



ISACo ANNUAL REPORT

Overview of ISACo Activities - 2019

2019



December 13, 2019

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The Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) entered 2019 as a new association looking to make an immediate impact while simultaneously building a solid foundation for future success. Both objectives were achieved.

I think it's important to pause for a moment to reflect on where we started. On October 22, 2018, ISACo opened an office at 828 South Second Street in Springfield. The office was completely empty but for an old desk along with a metal folding chair. Sitting atop the desk was my home computer.

I'm pleased to announce that we've since upgraded!

Furniture was acquired with the assistance of our friends with Will County and we purchased computer equipment and accepted the donation of laptop computers from the National Association of Counties (NACo). We thank NACo for its generosity and strong support of ISACo as Illinois' NACo feeder association. ISACo's office is fully operational and staff has since coordinated ISACo's activities and hosted meetings and visitors from this location.

Bringing a new association into existence presents its own unique set of opportunities and challenges. The opportunities include the ability to create an effective vision and outstanding organizational culture at the outset. Notable challenges are discovering the best way for the organization to make an immediate impact and generate excitement about the pursuit of a common vision.

As it looks to the future, ISACo can claim several successes during the first year of its existence that we will build upon during the coming year and beyond.

We are pleased to discuss our many 2019 accomplishments on behalf of your association in this report.

On a personal note, I have immensely enjoyed the many new relationships I have made with county officials and staff over the past year. I appreciate the important work that you do and it's an honor to serve you. Thanks.

Joe McCoy, Executive Director

December 13, 2019



LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The cornerstone of an association like ISACo is an active and aggressive legislative program.

During 2019, ISACo maintained a strong presence at the Statehouse and effectively communicated our positions on legislation affecting counties.

ISACo tracked approximately 800 bills and filed officials positions on more than 100 bills. Each legislator who sponsored a bill on which ISACo took a position received a hand-delivered letter informing them of where we stood.

ISACo contracted with two legislative advocacy firms to bring the total number of registered lobbyists working on behalf of ISACo and our member counties to five.

ISACo was invited to participate on two public policy working groups. The first was an Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) working group on rural broadband expansion. The second was a working group assembled by Governor Pritzker's Office to discuss taxation and revenue allocation policy for cannabis legalization where ISACo successfully advocated for a county share of the tax revenue generated from the sale of recreational cannabis.

ISACo was asked to provide testimony during a subcommittee hearing of the Property Tax Relief Task Force created by P.A. 101-0181. ISACo arranged for expert witness testimony during the hearing and issued a letter with specific policy recommendations to the broader Task Force.

ISACo advocated in support of its members' capital infrastructure project needs. ISACo led an effort to collect project lists from our member counties and delivered these lists to legislators and the Governor's Office.

ISACo prioritized timely communications with Illinois county officials about legislative news. ISACo published a weekly e-newsletter throughout the year with information and updates about legislative activities and issues pertinent to counties.

One of ISACo's more significant publications was a comprehensive report about specific bills affecting counties approved by the General Assembly and enacted into law by the Governor. This "Public Acts Report: Legislation of Interest to Counties Approved in 2019" document was initially published following the spring session and updated throughout the summer and fall as the Governor acted on legislation. ISACo published a companion overview summarizing the more impactful legislative actions of interest to counties in 2019.

Additionally, ISACo published a "first of its kind" report identifying new state mandates enacted into law that affect counties. The purpose of this report is to encourage county officials to develop a greater awareness of the cumulative costs imposed by these new laws. Each of these legislative reports are available on ISACo's website.

Developing an annual legislative agenda to address county needs is critical. ISACo established a Legislative Committee in 2019 and held meetings to consider various proposals.

ISACo's first ever Illinois County Action Program (ICAP) will be rolled out in January 2020.

EVENTS AND MEETINGS

ISACo hosted three social events for county officials from January-July 2019. The first was a breakfast in conjunction with the March National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. This event was attended by almost 40 Illinois county officials. The second was a March Open House at ISACo's Springfield Office that was attended by many county officials and state legislators. The third event was a dinner co-sponsored by Nationwide Insurance and attended by dozens of Illinois county officials participating in the July NACo Annual Conference in Clark County, Nevada.



In August 2019, ISACo hosted a legislative breakfast for area county board chairpersons in Tazewell County. The meeting was attended by Congressman Darin LaHood (R-IL18) and State Senator David Koehler (D-Peoria) who provided federal and state legislative updates respectively. More of these events will be held in 2020.



ISACo also joined county officials from Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota and Wisconsin at a White House Conference for local government leaders in August 2019.



ISACo attended the Local Officials Day at the Illinois State Fair in August 2019. The event was hosted by State Treasurer Michael Frerichs.



The ISACo Board of Directors met 5 times in 2019 and the Executive Committee met on 10 occasions during the year.



The Cook and Collar County Caucus (CCCC) met four times and the Large County Board Caucus (LCBC) met twice.



ISACo held an Annual Meeting on Friday, December 13, 2019, to consider revisions to the bylaws and evaluate a series of policy resolutions.





ISACo added two additional member counties in 2019 (Sangamon County and Ogle County).

ISACo entered into a contractual relationship with a consultant to assist with membership recruitment and our corporate partnership program.



ISACo established a corporate partner program and entered into new partnership agreements with 5 companies and now have 6 corporate partners contributing to the mission of ISACo. Continuing to grow our partnership opportunities will be a point of emphasis in 2020. Information about the corporate partner program is available on ISACo's website.



ISACo launched a quarterly newsletter to complement the weekly e-newsletter. The *County Quarterly* was initially published during the summer of 2019. The second newsletter was released in the fall. The *County Quarterly* is mailed to county officials throughout Illinois and available on ISACo's website. Readers of the *County Quarterly* will be kept apprised of ISACo activities and informed about issues that affect Illinois counties.



A web presence is invaluable and ISACo designed and built a website to meet the communication needs of the association. The website includes information about the association, its by-laws, board of directors and staff members. ISACo is committed to transparency and minutes from all Board of Directors and Executive Committee meetings are available on the website. Each of ISACo's publications are housed on the website as well. This includes an archive of ISACo's weekly e-newsletters and *County Quarterly* newsletters.



ISACo created Facebook and Twitter feeds to further connect with our members and other interested parties. County officials and staff are encouraged to follow us on these platforms for timely news and information.



ISACo hired an Executive Assistant who began service in 2019 and anticipates adding at least one more staff member in 2020.