



Illinois Baptist State Association
3085 Stevenson Drive
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IBSA Partnership Report • Fall 2024

Illinois is home to the nation's 3rd largest metropolitan area, but also more than 1,200 communities of populations under 10,000. With over 8 million people who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus, our state is a true mission field. We are thankful for the partnership of the nearly 900 cooperating churches and 33 local associations that enable us to strengthen and expand the reach of Baptists across Illinois.

IBSA staff work to serve churches through the strategies of health, growth, and mission, helping them reach our Illinois mission field together. Below are 2024 mid-year updates.

Investing in the health of churches: IBSA is directly engaged with 119 churches and 6 local associations in revitalization processes this year. Now in its fourth full year, our revitalization strategy is leading to healthier churches statewide. The number responding that revitalization is needed “now” or “urgently” in the Annual Church Needs survey continues to decrease (44% in 2023 vs. 67% in 2019).

Growing pastors and leaders: In connection with IBSA's “For the Pastor” emphasis, 78 pastors are receiving one-on-one coaching. Leaders from 148 churches have been gathered for encouragement and equipping in 12 regional Multiply Hub meetings with six more scheduled this fall. IBSA hosted two Pursuing God Together retreats which help pastor/wife couples strengthen their marriage and ministry. Four more individual retreats for pastors and pastors' wives are scheduled for the fall. The Priority Women's Conference saw over 500 women gather in Springfield for two days of leadership development and inspiration.

Moving churches into mission: So far, Illinois Baptist Disaster Relief has deployed 171 trained volunteers on 14 different callouts. Beyond providing essential physical help, they had 79 gospel conversations and 8 people received Christ. Over 80 new churches have been engaged in evangelism strategies through Ignite events and church evangelism consultations. And 5 of 14 projected new church plants have been launched this year, with the 2 most recent in August already baptizing 12 new believers.

Reaching the Next Generation: At summer's end, more than 900 children and students participated in IBSA camps at Lake Sallateeska and Streator Baptist Camps. Over 350 students experienced intensive discipleship at Disciple Now events in the spring and Illinois Super Summer in June. Nearly 1000 more students are expected at Youth Encounter and AWSOM events this fall.

Direct engagement in Health, Growth, and Mission strategies helped lead to encouraging numbers in the Annual Church Profile report, published in early 2024.

- Baptisms recorded by churches were up again, 30% from 2022 (3,361 vs. 2,787).
- Sunday School and Other Bible Study attendance reached highs since 2019 (60,169 and 6,220).
- Worship attendance statewide continued to rise since the Covid low (up 13% over 2022 to 58,895).

With prayer, trust in the Lord, and positive cooperation in statewide ministry and missions, Illinois Baptists have every reason to believe 2024 will continue to see more churches thriving.