conference and click "Event Details" then the link to "Register Today" will appear. ISACo will also share the registration link in our *News & Views* e-newsletters.

We hope to see you there!

(NACo) Legislative Conference February, 2024



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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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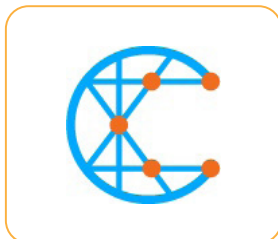
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Become an ISACo Corporate Partner!

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.

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

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