



2025

MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

Bringing people and businesses together.

JOIN US.

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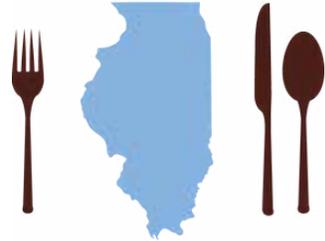
MISSION STATEMENT:

Founded in 1914, the Illinois Restaurant Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, protecting, educating, and improving the restaurant industry in Illinois.

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*We are Illinois' second largest private sector employer

ILLINOIS



RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION



IN TUNE WITH OUR INDUSTRY

We help the hospitality industry thrive. Period. The Illinois Restaurant Association is the largest, most active resource for the restaurant, bar, and hospitality industry in the State of Illinois. In addition to legislative advocacy, we provide access to cost-saving programs, networking events, referrals, educational seminars and webinars, marketing opportunities, certification classes, and a distinguished board of nationally-recognized restaurant, hospitality, and bar operators. We ensure that you stay connected to the pulse of the industry.

"The resources and relationships have blown me away. The networking has been invaluable, and the support from the IRA has helped us stay ahead of industry challenges."

- Jodi Fyfe, CEO The Paramount Group



At a Glance

26,797

RESTAURANT LOCATIONS
IN ILLINOIS

\$51.7 BIL
IN SALES

\$1.83

IS CONTRIBUTED TO THE
STATE ECONOMY FOR
EVERY \$1 DOLLAR SPENT

585,400

RESTAURANT AND
FOODSERVICE JOBS;
10% OF TOTAL JOBS
IN THE STATE

9 in 10

RESTAURANTS ARE
SMALL BUSINESSES

ADVOCACY

The Illinois Restaurant Association is the voice on issues that matter to your business. Join us to build on this progress.



Past

- Brought happy hour back to Illinois
- Helped secure the approval of \$50 million in grants for restaurants in the 2022 Illinois state budget
- Passed "Cocktails-to-Go"
- Protected the state's tip credit during minimum wage negotiations Repealed
- the Cook County Soda Tax
- Secured restaurant exemption from the Chicago Bag Tax
- Helped reform the Payment Protection Program (PPP) to make it more accessible to small businesses
- Advocated and secured a second round of PPP for the hospitality community
- Instrumental in securing the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF)

Present

- Preserved the tip credit at the state level in Illinois, saving restaurants 20-40% in labor costs
- Stopped the property tax increase in Chicago, saving \$300 million
- Stopped the proposed alcohol tax increase in Chicago, saving \$10.6 million
- Excluded restaurants from the Federal Trade Commission's final rule on "junk fees", saving the industry \$3.5 billion, or about \$4,800 per restaurant location
- Helped pass the Interchange Fee Prohibition Act, which eliminates swipe fees on sales tax and gratuity
- Enacted changes to BIPA legislation that reduced overall fines for violations

Future

- Continuously working to save the Illinois tip credit
- Working to pass an anti-piracy act that would make it illegal for unauthorized third-parties to sell reservations to customers
- Repeal sunset on "Cocktails-to-Go"
- Advocating for pro growth policies at local, state and federal levels
- Maintaining strong relationships with elected officials and regulators
- Having a place at the table on all hospitality issues

LOBBY DAYS IN SPRINGFIELD AND WASHINGTON, D.C.

Members are invited to visit Springfield and Washington DC with other restaurateurs from Illinois to discuss and advocate on issues that have an impact on the industry.

POLITICAL ACTION CAMPAIGN

Help us build on victories from the past by investing in our success in the future. Contributing to the IRA PAC provides a meaningful investment that drives the growth and vitality of the hospitality industry. For more information contact adeguide@illinoisrestaurants.org.



MEMBERSHIP

Bringing people and businesses together.

JOIN US.

MEMBERS JOIN FOR MANY DIFFERENT REASONS:

- Advocacy and Representation
- Industry Updates and Resources
- Networking Opportunities
- Training and Educational Programs
- Discounts and Preferred Pricing
- Marketing Support and Recognition

We are a community of trusted thought leaders dedicated to the growth and advancement of the restaurant, bar, and hospitality industry in Illinois. There is strength in numbers - joining the IRA pledges your support to the foodservice and restaurant industry.

OUR MEMBERS

Operator members include: chef driven concepts, fine dining, bars, event venues, food trucks, caterers, banquet halls, airport concessions, fast casual, and more.

Associate members include: product and service suppliers, distributors, lawyers, accountants, tech companies, insurance brokers, and more.

It's been our mission for over 100 years to provide unparalleled support for our members, and to strengthen our industry now and in the future.

HOW DO I JOIN?

Joining is easy!

Scan to join today or go online at illinoisrestaurants.org.



Scan to Join



BENEFITS

DISCOUNTS ON CERTIFICATION CLASSES AND TRAINING PRODUCTS

The IRA offers mandated food safety and responsible alcohol certification trainings with tuition discounts available for IRA members.

DUAL MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Illinois Restaurant Association includes a membership in the National Restaurant Association.

COST SAVINGS THROUGH IRA ENDORSED PROGRAMS

Through IRA Endorsed Programs, suppliers to the foodservice industry offer valuable members-only savings on everyday expenses, such as: health care, music licensing, credit card and payroll processing, energy bills, insurance, uniforms, and more.

EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS AND WEBINARS

The IRA hosts a variety of webinars and seminars on pressing issues facing our industry.

EXPERT REFERRALS

Membership provides access to industry experts in a variety of fields such as HR, law, food safety, PR, insurance, accounting, and more.

MEMBERSHIP EVENTS

The IRA regularly hosts an array of membership events from small gatherings to extravagant festivals. There are also many committees to become a part of. Members can also become a part of one of our many committees.

CONNECTIONS TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF CULINARY LEADERS

IRA members can mentor and hire ProStart® students through the IRA Educational Foundation (IRA EF).



ENDORSED PARTNERS



The IRA's endorsed partners are fully vetted, and our endorsed companies provide benefits exclusive to our members.

ServSafe

IRA members receive discounts on certification classes and all ServSafe training products.

Discounts

National Restaurant Association Show

IRA operator members includes membership in the National Restaurant Association, giving you access to an extensive network of industry peers and **a complimentary expo ticket** to the annual NRA Show held in Chicago every May.

Discount

Adesso Capital

Already received ERC? You may qualify for a refund of FICA taxes paid on tipped wages. See if you qualify. Adesso will navigate you through this process, and file for you, ensuring you receive the money owed.

Cash In Hand

ARAMARK

ARAMARK offers the total solution: rental, lease, and direct sale, or any combination of these options, for a customized single-source solution for your company. Members receive rental discounts of up to 20%, and 10% off all direct sale catalog rates.

Preferred Pricing & Discounts

BMI Music

IRA members receive up to 20% off music licensing fees from BMI. If you are currently paying fees and have not informed BMI you're a IRA member, visit their portal today.

Discounts

C-SOAP

C-SOAP sells, leases and leases-to-own high quality, low-energy dishmachines from American manufacturers. IRA members receive a 10% discount on the first 12 months of their lease.

Discounts

EMPLOYERS®

EMPLOYERS is an exclusive partner of the IRA, providing workers' compensation insurance and services to our members through a network of independent insurance agents. IRA members receive up to a 5% credit on their EMPLOYERS workers' compensation policy.

Cost Savings

HUB International

HUB's team of hospitality risk professionals will help you develop a restaurant insurance and risk management program that protects against physical property catastrophes or damages, covers your liability in the event of lawsuits for injury, and insulates you from other events that could disrupt your business or harm your restaurant's good name.

Preferred Pricing

IGS Energy

As a local, family-owned supplier, we know your markets. By taking advantage of the free energy audit available to IRA members, we can create a customized energy solution for your business.

Discounts

Heartland Payment Systems

An IRA partner for over a decade, Heartland can support your credit card processing and payroll needs. Heartland offers exclusive discounts on all services to IRA members.

Discounts

J&J Gaming

J&J can maximize your potential in video gaming no matter where you're at with gaming in your establishment! They will provide all necessary up front and ongoing guidance at no cost and without strings attached in addition to a multitude of services. J&J partners on average earn an additional \$20,000 annually.

Cash In Hand

United Healthcare

One of our national-level benefits, the restaurant insurance trust offers a variety of healthcare options to provide your employees insurance. Choose from a range of innovative products and services to meet the diverse needs of restaurant employers, employees and their families. IRA Members can save up to 5% off health, dental, vision and other forms of Insurance.

Preferred Pricing

Start realizing these opportunities by scanning the QR code or visiting illinoisrestaurants.org/page/EndorsedPrograms



EDUCATION

*We've got your
certification needs
covered.*

The IRA is the best solution for all of your certification needs. Be sure to comply with Illinois law by getting certified with the most experienced instructors. Illinois Restaurant Association members receive special pricing. You can trust the IRA to keep you informed and compliant:

- ServSafe Food Service Sanitation Manager
- ServSafe Food Handler
- ServSafe Alcohol / BASSET
- Summer Festival Food Vendor Sanitation
- ServSafe Allergen
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

In addition to year-round classes at our offices in both English and Spanish, we also offer private classes for groups of 10 or more at your location. Call our office at (312) 787-4000 to book your private class.

For a schedule of class dates or to register, visit illinoisrestaurants.org.



Scan to Register





FOUNDATION

Build the Future of Hospitality



The Illinois Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (IRAEF)

Developing skilled talent, supporting workers, and connecting restaurant owners with job-ready employees.



We provide incredible value to restaurant owners and the hospitality industry:

Developing Talent:

- Prepare high school students with certifications, internships, and real-world experience through the ProStart program.

Scholarships:

- Awarded \$3.4M+ in scholarships to future culinary and hospitality professionals.

Workforce Development Programs:

- Offer essential training for youth and justice-involved individuals to build successful careers in hospitality.

Supporting Workers:

- Provide \$290K+ in emergency relief to food and beverage workers in crisis.

Meeting Workforce Needs:

- Job placement programs connect trained, job-ready candidates with employers.

How to get involved:

- **Donate:** Support scholarships, training programs, and emergency relief efforts.
- **Volunteer:** Mentor students, host internships, provide job-shadowing opportunities, or share your expertise.
- **Hire Graduates:** Tap into a pipeline of skilled, motivated, and trained employees.

Together, we can build a stronger, more sustainable future for Illinois hospitality industry.



Scan to Get Involved



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

IRA Educational Foundation ProStart®

Available in 52 Illinois high schools, Prostart® is a two-year, industry-backed culinary arts and restaurant management program aimed at providing valuable experience and empowering the next generation of hospitality professionals.

Career Exploration

- Career Camps
- Career Fairs
- Field Trips
- Guest Speakers
- Job Shadow Days
- Mentoring

Practical Experience

- Industry Certification
- Job Readiness Training
- Internship Placements

Connections to Post-Secondary Education

- College Tours
- College Prep Workshops
- Scholarship Prep Workshops

Youth Readiness & Employer Advancement

- Registered Apprenticeships
- Gain Essential Job and Life Skills

Paving the way for careers in hospitality.



Scan to Get
involved

CHICAGO GOURMET

Presented by



Chicago Gourmet presents food connoisseurs with the best food, wine, spirits and beer from Chicago and beyond!



Scan to learn more about Chicago Gourmet.

HIT A STAGGERING
2.03 BIL
MEDIA IMPRESSIONS



EVENTS

CHEF'S TABLE

Mix and mingle with over 700 industry peers while sampling food and cocktails from the top restaurants in Chicagoland area.

IRA GOLF CLASSIC

Build valuable relationships through a casual day on the course. The event unites over 300 restaurant and foodservice professionals and is followed by a spirited evening reception.

MEET THE EXPERTS

The most anticipated annual membership event. Top industry professionals participate in one-on-one speed coaching and power networking.

ANNUAL MEETING

An annual celebration of membership that welcomes and installs new officers and new members of our Board of Directors.

MEMBERSHIP EVENTS

Discuss the latest industry news and trends with other members and learn from fellow peers. These events include: seminars, webinars, business advising, local roundtables, Tech Tour, and our Cubs Rooftop Membership Mixer.



There are several additional marketing and networking opportunities throughout the year. Check our website illinoisrestaurants.org for more information.

CORPORATE SPONSORS



Thank you to the 2025 Illinois Restaurant Association Corporate Sponsors

DIAMOND



PLATINUM



GOLD



SILVER

BRONZE



Bringing people and
businesses together.

JOIN US.



To effectively serve the needs of the restaurant industry and support its continued growth, the Illinois Restaurant Association is proud to be guided by its prominent and influential Board of Directors. Comprised of industry leaders and experts, our Board plays a vital role in shaping the future of the association and the restaurant community in Illinois.

2025 OFFICERS

President & CEO

Sam Toia

Chair

Scott Weiner
The Fifty/50 Group

First Vice Chair

Liz Lombardo Stark
Gibsons Restaurant Group

Second Vice Chair

Clodagh Lawless
The Dearborn

Corporate Secretary

Carmen Rossi
8 Hospitality

Treasurer

Carin Stutz
Hawaiian Bros.

Assistant Treasurer

Deanna Chang
Plante Moran

Immediate Past Chairman

Steven Hartenstein
Lucca Osteria & Bar

IRA Educational Foundation Chair

Adam Barrons
EcoLab

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Aaron Aschemann

Gordon Food Service

Joshua Bennett

Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling

Kevin Boehm

Boka Restaurant Group

Bill Carlson

Turano Baking Company

D'Andre Carter

Soul & Smoke

Karen Conn

Conn's Hospitality Group

Dave Connor

Blackhawk Restaurant Group, LLC

Jim Doney

Chicago Beverage Systems

Michelle Durpetti

Gene & Georgetti

Adam Gewanter

TAO Group

Christina Gonzalez

Taqueria Los Comales

Andrea Hill

HMC Hospitality Group

Billy Lawless Jr.

Gage Hospitality Group

Brad Maher

HMS Host

Tim McGrail

PepsiCo

Matt Menna

Sterling Bay / Four Corners

Mario Ponce

Takito Brands

Tony Priolo

Piccolo Sogno

Dan Raskin

Manny's Cafeteria & Delicatessen

Ethan Samson

Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises

Korina Sanchez

Third Coast Hospitality

Faraz Sardharia

Tandoor Char House

Mike Telesky

UnitedHealthcare

Mike Thompson

Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits

Kim Walz

McDonald's

Patrick Wartan

Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP

Eric Williams

Bronzeville Winery



ILLINOIS
RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

OPERATOR MEMBER • ILLINOIS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

Organization Name _____

Corporate Name (If Different Than Above) _____

Primary Contact _____

Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Phone _____ Mobile _____ Fax _____

Email (confidential) _____

Website _____

Number of Locations _____ Attach list of additional locations, if any.

Company Type: Independent Restaurant Franchisee National/Regional Chain

Industry Segment: Fine Dining Casual/Family Dining Fast Casual Quick Service Other _____

Do You Have A Liquor License? Yes No

Number of Full Time Employees _____

Cuisine Type _____

PAYMENT

Check payable to Illinois Restaurant Association,
enclosed for \$ _____

Credit Card, charged for \$ _____

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

Name On Card _____

Billing Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____ CSV _____

Signature _____

Memberships are non-transferable and non-refundable. By becoming a member and paying your dues, you agree to the bylaws of the IRA. This firm or individual certifies that the information provided is correct and agrees to the statements on this application.

ANNUAL GROSS-SALES

DUES

\$0 - \$499,999	\$299
\$500,000 - \$999,999.....	\$465
\$1,000,000 - \$2,499,999	\$695
\$2,500,000 - \$4,999,999	\$1,165
\$5,000,000 - \$9,999,999	\$1,745
\$10,000,000 - \$10,999,999.....	\$2,030

Add \$250 for each \$1 million starting at \$10 million in Annual Gross Sales with a maximum dues amount of \$5,000. Monthly/Recurring payments are available for credit cards only. Contact IRA Office at (800) 572-1086 or membership@illinoisrestaurants.org.

OPTIONAL

Political Action Committee

\$50, \$100, Other..... \$ _____

Educational Foundation

\$25, \$50, Other..... \$ _____

TOTAL INVESTMENT \$ _____

Disclosure Notice: 61% of your dues may be tax deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses. 39% are non-deductible lobbying and political expenditures.

Return completed application to the Illinois Restaurant Association
33 West Monroe, Suite 250 | Chicago, Illinois 60603
(312) 787-4000 | Fax: (312) 787-4792 | membership@illinoisrestaurants.org



ILLINOIS
RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ILLINOIS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

Organization Name _____ Corporate Name (If Different) _____

Primary Contact _____ Mobile _____

Address _____ Work Phone _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email (confidential) _____

Website _____

Mailing Address (If Different Than Above) _____

What Keywords Best Describe Your Business? (Up to 5 Keywords) _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues are based on total annual gross sales of the organization.

ANNUAL GROSS-SALES	DUES
\$0 - \$4,999,999.....	\$475
\$5,000,000 - \$9,999,999	\$830
\$10,000,000 - \$14,999,999.....	\$1,190
\$15,000,000 - \$19,999,999	\$1,550
\$20,000,000 - \$24,999,999.....	\$1,910
\$25,000,000 - \$30,000,000	\$2,150
\$30,000,000 and over	\$2,500

OPTIONAL

Political Action Committee

\$50, \$100, Other..... \$ _____

Educational Foundation

\$25, \$50, Other..... \$ _____

TOTAL INVESTMENT \$ _____

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PAYMENT

Check payable to Illinois Restaurant Association, enclosed for \$ _____

Credit Card, charged for \$ _____

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

Name On Card _____

Billing Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____ CSV _____

Signature _____

MEMBERSHIP DISCLAIMER

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Signature _____ Date _____

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ILLINOIS



RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION

Illinois Restaurant Association
33 W. Monroe St, Ste. 250
Chicago, IL 60603
Ph: 312-787-4000 • Fax: 312-787-4792
info@illinoisrestaurants.org