



Illinois Baptist State Association
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IBSA Partnership Report • Fall 2022

For over 115 years, Baptist churches across Illinois have been joined together to strengthen each other and expand gospel missions throughout our state. Through the mid-point of 2022, churches have turned a corner. While attendance for many has not returned to pre-COVID levels and inflation presents economic challenges, much of the pandemic-driven uncertainty marking the previous two years is in the past.

The 2021 Annual Church Profile reports reflect this:

- Baptisms recorded by IBSA churches were down 3% from 2020 (1,985 vs. 2047)
- Professions of faith were up 31% from 2020 (2,184 vs. 1,668)
- Worship attendance statewide was down 24% (46,747 vs. 61,444)
- VBS enrollment rebounded, up 5,000 from 2020 (15,735 vs. 10,354)
- Missions giving through CP (\$5,835,888.66) rebounded from 2020 (\$5,443,103.97)

Life has changed, but churches are navigating evangelism and discipleship in this new landscape and IBSA is actively engaged in helping them in new ways.

IBSA is continuing to invest in the next generation. Over 600 students were disciplined in week-long IBSA summer camps at the Lake Sallateeska and Streator facilities. And from January through June, 84 students made professions of faith at the camps. During that same time, at camps, events, and partnerships with local churches and associations, almost 300 students have been trained to share their faith.

IBSA is strengthening churches and leaders. In last year's Annual Church Needs survey, *56% of churches said they need revitalization now*. Through the first half of 2022, 48 churches and 15 local associations are engaged in revitalization processes with the Health Team.

IBSA's Health, Growth, and Mission teams are also engaged with almost 100 churches in Next Step consultations. These conversations with church leaders focus on listening, asking questions, discovering the church's next right step to move forward, then helping the church map out a strategy of action. This shorter-term process is helping churches make progress in focused areas like pastor searches, deacon trainings, evangelism, and discipleship strategies. The Growth Team at IBSA continues to offer ministry skills trainings throughout the state, often deploying leaders from the network to lead trainings for the network.

IBSA is multiplying churches. With the population of Illinois shifting, it's not only essential that IBSA help churches remain strong and healthy. It's also vital that new churches are started each year to reach new communities and peoples. Illinois is a mission field and churches are the missionaries. IBSA continues the hard work of planting new churches in the population dense areas of Chicago and St. Louis Metro East but is also working hard to plant churches in unreached small towns, mid-sized cities, and college communities.

Through the first six months of 2022, IBSA helped start 5 new churches with 18 expected to launch this year. And 32 churches planted over the last few years are still being helped with support.

With over 8 million people who don't know Jesus and 10 counties without an IBSA church, there is much work to do. IBSA's Mission Team is developing new strategies to partner with churches and local associations to multiply churches across the state.

**Whether it's strengthening existing churches
or planting new ones, it's a big mission, and the
cooperative giving of IBSA churches fuel the mission.**

► Watch the partnership video at
www.IBSA.org/partnershipreport