

County Farm Bureaus in Action:

Tracking Advocacy and Opportunities for Engagement

- ➡ Leadership
- ➡ Outreach
- ➡ Grassroots
- ➡ Communication
- ➡ Policy

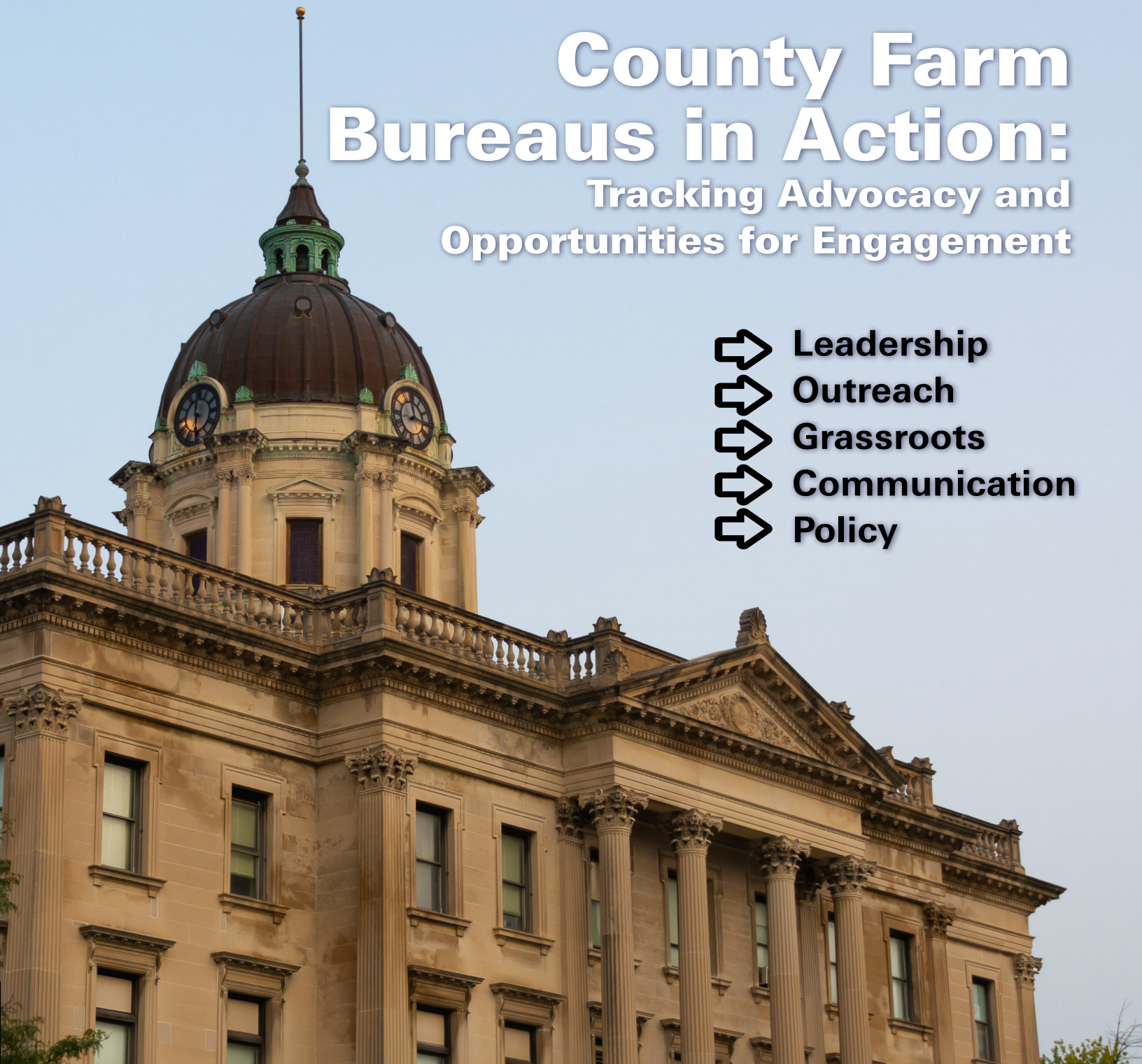


Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Grassroots Advocacy	4
New Laws Impacting Local Governments	8
Rural Development Grants Return	9
Rural Development Grant Program FAQs	10
Think LINK Program	13
Allies In Agriculture Resources Available	14

Contact Our Team



Brenda Matherly

Director of Local Government

309-557-3151

bmatherly@ilfb.org



Ryan Tate

Associate Director of Local Government

309-557-3274

rtate@ilfb.org

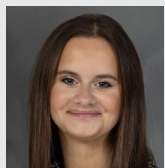


Mitchell Remmert

Associate Director of Local Government and Political Engagement

309-557-2075

mremmert@ilfb.org



Maggie Hunter

Administrative Assistant

309-557-2102

mhunter@ilfb.org



Our Mission

To improve county Farm Bureau® influence in local government issues and advance county Farm Bureau leaders' awareness, capability, and involvement in local government through information and assistance in understanding and planning on local government issues.

Call to Action

We encourage you to share LINK with county Farm Bureau leadership and membership.

We invite you to share this publication with your local officials. This information may be a LINK to their success.

For information on past editions of the LINK publication and to access copies, please click [here](#).

Upcoming Dates & Events

October 1:

[IFB Rural Development Grant Program Applications Open](#)

November 5:

Statewide Resolutions Committee Meeting

November 17-19:

[Illinois Association of County Officials \(IACO\) Fall Conference](#)

December 1:

Rural Development Grant Program Applications Close

December 6-9:

IAA® Annual Meeting

January 15-16:

Illinois Association of Drainage Districts Annual Conference

January 28-30:

[From Food to Flowers: Everything Local Conference](#)

February 17:

Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference (GALC)

February 25-26:

[Rural Community and Economic Development Conference](#)



When it Comes to Advocacy, County Farm Bureaus Get the Job Done

Throughout Illinois, the strength of Illinois Farm Bureau's (IFB's) advocacy lies with its grassroots – its members. These members, represented through their county Farm Bureaus (CFBs), are the face of agriculture to their communities and their elected and appointed officials at all levels of government.

Their engagement with these officials helps ensure farmers' voices are represented in the policies and decisions that directly affect the long-term prosperity of our industry, livelihoods and local communities.

At IFB, our Local Government Team prioritizes assisting CFBs build and grow their relationships with local officials.

Our Rural Development Grant program encourages CFBs to develop partnerships by providing funding through CFBs for rural development projects that will positively impact Farm Bureau members and other residents.

The Allies in Agriculture program promotes strong relationships between CFBs and local governments through engagement, productive conversations, shared understanding and the adoption of a Pro-Agriculture Resolution by the local government board.

The Local Information News and KnowHow (LINK) newsletter seeks to improve CFBs influence in local government issues and advance CFB leaders' awareness, capability, and involvement in local government through

information and assistance in understanding and planning on local government issues.

This issue of LINK focuses on CFB engagement. Whether through one of our priority programs, like Allies in Agriculture and the Rural Development Grant program, or through attending local meetings and being fixtures within their communities, when it comes to representing agriculture, CFBs are getting the job done.



ADVOCACY

IN MEMORIAM



RYAN WHITEHOUSE

As we mourn the passing of IFB's Director of National Legislation, Ryan Whitehouse, we are also reminded of his commitment to advocacy and engagement on behalf of agriculture and rural communities.

Ryan previously served as IFB's Associate Director of Local Government and Political Engagement from 2019 to 2024. During his time with the Local Government Department, Ryan was instrumental in assisting county Farm Bureaus and farmers establish and grow their relationships with local governments and local officials.

He created Allies in Agriculture, a flagship program that encourages ongoing and thoughtful dialogue between farmers and local officials. Through our Think LINK program, his contributions to this publication and his interactions with managers, CFB leadership, membership and countless others, Ryan promoted political and civic engagement at all levels of government.

We dedicate this issue of LINK to Ryan and his legacy of agricultural advocacy, education and leadership.

Grassroots Advocacy – County Farm Bureaus Surveyed on Local Engagement

Illinois Farm Bureau's advocacy begins at the local level. In August 2025, Illinois Farm Bureau's Local Government Department prepared a survey to better understand CFBs' level of engagement with their local officials and governments. In total, 67 (72%) of 93 CFBs completed the survey. The information gathered offered insight into the scope of issues CFBs are involved with throughout the state and where IFB can assist CFBs establish or grow their relationships with local governments and local officials.

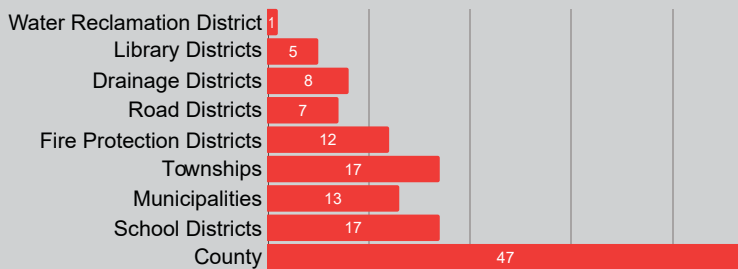
Relationships with Units of Local Government

Illinois has more units of local government than any other state, including general purpose governments and special purpose districts. Each unit of government is a potential point of contact for CFBs. CFBs were asked about their relationships with these units of local government.

A majority (70%) reported having strong relationships with their county government, followed by school districts (25%), townships (25%) and municipalities (19%).

CFBs were also asked if they had a strained or complicated relationship with any unit of local government. While a majority (78%) of respondents answered "no," some reported having issues with their local municipalities (5%), county governments (3%) and school districts (1%).

Strong Relationship with Local Government

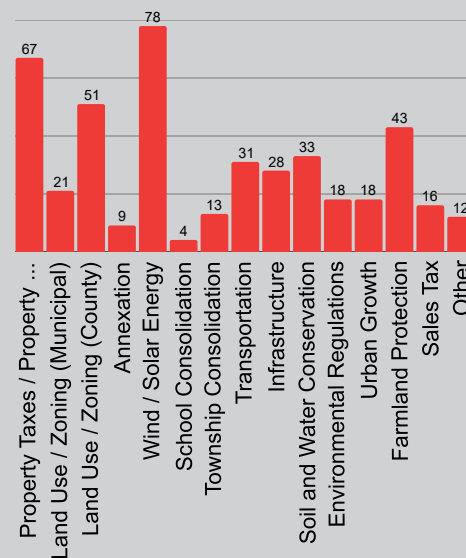


Issues Impacting Farmers

As the face of agriculture to local officials, CFBs are the tip of the spear when taxation, zoning or other issues impacting agriculture arise. To gauge the local issues impacting Farm Bureau members throughout the state, the survey asked respondents to identify issues historically impacting their members. These include issues that CFB members have expressed concern about or for which outside groups or local officials have contacted the CFB. Respondents were able to select multiple options from a list of 14 pre-identified issues and had the option to list others not included in the built-in list.

The top five issues historically impacting farmers and the percentage of CFBs reporting them were Wind / Solar Energy (78%), Property Taxes / Assessments – Including Farmland (67%), Land Use / Zoning – County (51%), Farmland Protection (43%) and Transportation (31%).

Historical Issues Impacting Farmers



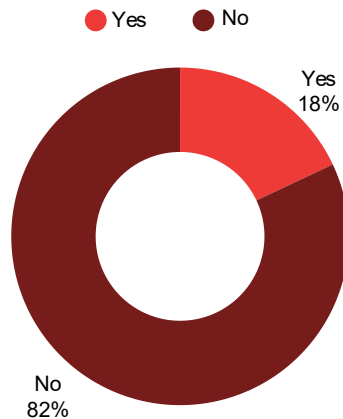
Local Policy

One of IFB's Local Government Priorities is to assist CFBs with the development of local policies. A local policy is a formally adopted set of ideas, principles or plan of action the CFB may adopt to guide its behaviors, decisions and actions when situations impacting the organization arise. Local policy is separate and distinct from IFB state and federal policy and should be specific to the county, relevant to local issues and actionable by the CFB. It is a valuable tool CFBs can use in their interactions with local officials and local governments.

Fifty-five (82%) CFBs reported that they had not adopted a local policy, while 12 (18%) of the respondent CFBs stated they have.

Grassroots Advocacy continued...

CFB Adopted Local Policy?

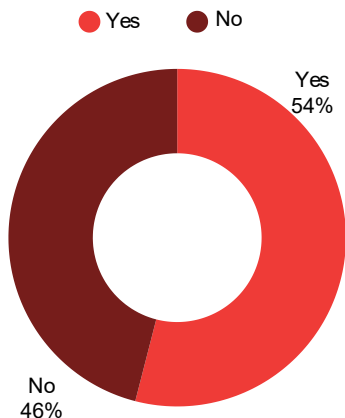


Of the 55 CFBs that had not adopted a local policy, a majority (34) stated they would be interested in learning more about establishing one, while 21 CFBs (38%) stated they would not. IFB's Local Government Department can assist CFBs with developing their own local policies or pair them with CFBs to help with the process.

Government Affairs Committee

While some CFBs interface directly with their local governments through their board or staff, a little more than half of respondent CFBs (36) have opted to create a committee charged with handling advocacy, relationships with local officials, political engagement or communication about the CFB with outside groups.

Established Government Affairs Committee?



Generally, these committees consist of CFB board members or a combination of CFB board members and general membership / volunteers. Meetings occur annually, monthly or as-needed.

Of the 31 respondent CFBs without a committee, a little less than half (14) stated they would be interested in learning more about creating one.

Relationships with Local Officials

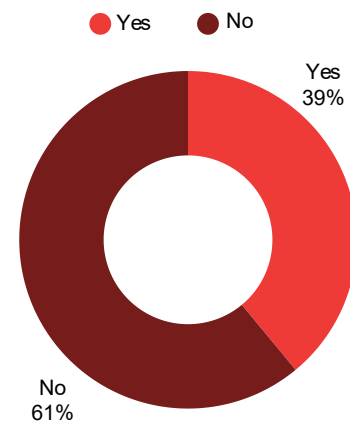
The survey also asked about CFB engagement with local officials, including any programs designed to foster relationships between the CFB and local officials, and CFB-hosted events geared towards local official appreciation.

Four CFBs reported having such programs in place to build relationships. The Rock Island County Farm Bureau hosts a "Conversation and Combine Rides" program that allows county board members to join a CFB director in a combine during harvest.

Woodford County Farm Bureau hosts an "Adopt a County Board Member" program whereby each CFB director is paired with a County Board member that lives nearby. Each CFB board director is assigned one monthly county board meeting to attend, connect with their designated county board member and act as a liaison should an issue impacting agriculture arise. The CFB directors also invite county board members to their farms.

Although a majority of CFBs do not have an established program designed to foster relationships with local officials, more than a third (26) of respondent CFBs reported hosting an event honoring or appreciating local elected officials.

CFB Hosts Local Official Appreciation Events?



CFBs reported a variety of events, including luncheons, picnics, dinners and other events that included state and local officials as well as CFB leadership, membership and Young Leaders.

Grassroots Advocacy continued...

County Farm Bureau	Event Name	Description
White	County Board Relationship Dinner	• Invite county board members • CFB provides meal • Discuss issues of mutual interest • CFB provides FB swag gift
Randolph	Evening in the County	• Invite all local elected officials and state legislators • CFB provides meal • Officials given time to speak in front of membership on issues they are working on where CFB can partner with them
Kankakee	Get Acquainted Luncheon	• Invite elected and appointed officials in county and CFB leaders • CFB provides lunch • CFB prepares questions to ask local officials about projects, events, etc. • Designed to acquaint Farm Bureau leaders with elected and appointed county officials, facilitate communications, and identify common concerns • Include CFB board, Young Leaders, FFA members and more
Peoria	Grassroots Picnic	• Invite all elected officials, including all local government officials. • Everyone gets an opportunity to give a short message to the Farm Bureau members in attendance.

Other Forms of Outreach to Local Officials

CFBs also identified other ways they strengthen relationships with local officials. Responses included:

- Attendance at county board meetings
- Invitations to all CFB events
- Maintaining open lines of communication
- Planning to implement an "Adopt an Acre" program whereby county board members receive updates from the farm
- Comping CFB memberships for certain county officials
- Conducting introductory visits with newly appointed or elected officials
- Attending zoning hearings
- Distributing the LINK publication
- Inviting local officials to CFB Governmental Affairs Committee meetings

Political Action Committees

A political action committee (PAC) is a tax-exempt entity that pools campaign contributions from members and donates those funds to supported candidates and ballot initiatives. Some county Farm Bureaus have created PACs to formally endorse candidates for local office. These endorsements are separate and distinct from IFB's ACTIVATOR program, which is IFB's PAC used to endorse candidates that support agricultural interests in Washington and Springfield.

Currently, only 8 (12%) of the respondent CFBs reported having a PAC, while 59 (88%) reported not having one.

A majority (5) reported their PAC being governed by a combination of CFB board members and CFB members / volunteers while others reported their PAC being governed exclusively by CFB board members (1) or an independent board / committee (2).

All CFBs with PACs reported receiving their funding from either member donations or member dues, with one CFB stating it occasionally fundraised through mail solicitations and another reporting its funding coming from investments that originated from member donations.

Grassroots Advocacy continued...

Individual CFB PACs make as few as 3-5 endorsements per election cycle and as many as 20 or more, depending on the election cycle and the offices up for election.

CFBs that reported not having a PAC were asked if they or their board would be interested in establishing one. Of the 52 CFBs that responded, 41 (79%) said a version of no, 10 (19%) were unsure or said "maybe" and 1 (2%) responded yes.

LINK Newsletter

IFB publishes the LINK newsletter on a bimonthly basis. LINK is intended to improve CFB influence in local government issues and advance CFB leaders' awareness, capability, and involvement in local government. IFB encourages CFBs to share LINK with CFB leadership, membership, and local officials.

Only 19 (28%) of respondent CFBs reported sharing LINK with their local officials while 48 (72%) stated they did not.

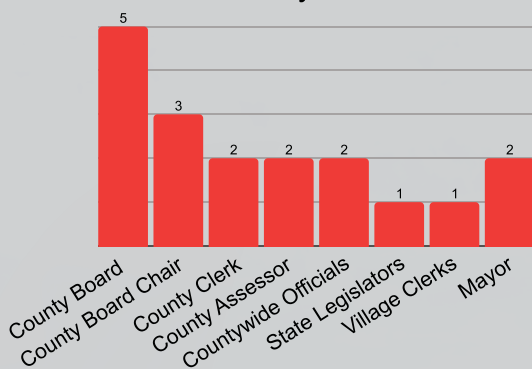
CFBs that provide LINK to local officials identified individuals or groups of individuals they provide the newsletter to regularly. This included groups such as members of the county board, countywide office holders, mayors and individual office holders such as the county board chair, village clerks, county clerk and county assessor.

If you do not currently receive the LINK newsletter or are interested in learning more about LINK, please contact a member of IFB's Local Government team.

IFB's survey on local political engagement shows that a majority of CFBs are actively engaged in representing agriculture before their local officials and local governments. This impactful advocacy at the local level is the grassroots to IFB's continued success throughout the state.

Whether it is developing local policy, organizing a local appreciation event, or navigating a local ordinance, IFB staff and the experienced leadership throughout the 93 CFBs are here to assist.

Groups or Individuals Provided
LINK by CFBs



Governor Approves Dozens of New Laws Impacting Local Government Operations

By the time the Illinois General Assembly adjourned its spring legislative session on May 31, more than 400 pieces of legislation passed both chambers and were sent to the Governor for his approval or veto. Among these new laws approved by the Governor this summer are dozens that impact local governments and their officials.

Because many county Farm Bureaus work closely with their local governments or have members that serve as local elected or appointed officials, we are highlighting some of these new laws as an educational resource. As a reminder, we also encourage CFBs and their leadership to share LINK with their local appointed and elected officials.

HB 1615 / Public Act 104-0192 **(Rep. DeLuca / Sen. Belt):**

Allows county governments to display the U.S. flag prominently on the grounds of the county courthouse. Previously, state law required the flag to be placed on top of the courthouse. Effective Jan. 1, 2026.

HB 2142 / Public Act 104-207 **(Rep. Meier / Sen. Bryant):**

Follow-up legislation to a 2024 law allowing voters to create emergency services districts to provide emergency ambulance services. Public Act 104-207 clarifies that an emergency services district may provide ambulance service within a fire protection district's boundary, but only if the fire protection district stops collecting its own ambulance levy in the same area. This law took effect on August 15, 2025.

HB 2966 / Public Act 104-0257 **(Rep. Katz Muhl / Sen. Morrison):**

Creates a new grant program through the State Board of Education to incentivize school districts to conduct reorganization feasibility studies. Under the law, ISBE shall prioritize grants to school districts that are contiguous with one another, have similar property tax rates and have similar per-pupil adequacy funding. This law took effect on August 15, 2025.

HB 3388 / Public Act 104-0304 **(Rep. Swanson / Sen. Anderson):**

Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code to include any recreational off-highway vehicle, all-terrain vehicle, watercraft, or aircraft that is designated or authorized by proper local authorities for fire department use in the definition of "fire department vehicle." This law took effect on August 15, 2025.

HB 1082 / Public Act 104-0167 **(Rep. Johnson / Sen. Turner):**

Alters the annual financial reporting requirements for municipalities with a population of less than 1,000. Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027, municipalities with a population of less than 1,000 will be required to provide the Illinois Office of Comptroller (IOC) a simplified annual financial report in lieu of an annual audit report prepared by a licensed certified public accountant (CPA). Previously, municipalities with a population of 800 or more were required to retain a CPA to file an annual audit with the IOC, while those with a population of less than 800 could file an annual financial report. The annual financial report is conducted through forms created by IOC that do not require professional accounting services or CPAs for preparation. This law takes effect January 1, 2026.

HB 2442 / Public Act 104-0226 **(Rep. Ugaste / Sen. DeWitte):**

Allows vehicles used by local or county emergency services agencies to install and operate a traffic control signal preemption device when responding to a bona fide emergency and when used in combination with red oscillating, rotating or flashing lights. These traffic control signal preemption devices emit a pulse of light or other signal that change traffic control signals to a green light. This law takes effect January 1, 2026.

SB 0784 / Public Act 104-0364 **(Sen. Belt / Rep. Hoffman):**

Allows any public safety agency in the state to provide aid to any other public safety agency in the state or a bordering state in the event of a disaster, including a fire, earthquake, flood, tornado, hazardous material incident or other disaster. The provisions of this law apply to any public safety agency, including fire departments, fire protection districts, emergency medical services, municipal police departments, county sheriff's departments, local emergency management agencies and local public works department. This law takes effect January 1, 2026.

SB 1523 / Public Act 104-0382 **(Sen. Turner / Rep. Gill):**

Makes it illegal for any person to file a deed with a county recorder that is fraudulent, unlawfully altered, or intended to unlawfully cloud or transfer the title of any real property. The law also requires all counties in Illinois to establish a property fraud alert system and requires every recorder to establish a fraud referral and review process to review deeds and instruments. This law takes effect January 1, 2026.

New Laws Impacting Local Governments continued...

SB 1941 / Public Act 104-0401 **(Sen. Murphy / Rep. Costa Howard):**

Expressly allows units of local government that have ownership or control over an intersection near an elementary or secondary school to install flashing light indicators at pedestrian crosswalks to alert motor vehicles to the presence of pedestrians in the crosswalk. This law takes effect January 1, 2026.

SB 2044 / Public Act 104-0406 **(Sen. Balkema / Rep. Bunting):**

Allows units of local government, including municipalities, townships, counties, park districts, forest preserve districts and conservation districts, to accept web-based signatures if the units of local government use a secure web-based platform. This law takes effect January 1, 2026.

SB 2129 / Public Act 104-0409 **(Sen. Morrison / Rep. Faver Dias):**

Requires the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to establish an online portal that allows units of local government to submit forms electronically to IDOT and also track the submitted documents. It additionally requires IDOT to provide a point of contact at the Department. This law takes effect January 1, 2026.

To view the full text of these new laws, please visit ilga.gov

IFB Rural Development Grants Return for Year #3

"Your Ideas. Our Support. A Better Rural Illinois." is one of the marketing themes you will see as we promote the 2025-2026 Illinois Farm Bureau Rural Development Grant Program, and it encapsulates what the program hopes to accomplish. IFB will provide the resources to help county Farm Bureaus and their community partners bring to fruition ideas that impact rural economic and community development, as well as quality of life for farmers and rural residents across Illinois.

The Rural Development Grant Program is one way that IFB provides value to Farm Bureau members and to the rural communities where they live and work. Below is a summary of key points for this year's grant program and more details. Testimonial videos, Frequently Asked Questions (pro-tip for potential applicants: Read these!), and news articles about past recipients can be found on the grant webpage at <https://on.ilfb.org/IFBrdg25>.

- Available Funding – \$120,000, which represents a \$100,000 investment by IFB and a \$20,000 contribution from COUNTRY Financial. IFB will once again allocate 20% of the grant funds to support the needs of emergency service providers, including fire, police and/or ambulance.
- Applications – open on Oct. 1st and close on Dec. 1st. All grant applications must be submitted online via JotForm and interested applicants should contact their local county Farm Bureau (CFB) to discuss their project and request the link to the JotForm application. The application is designed so that a professional grant writer is not necessary.
- Potential Applicants – County Farm Bureaus can: 1) apply directly and lead the rural development project or 2) collaborate and engage with local partners who want to submit an application for a CFB endorsed project. Partners include units of local government (including emergency services), community and non-profit organizations, economic development groups, small businesses and related entities.
- Promotion – the grant program will be marketed through FarmWeek, www.FarmWeekNow.com, RFD Radio, LINK, social media, email, external media, partner organizations and a toolkit for CFBs to utilize for their communication and social media channels.
- Grant recipient selection – IFB anticipates selecting and notifying grant recipients by Feb. 20, 2026, with funds being distributed to/through the CFBs in March 2026. All grants will be awarded in conjunction with local county Farm Bureaus and IFB policy will be considered when evaluating projects to ensure alignment. A communications plan is in place to announce and promote the grant recipients. All grant recipients will be required to submit a Grant Impact Report via JotForm upon completion of their project.
- For questions or more information, please visit the grant webpage, read the FAQs, contact your county Farm Bureau or email RDGrants@ilfb.org.

In closing, thank you to COUNTRY Financial for the additional support this year, and a huge shout-out to all of the CFBs. This program would not be possible without their involvement as applicants or endorsers, recipients and distributors of the funding, and direct partners with projects in their communities and counties. IFB is excited to continue supporting impactful ideas that benefit rural Illinois and to be a catalyst for new relationships between county Farm Bureaus and local partners.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM



FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How much funding is available?

A: Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) will award a TOTAL of \$120,000 for rural development grants. To be clear, this is \$120,000 in TOTAL to be spread across multiple grant awards.

Q: Is there a minimum or maximum funding amount I can apply for?

A: No. However, IFB's intent is to award multiple grants, not just one or a few large ones. Last year, grant awards ranged from \$1,300 to \$10,000. Amounts may vary but we want to emphasize that we will have multiple grantees again this year.

Q: Will you continue to allocate grant dollars specifically for emergency services projects?

A: Yes. While the largest amount of grant dollars will support rural community and economic development projects, we know the importance of farmers and rural communities having access to emergency services as well as for emergency service providers to have the appropriate equipment necessary for situations they may encounter in agricultural areas. Having access to emergency services when needed improves the quality of life for all residents and we will once again allocate 20 percent of the grant funding to support emergency services projects.

Q: When does the grant application open and close?

A: We will accept grant applications from October 1 – December 1, 2025.

Q: When will I know if I am selected as a grant recipient?

A: We anticipate being able to notify all applicants of their status by no later than February 20, 2026.

Q: How will the funding be disbursed to grant recipients?

A: Grant funding will flow to the county Farm Bureau (CFB) making or supporting the application and they can then disburse it to the partner(s) leading the project as appropriate.

Q: Do I need to work with my CFB in order to apply?

A: Yes. A CFB can choose to apply directly but all other applicants should contact their local CFB to speak with them about the project and to request the JotForm link to the grant application. We encourage CFBs to be involved and engaged with funded projects in the county. Please note that we will not fund any projects the CFB is not aware of or does not endorse. Once we receive an application, we do verify with the local CFB that the applicant has been in touch with them and that the CFB is supportive of the proposed project.

Q: What if my project will impact multiple counties?

A: In situations like this, please contact the CFB in the county in which you are located first. However, if you plan to reference other CFBs on your application, we ask that you contact them as well to inform them of the project and seek their endorsement. Keep in mind that CFBs outside of your county may have applicants from their county that they are also interested in endorsing. However, CFBs can choose to endorse multiple projects.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM



FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is considered rural?

A: There are many definitions of rural, including multiple ones used at the federal and state levels. Generally, if your community, county or project meets any of these definitions, you are eligible for this grant.

Q: Who is eligible to apply?

A: Generally, the rural development grants are open to county Farm Bureaus, units of local government, economic development organizations, non-profits and/or community groups, and small businesses. These are the most common applicants, although others may be considered based on the proposed project.

Q: Are entities based/headquartered outside of Illinois eligible to apply if the project will be done in Illinois?

A: No, you must be located in Illinois in order to apply for a grant through this program.

Q: What types of projects are eligible for this grant?

A: We continue to take a broad approach on project types as we do not want to stifle new and innovative ideas. Ultimately, we are looking for projects that will meet a need in a community, county or rural area. Examples could include projects focused on attracting businesses, fostering entrepreneurship, providing access to fresh foods, improving infrastructure, increasing healthcare access, expanding recreational opportunities, expanding available housing, developing tourism, enhancing emergency services support (such as fire, EMS, police, etc.) or other projects that positively impact farmers and residents.

Q: Do you have examples of the projects that were funded last year?

A: Yes. There are links to news articles about last year's rural development grants on the grant webpage, which can be found here: [Rural Development Grant Program | Illinois Farm Bureau \(ilfb.org\)](#). However, please remember that we are open to other types of projects as noted in the previous question.

Q: What else should a potential applicant keep in mind before/when applying?

A: We will be putting more emphasis on projects that are ready to move forward and are not overly dependent on other external factors outside of the applicant's control. If your project is still more than a year out from moving forward, you may want to wait until a future grant cycle to apply. If your project is dependent on other funding besides this grant, it will be important to explain on the application the likelihood and timeline for receiving those funds. In addition, we generally do not fund annual operating expenses as these do not make a long-term, ongoing impact and this grant program is not designed to fund them year after year. If your project will require ongoing funding beyond this grant, it will be important to explain on the application how you plan to sustain the project in future years.

Q: Are matching funds required?

A: No. This grant can be used without matching funds to support a project, or it can be combined with other funding sources for projects that are larger in scope. However, if you are able to use this grant to leverage or generate matching funds, that is great. If county Farm Bureaus want to also provide financial support, they have the option to do so but it is not required for the grant.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM



FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Will you accept a multi-year project?

A: We are unable to commit to multi-year funding. However, you can apply for funding each grant cycle for an ongoing and/or multi-year project.

Q: What if my community or county wants to create a strategic plan and needs financial resources to do so?

A: We will consider grant applications for funding to support the development of a strategic plan. In addition, while this is not the only option, we encourage you to contact the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University to learn more about their MAPPING the Future of Your Community Program. This program focuses on “strategic visioning, planning and doing” while utilizing the community’s strengths and building community support. Learn more at [MAPPING the Future – Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs \(iira.org\)](#).

Q: What will be required for the grant impact reporting?

A: The impact report will ask for a summary of the completed project and the impact it is having to date. It will also ask you to confirm or update the details outlined in the application such as the participants, engagement, and other relevant information. In addition, there is an option to provide feedback on the grant program. Lastly, there is an opportunity to provide pictures of the project, copies of any media coverage, etc. as this is helpful for us to have available to share when needed.

Q: When is the grant impact report due?

A: Grant impact reports will be due within 30 days of the project being completed or by December 15, 2026. Please see the next question for additional information.

Q: What if my project is one that needs a longer period of time to be completed due to the size or complexity of the project?

A: If the project is going to extend beyond the grant impact reporting due date, please be sure to indicate the specific timeline and planned steps as requested in the application. In place of a grant impact report, we will request a project status update be submitted by December 15, 2026, followed by a full grant impact report within 30 days of the project being completed.

Q. Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

A: Your local county Farm Bureau is the first point of contact, and a directory can be found here: [Directory | Illinois Farm Bureau](#). For additional assistance, you may also email RDgrants@ifb.org.

Think LINK Program Fosters Local Engagement

Think LINK is a program offered by Illinois Farm Bureau's Local Government Department intended for CFB managers who are relatively new to the job – especially those in their first two years in a county.

The program is designed to build awareness, experience and understanding of local issues, local government structure and authorities, and help CFB managers become more familiar with the local officials in their county. Through this process, we hope they will become more comfortable with—thus more involved in—local government.

The program takes place over a 10-month timeframe. During that time, participants will be involved in a range of focused experiences and topic discussions during our in-person group meetings.

Most meetings are half-day events but will require about a 1 ½ hour travel time to and from the meeting. A couple of meetings will require managers to travel to Bloomington.

Strengths to be gained through participation:

Knowledge of Government Structure & Authority

- Instruction & resources
- Inventory county's local government
- Potential on-site visits to other counties
- Policy review on government structure

Understanding of Local Issues

- Instruction & resources on issues
- Background on issue development
- Research on local issues
- Communication--CFB / local officials
- Policy review on associated local issues

Comfort Level with Local Officials

- Directory of local officials
- Open lines of communication
- Build rapport through interaction
- Encourage cooperative projects/ meetings
- Positioning the CFB as the "go-to" viewpoint for local agriculture issues

Penchant for Involvement

- Doing the legwork – attending meetings
- Voicing agriculture's viewpoint
- Responsive to local issues
- Proactive on local issues impacting agriculture

Action Plans Aligned with Policy

- Become familiar with IFB policy
- Scope for needed changes to policy
- Develop, enhance and implement local policies
- Develop, enhance and implement action plans

Awareness of In-County Issues

- Protocol for discovery & tracking
- Presence at local gov't. board and committee mtgs.
- Network of members who track local issues
- Direct communication with government officials
- Updates from GAC on emerging issues impacting local government



2025 Think LINK Graduates!

We applaud the accomplishments of our recent Think LINK participants! October marks the graduation of our eleventh class who completed their involvement in the program. We'd like to say congratulations to:

- **Lindsey Vogt**, *Clark and Jasper County Farm Bureaus*
- **Kacie Claire**, *Ford-Iroquois Farm Bureau*
- **Parker Hutchcraft**, *Franklin County Farm Bureau*
- **Jayclynn Presutti**, *Jackson County Farm Bureau*

- **Korbin Collins**, *Kankakee County Farm Bureau*
- **Sydnee Shafer**, *Piatt County Farm Bureau*
- **Kenzie Dillow**, *Union County Farm Bureau*

Each of these managers did an outstanding job and successfully completed the program that focuses on local government awareness and involvement. Make sure to congratulate each of them on a job well done!



Lindsey Vogt



Kacie Claire



Parker Hutchcraft



Jayclynn Presutti



Korbin Collins



Sydnee Shafer



Kenzie Dillow

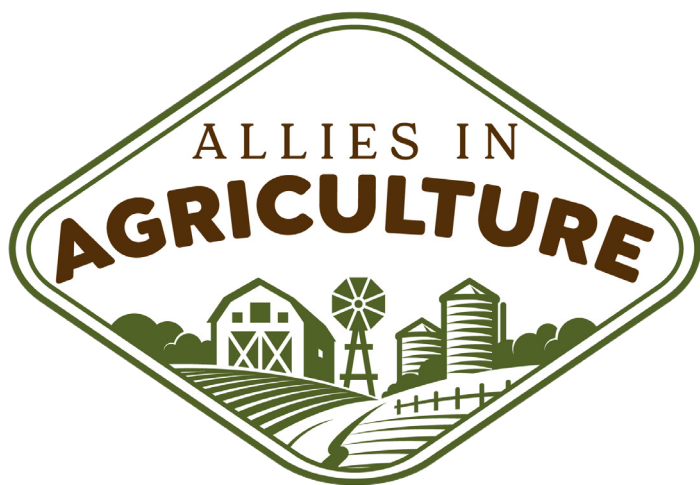
Allies in Agriculture Resources Available

Allies in Agriculture is an Illinois Farm Bureau program designed to help build relationships between county Farm Bureaus (CFBs) and local officials, with an emphasis on county governments. For more information on the program, please see the [December 2024 issue of LINK](#).

Although 71 counties have adopted a resolution at least once during the three cycles of the program (2022, 2023-2024 and 2025-2026), only 49 have adopted or readopted a resolution during the current cycle.

The Local Government Political Engagement Survey featured prominently in this issue of LINK asked CFBs for their input about this program. Namely, obstacles to their county adopting a Pro-Agriculture Resolution and any resources that would benefit CFBs as they navigate this process.

Several CFBs reported a lack of familiarity with how the process works or requested additional resources to assist them with navigating the adoption of the resolution.



General Resolution Process

- 1. IFB provides CFB with updated Pro Agriculture Resolution**
(typically every two years following election of county board members)
- 2. CFB reviews resolution**
(or customizes if necessary)
- 3. CFB meets with county board members/ county board committees to present resolution**
- 4. CFB presents resolution to full county board for approval**
- 5. Once approved, IFB prepares a plaque for CFB to present to the county board**

Resources Available

Although IFB provides CFBs with their draft resolution upon request, we host numerous resources related to the Allies in Agriculture program for CFBs to utilize when meeting with their local officials and seeking the passage of a Pro-Agriculture Resolution. This includes a dedicated webpage: <https://www.ilfb.org/ifb-in-action/allies-in-agriculture> and several resources listed on the [IFB Leaders' Portal](#), including:

- [FAQs](#): Explains the purpose and benefits of the program
- [County Farm Economy Reports](#): Demonstrates the contributions of agriculture to county economies
- [Communications Templates](#): Assists CFBs with contacting and meeting with county officials. Includes:

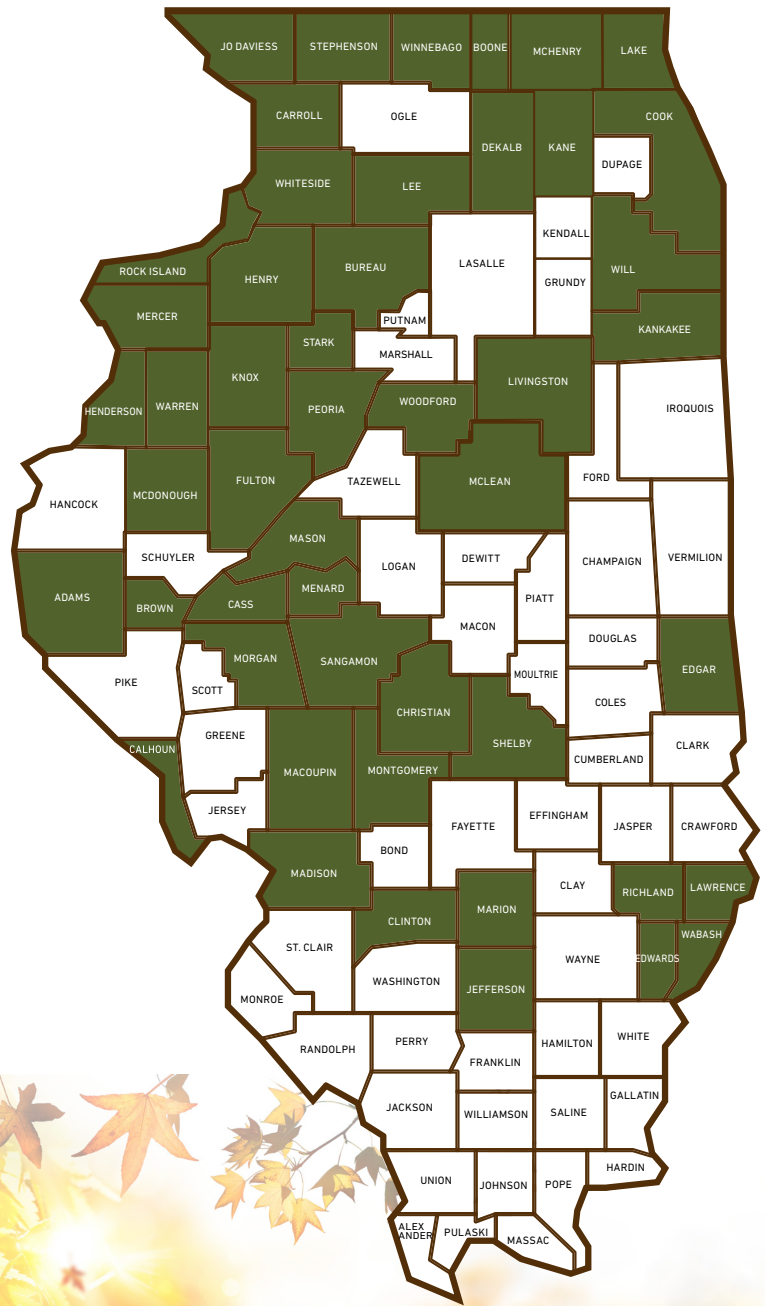
- [Template Letter to the County Chair](#)
- [Template Email Invitation to County Official](#)
- [Template Phone Call Invitation to County Officials](#)
- [Template Script for Introductory Meeting](#)
- [Script for Presentation of Resolution at County Board Meeting](#)
- [Template Press Release after Passage of Pro-Ag Resolution](#)
- [Suggested Next Steps after Passage of Pro-Agriculture Resolution](#)

Additional questions about the Allies in Agriculture program may be directed to Mitchell Remmert, Associate Director of Local Government and Political Engagement, by phone at (309) 557-2075, or email at mremmert@ifb.org.

Thank You, County Farm Bureaus!

To date, 49 county governments have become Allies in Agriculture by partnering with their county Farm Bureaus to adopt or re-adopt a Pro-Agriculture Resolution during the 2025 – 2026 cycle:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Adams | 26. Macoupin |
| 2. Boone | 27. Madison |
| 3. Brown | 28. Marion |
| 4. Bureau | 29. Mason |
| 5. Calhoun | 30. McDonough |
| 6. Carroll | 31. McHenry |
| 7. Cass | 32. McLean |
| 8. Christian | 33. Menard |
| 9. Clinton | 34. Mercer |
| 10. Cook | 35. Montgomery |
| 11. DeKalb | 36. Morgan |
| 12. Edgar | 37. Peoria |
| 13. Edwards | 38. Richland |
| 14. Fulton | 39. Rock Island |
| 15. Henderson | 40. Sangamon |
| 16. Henry | 41. Shelby |
| 17. Jefferson | 42. Stark |
| 18. Jo Daviess | 43. Stephenson |
| 19. Kane | 44. Wabash |
| 20. Kankakee | 45. Warren |
| 21. Knox | 46. Whiteside |
| 22. Lake | 47. Will |
| 23. Lawrence | 48. Winnebago |
| 24. Lee | 49. Woodford |
| 25. Livingston | |



For more information on Allies in Agriculture please visit: www.ilfb.org/ifb-in-action/allies-in-agriculture