



IBSA

Illinois Baptist State Association

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IBSA Partnership Report Fall 2026

The Illinois Baptist State Association is committed to serving its nearly 900 cooperating churches as they engage lostness in Illinois with the light of the gospel. Illinois Baptist ministries strengthen churches and assist in evangelism through discipleship and missions strategies. The first 7 months of 2026 continue to build positive momentum upon encouraging reports from 2025 Annual Church Profile (ACP) data. Here are a few highlights from this year.

Investing in the health of churches: IBSA's church revitalization staff has engaged with more than **65 new pastors** in "revitalization readiness" coaching and is leading over **90 churches** through in-depth revitalization processes. This intentional process continues to lead to healthier churches statewide. The number responding that revitalization is needed "now" or "urgently" in the Annual Church Needs survey continues to decrease (down to 39% in 2025 vs. 67% in 2019).

Growing church leaders: Investment in the spiritual health and ministry skills of pastors and volunteer leaders is essential. Nearly **250** participated in January's two-day **Illinois Leadership Summit** in Springfield. And through leadership development events for adults and youth, IBSA provided ministry skills training to over **1,200 participants** from churches across the state. The annual Priority Women's Conference had over **700 women** attend across three locations to receive two days of leadership development and inspiration. IBSA also continues to support local Baptist associations. The 2-day Associational Roundtable in Springfield saw **more than 40** Associational Mission Strategists, Moderators, and their spouses gather for support and learning.

Moving churches into mission: Through July of this year, **6 new churches** have been planted or restarted, and 20 new church planters are in the pipeline. Illinois Baptist Disaster Relief had a busy spring and summer deploying trained volunteers to 8 locations, providing **7,960 hours of labor** to people in need. Beyond providing essential physical help, volunteers had **77 gospel conversations** and prayed with **1 person** to receive Christ.

Reaching the Next Generation: At summer's end, over **1,200 children** and students participated in IBSA camps at Lake Sallateeska and Streator Baptist Camp, Super Summer, and Go Chicago mission week. Nearly **100 more** students experienced DNow discipleship weekends in the spring. And collegiate campus ministry continues strategic renewal, with ministry now taking place at **six universities** and plans for continued expansion underway.

The 2025 **Annual Church Profile (ACP)**, published in March, showed gains in Illinois Baptist churches and cooperative work:

- Baptisms rose again. The 3,875 baptisms was up 5.6% from 2024, the highest total since 2016.
- Worship attendance statewide also continued to rise, up 2.4% from the previous year (62,131 vs. 60,640), the highest since 2019.
- Sunday School enrollment also saw gains, up 3% year-over-year (62,325 vs. 60,408)

Churches and our cooperative work are strengthening, while challenges remain. Growth from church plants and newly cooperating churches is not keeping pace with church closures and attrition due to non-cooperation. This reinforces the need to start more new churches to reach Illinois' changing population.

Church missions giving through the Cooperative Program (CP) was slightly down year-over-year (\$5,226,214.63 vs. \$5,391,920) and is 21% lower than the historic high of \$6,640,960 in 2009. However, 2026 is seeing positive signs of churches reversing the downward trend in missions giving through CP. Through July, CP giving stood at **\$3,062,321.29, compared to \$3,001,329 the previous year, a 2% increase.**

Thank you for your church's participation and cooperative giving. Together, we are taking the gospel to the more than 8 million in Illinois who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord.