



Illinois Baptist State Association
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IBSA Partnership Report • Fall 2023

As your IBSA network continues to invest in the health, growth, and mission of its nearly 900 member congregations, a new day of church health is emerging, and lives are being changed across our home-state mission field. The Annual Church Profile report, published earlier this year, reflects this:

- Baptisms recorded by IBSA churches were up 40% from 2021 (2,787 vs. 1,985).
- Over 18% more churches recorded baptisms (434 vs 367).
- VBS enrollment increased almost 38% over 2021 (21,673 vs. 15,735).
- Worship attendance statewide rose nearly 13% from the previous year (52,666 vs. 46,747).
- Still, inflationary and other concerns contributed to Cooperative Program and Mission Illinois offering giving from churches declining slightly from the previous year (CP \$5,513,999 vs \$5,835,888 and MIO \$308,951 vs \$335,734).

Several strategic shifts first implemented in 2019 are helping the network deliver value to churches with increasingly different needs, providing processes and resources that enable each church to thrive.

Working to help churches revitalize. IBSA's Health Team is directly engaged with 84 churches and 15 local associations in revitalization processes. The most recent Church Needs survey indicates the tide is turning toward healthier churches. The number of churches responding that revitalization is needed "now" or "urgently" has decreased 28% since 2018.

Guiding churches to take their next steps. IBSA's Health, Growth, and Mission teams are engaged with at least 130 churches in various "Next Step" processes. These strategic consultations help guide church leaders toward a contextualized plan for ministry, based on the top needs the church identifies. For example, this year Next Step consultations have already equipped more than 60 churches with new evangelism strategies and assisted almost 30 churches in their search for a new pastor or ministry staff member.

Helping churches reach and disciple the next generation. Through mid-year, nearly 1,000 children and students have already been disciplined through Super Summer, Go Chicago student mission week, and IBSA camps at the Lake Sallateeska and Streator facilities. Over 800 more students are expected at Youth Encounter and AWSOM events this fall. And 7 different campus ministries continue at Illinois colleges and universities.

Multipling churches. IBSA has helped launch 6 new churches this year, with several more in process. In addition, more than 30 churches planted over the last few years are still being helped with support.

Mobilizing volunteers to meet community needs. Illinois Baptist Disaster Relief has deployed 237 trained volunteers to provide labor, meals, and support to people experiencing loss, working at over 340 different job sites. In partnership with the North American Mission Board, IBSA helped host an August 4-5 Serve Tour in Chicago that saw more than 700 missions volunteers complete 46 projects and engage in 980 gospel conversations, with at least 26 coming to faith in Christ that weekend.

With over 8 million people who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus, there is no shortage of spiritual work in this increasingly diverse Illinois mission field. As a statewide network of churches, IBSA is working hard to support the churches and church plants that are our state's primary missionaries.

Thank you for your church's participation and cooperative giving that fuel the mission of taking the gospel to more than 8 million lost people in Illinois.