



2026 MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

Invest in your people. Protect your business.
Advance the Industry. **JOIN TODAY.**



“

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.

”

*We are Illinois' second largest private sector employer

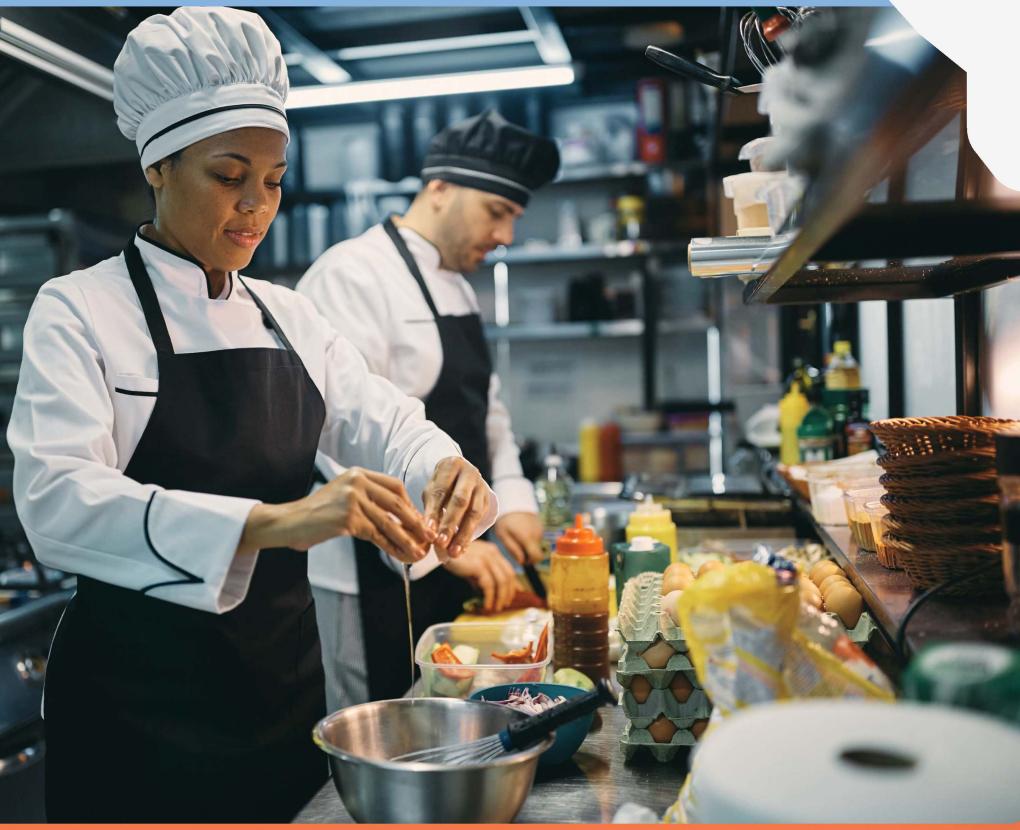


IN TUNE WITH OUR INDUSTRY

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

- 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
- Brought happy hour back to Illinois
- Helped secure the approval of \$50 million in grants for restaurants in the 2022 Illinois state budget
- Repealed the Cook County Soda Tax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)
- Fought to exclude restaurants from FTC's "junk fee" rule, saving \$3.5 billion, or \$4,800 per restaurant

Present

- Maintained the tip credit at the state level, saving 20-40% in labor costs
- Continued the fight against the elimination of tip credit in Chicago
- Legalized video gaming in Chicago
- Kept the head tax out of the 2026 Chicago budget
- Passed legislation making cocktails-to-go permanent
- Passed legislation making it illegal for unauthorized third parties to sell reservations
- Got hemp beverages exempted from the hemp ban in Chicago

Future

- Continuously working to save the tip credit
- 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
- Fighting against new tax proposals that harm the hospitality industry

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 COMMITTEE

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 Communications & Government Relations Manager Alison DeGuide at adeguide@illinoisrestaurants.org.



MEMBERSHIP

Invest in your people. Protect your business.
Advance the Industry. **JOIN TODAY.**

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 hospitality industry in Illinois. There is strength in numbers – joining IRA pledges your support to the food service 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.

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, foodservice industry suppliers 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 from 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 join.

CONNECTIONS TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF CULINARY LEADERS

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



ENDORSED PARTNERS

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

ServSafe

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

Discounts

National Restaurant Association Show

Cost Savings

IRA Operator members also receive 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.

ARAMARK

Preferred Pricing & Discounts

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.

BMI Music

Discounts

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

C-SOAP

Discounts

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.

EMPLOYERS®

Cost Savings

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.

HUB International

Preferred Pricing

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.

IGS Energy

Cost Savings

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

Heartland Payment Systems

Discounts

A 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.

J&J Gaming

Cash In Hand

J&J Gaming is the preferred gaming provider for the IRA and 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.

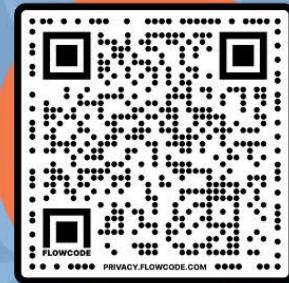
UnitedHealthcare

Preferred Pricing

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.

Start realizing these opportunities by scanning the QR code below or visiting

illinoisrestaurants.org/page/EndorsedPrograms



Don't leave money on the table.

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:

- ProStart® Program: Prepares high school students with certifications, internships, and real-world experience.

Scholarships:

- \$3.4M+ in Scholarships awarded to future culinary and hospitality professionals.

Workforce Development Programs:

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

Supporting Workers:

- \$290K+ in Emergency Relief provided 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's 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

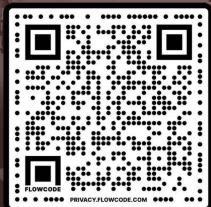
Connections to Post-Secondary Education

- 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

2020
ja

CHICAGO GOURMET

Powered By

 Invesco QQQ

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

2.4 BIL

MEDIA IMPRESSIONS



EVENTS

CHEF'S TABLE

Mix and mingle with over 900 industry peers while sampling food and cocktails from the top restaurants in Chicago and Chicagoland area.



IRA GOLF CLASSIC

Build valuable relationships through a casual day on the course. The event unites over 300 restaurant and food service professionals, which 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 the IRA 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 2026 Illinois Restaurant Association Corporate Sponsors

DIAMOND



United Healthcare

DOORDASH

Sysco

Heartland

US.
FOODS

BREAKTHRU
BEVERAGE GROUP

ACQUA PANNA
THE FINE DINING WATERS
S. PELLEGRINO

J&J Gaming

PLATINUM

EMPLOYERS®

America's small business insurance specialist.®



ECOLAB®



JCDecaux

MOLSON
COORS beverage company

Square

PERFORMANCE
FOODSERVICE



Gordon®
FOOD SERVICE

GOLD



SILVER



Nicor Gas

BRONZE

SOCIETY
INSURANCE.
Small details. Big difference.™

Uber

igsenergy



RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION

*Invest in your people. Protect your business.
Advance the Industry. JOIN TODAY.*

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.

2026 OFFICERS

President & CEO
Sam Toia

Chair
Liz Lombardo Stark
Gibsons Restaurant Group

First Vice Chair
Clodagh Lawless
The Dearborn

Second Vice Chair
Carmen Rossi
8 Hospitality

Corporate Secretary
Dan Raskin
Manny's Cafeteria & Delicatessen

Treasurer
Carin Stutz
Hawaiian Bros.

Assistant Treasurer
Chad McCoy
Plante Moran

Immediate Past Chairman
Scott Weiner
The Fifty/50 Group

IRA Educational Foundation Chair
Adam Barrons
Ecolab

2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Aaron Aschermann
Gordon Food Service

TJ Callahan
Farmheads

Bill Carlson
Turano Baking Company

D'Andre Carter
Soul & Smoke

Karen Conn
Conn's Hospitality Group

Juan Covarrubias
Churro Factory and Istmo

Thai Dang
HaiSous

Michelle Durpetti
Gene & Georgetti

Jon Farrer
Ballyhoo Hospitality

Kimberly Galban
Hogsalt

Christina Gonzalez
Taqueria Los Comales

Andrea Hill
HMC Hospitality Group

Donnie Madia
One Off Hospitality

Tim McGrail
PepsiCo

Jessica Perjes
Tacotlan

Thomas Pingel
Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling

Tony Priolo
Piccolo Sogno

Cliff Rome
Rome's Joy Catering

Ethan Samson
Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises

Korina Sanchez
Third Coast Hospitality

Faraz Sardharia
Tandoor Char House

Jeremy Tannehill
DineAmic Group

Mike Thompson
Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits

Mark Wagner
Hyatt Regency Chicago

Patrick Wartan
Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP

Eric Williams
Bronzeville Winery



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	\$350
\$500,000 - \$999,999.....	\$515
\$1,000,000 - \$2,499,999	\$765
\$2,500,000 - \$4,999,999	\$1,285
\$5,000,000 - \$9,999,999	\$1,920
\$10,000,000 - \$10,999,999.....	\$2,235
\$11,000,000 - \$11,999,999.....	\$2,525
\$12,000,000 - \$12,999,999.....	\$2,825
\$13,000,000 - \$13,999,999.....	\$3,120
\$14,000,000 - \$14,999,999.....	\$3,450

Add \$250 for each \$1 million starting at \$15 million in Annual Gross Sales with a maximum dues amount of \$5,500. 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.

MAKE YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNT TODAY



Check off the programs you would like more information about that can save you money on operational costs. We will be in touch with your membership packet shortly after we receive this application with your member's packet. Feel free to write in additional topics below.

- FREE NRA Show Badge for Operators
- Discounts on sanitation classes (ServSafe Manager, Allergen, Food Handler, BASSET)
- Aramark Linen & Uniform Services
- UnitedHealthcare (Discounts on group health insurance & individual plans.)
- EMPLOYERS: Workers' Compensation Insurance
- BMI Music Licensing Discounts
- Discounted Tuition at Kendall College
- Educational Foundation & ProStart
- Heartland: Credit Card Processing, POS Systems, Payroll, HR
- State Auto: Property/Casualty Insurance
- IGS Energy: Electric & Gas Supply
- Four Networking Committees

Other _____

ILLINOIS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION MEMBER COMMITTEES & BOARDS

OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS:

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee works to enhance existing programs and develop additional programs, which allow members to effectively handle cost and improve the profitability of their business. The Committee also recruits and welcomes new members through Committee-sponsored events and outreach efforts.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Government Relations Committee is the members' voice in local, state, and federal legislative arenas. The goal of the Committee is to promote and protect the restaurant industry at all levels of government. With annual "lobby days" in Springfield & Washington, DC, the Government Relations Committee works hard to represent your needs to lawmakers & regulators across the state and nation.

GOLF CLASSIC COMMITTEE

The Golf Classic Committee plans and organizes the IRA's annual Golf Classic. The annual Golf Classic is an avenue for associate members to meet and network with owner/operators and is a revenue source for the Association.

CHEF'S TABLE GALA COMMITTEE

The Chef's Table Committee works to raise scholarship money for the Educational Foundation and acknowledge the scholarship recipients by having a gala celebration of the industry.

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



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.....	\$525
\$5,000,000 - \$9,999,999	\$920
\$10,000,000 - \$14,999,999.....	\$1,310
\$15,000,000 - \$19,999,999	\$1,705
\$20,000,000 - \$24,999,999.....	\$2,100
\$25,000,000 - \$30,000,000	\$2,365
\$30,000,000 and over	\$2,750

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.

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

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.

Signature _____ Date _____

