

Townships: The Grassroots Unit of Local Government



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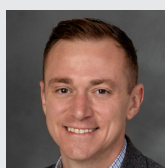
Contact Our Team



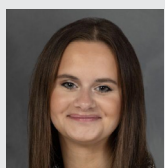
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Our Mission

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.

Upcoming Dates & Events

June 30:

Deadline for Resolutions
Committee submittals

July 4:

Independence Day

July 21:

Portal opens for Resolutions
submittals for November
committee meeting

July 21-22:

Resolutions Committee Meeting

July 30-31:

[Illinois Rural Health Association
\(IRHA\) Annual Education
Conference](#)

August 7-17:

[Illinois State Fair](#)
(Agriculture Day on August 8)

August 11-14:

[Midwest Community Development
Institute \(Midwest CDI\)](#)

August 23-September 2:

[Du Quoin State Fair](#)

August 26-28:

[Farm Progress Show](#)

September 1:

Labor Day



Township Consolidation Proposals Stall and New Township Officials Elected

In his February 19 combined State of the State and Budget Address, Governor Pritzker unveiled a new proposal to consolidate township governments. Under his proposal, state law would be amended to:

1. Lower the petition threshold to initiate a referendum to eliminate or consolidate a township from 10% of registered voters to 5% of registered voters in the most recent township election.
2. Allow county boards to initiate a referendum on the countywide elimination of a township.
3. Eliminate the office of township assessor in counties with populations under 5,000.

In response, state legislators filed numerous pieces of legislation at the start of the spring session to implement this proposal, including Senate Bills (SBs) 2504 and 2217 and House Bill (HB) 2515.

This action kicked off a flurry of questions to Illinois Farm Bureau's (IFB's) state and local teams: What is the purpose of township government? What is the current process for township consolidation? Is there a benefit to consolidation? What is IFB's policy on local government consolidation and these legislative proposals? This LINK publication hopes to answer some of these questions.

To be clear, IFB policy does not oppose the consolidation or dissolution of local government when that decision is made at the local level. For example, IFB policy on local government states that we support:

“Providing for the absorption, consolidation, disconnection, and dissolution of units of local government by front door referendum. Only that unit’s governing board or registered voters residing within the unit of government should be allowed to initiate the front door referendum (Policy 110, Page 91, Line 50).”

A front door referendum is a direct vote by the public where voters are asked to make a “yes” or “no” decision on a ballot question. Without this voter approval, the unit of government does not have the authority to act.

Because the bills filed during the spring session included certain measures like the forced consolidation of some local offices without a referendum, and allowing the county government to initiate the consolidation of townships, IFB opposed these measures. Due to this and other opposition, none of these proposals advanced.

Townships also made headlines this spring during the Consolidated Election. On April 1, candidates for multiple township offices were elected, including township supervisors, township clerks, township assessors and multi-township assessors, highway commissioners, trustees, and in some cases, township collectors.

As these newly elected officials begin taking office, it is important to understand their roles, responsibilities and functions.

This issue of LINK is dedicated entirely to township government and aims to aid readers with that understanding. We hope you find it useful as you interact with your township officials or when consolidation proposals surface again at the State Capitol or at the local level.



A History of Township Government – The Grassroots Form of Government

Illinois is known for its many units of local government; nearly 7,000, give or take. Included in that number are the 1,426 civil townships spread through 85 counties in the state, not to be confused with congressional townships (as explained later in this article).

History

The concept of township government dates back to the Anglo-Saxon era in England, and it is the oldest existing unit of government continuing to serve on the North American continent, having first been established in Providence, Rhode Island in 1636.

In Illinois, the state constitution of 1848 gave voters in each county the opportunity to adopt this form of government as a sub-unit of county government. This was later changed by the 1970 Constitution, which made townships an independent unit with the authority to exercise power as provided by statute and no longer a political subdivision of the county.

Today, 85 of our 102 counties operate under the township form of government with the remaining 17 structured under the commission form of government which are located mostly in southern Illinois.

Structure

In Illinois there are two kinds of townships, civil and congressional. The civil township refers to the actual unit of government with locally elected officials, the ability to tax, and statutorily mandated duties and functions.

This is different from congressional townships, which is a measurement of area set up in a grid-like system consisting of six-mile squares across the state. Congressional townships are used to determine and identify property location and boundaries.

Townships' popularity is due, in part, to their accountability. They are often referred to as the grassroots government because they're one of the closest levels of government to the people.

Role and Responsibilities

Townships are considered one of three "general purpose" units of local government, meaning their authority is general and not limited to only one function or combination of related functions. The other two general purpose governments in Illinois are counties and municipalities. For more information on municipal government, please see the [April 2025 issue of LINK](#).

The role of township government, by statute, is to provide three primary functions:

1. General assistance programs to residents in need that qualify under local standards
2. Property assessment, a source of revenue by valuing property for taxation used to help fund most local units of government
3. Maintenance of township roads and bridges

Beyond these mandated functions, many townships offer a variety of programs and services designed to improve life for their residents. These services can include senior citizen and youth programs, transportation and cemetery maintenance.

Another important function of the township is to hold the Annual Town Meeting!

Annual Town Meeting

Every township is required to hold this meeting on the second Tuesday in April each year. The Annual Town Meeting was April 8, 2025. Next year's will be on April 14, 2026.

At these meetings, those that show up have the power, meaning every qualified elector of the township is entitled to participate in all discussions and actions concerning the business of the township. They act and cast their votes as the corporate authority or governing body of the township. Attending this meeting is the only instance in which the citizens have a direct say in how their government is run.

For more information on township government visit the website of the Township Officials of Illinois (TOI) at www.toi.org

Township V. Commission Structure of County Government: Civil Townships in 85 of our 102 Counties:

With a focus on township government in this publication of LINK, it might be helpful to understand the difference between counties structured under the township form of government and those that operate without civil townships – known as commission counties.

Category	Township Counties	Commission Counties
History	New Englanders who settled in Illinois—generally in the northern portions of the state—brought with them their township form of government. This form is now in 85 of Illinois' 102 counties. Prior to the 1970 Illinois Constitution, boards in township counties were known as "County Boards of Supervisors" because the supervisors of each township were members of the county board. That form of geographic representation was replaced by the 1970 constitution.	Southerners who settled in Illinois—generally in the southern portions of the state and along the river systems—brought with them their more centralized system of local government. That resulted in the commission form of county government in 17 counties—generally in southern Illinois. While these counties have congressional townships and road districts or a unit road district, they do not have township government.
Structure	County boards must have at least 5 members. If elected by district, each district has to be equal in population. The board can decide whether they will be elected at-large or by district (either single or multi-member districts). The board can also decide how many members they will have and if elected by district, how many districts there will be. Where elected by district, those districts are re-drawn every 10 years following the decennial census.	Until 2000, all boards of commissioners were made up of 3 members elected at-large. Legislation passed in 1999 allowed voters to choose to elect their 3 members at-large or by district single-member districts or move to a 5-member commission elected by single-member districts.
Authority	The powers of the county board are virtually identical under either form.	
Operation	These boards, especially the larger ones, function with a committee structure. The committees generally evaluate and recommend actions with the approval of the full board required for authorization.	Commissioners generally serve as a committee of the whole. In some cases, individual commissioners may assume oversight responsibility for a given area of county government activities.

Current Township Restructuring Options in Illinois Law: Consolidation, Merging and Dissolution

A reduction in the number of township governments has been a hot topic at the State Capitol in recent months. During the Illinois General Assembly's recent spring legislative session, legislators introduced several initiatives based on the Governor's suggestion, designed to reduce the number of townships throughout the state.

These proposals featured a more "top-down" mandated restructuring that limited input from local voters. Although the legislative proposals did not advance during the General Assembly's 2025 spring legislative session, Illinois law still provides several locally-driven options for township reorganization – should township boards and residents decide this is the best option for them, as illustrated below.

Residents owe it to themselves to understand their local units of government. Voters should decide whether those units of local government are providing the most efficient and effective services and what options are available to reorganize or dissolve those units no longer serving their purpose.

Township Consolidation:

Township consolidation is the combining of two or more townships to make one new, larger township and is detailed in Illinois law under 60 ILCS 1/22 *et seq.* In this scenario, the question of township consolidation is not initiated by a public petition. The law only allows this question to come to the ballot through resolutions initiated by the township board.

Township Consolidation

RESOLUTION

- Two or more township boards pass identical resolutions proposing consolidation by referendum
 - 1) into a new township; or 2) into an existing township
- The resolutions must be passed at least 79 days before a general election stated in the resolutions
- The townships must hold a public hearing prior to passing the resolutions

REFERENDUM

- Prior to the election, the township board must publish a copy of the resolution on each township's website, in a newspaper, and mail a copy of the referendum language to every registered voter in each affected township
- To pass, the referendum must be approved by more than 50 percent of voters in each of the affected townships

TRANSITION

- If the referendum passes, all rights, powers, duties and assets of the separate townships are transferred to the new, larger consolidated township
- Road districts located within the separate townships are abolished. When the new consolidated township is created, a new road district within the consolidated township is created

Township Merger:

Effective January 1, 2018, Illinois law was amended to allow communities in Illinois to hold referenda on whether to allow a single township to be merged with two other adjacent townships (60 ILCS 1/23 *et seq.*).

With this change, the township boards of any 3 adjacent townships may, by identical resolutions of each board, propose that a township which borders the other two townships be dissolved by referendum and absorbed into the expanding boundaries of the neighboring townships.

The process of getting this question on the ballot and approved by voters is the same as illustrated in the chart above under township consolidation.

Dissolving the Township Structure of Government:

Finally, there is an option to do away with the township unit of government within the county (as seen in counties under the commission form of government) and is detailed in Illinois law under 60 ILCS 1/25 *et seq.* Unlike the consolidation or merger scenarios, citizens initiate the dissolution of the township structure, but the requirements are so stringent that it is very difficult to do.

Township Dissolution

PETITION REFERENDUM

- Citizens must collect signatures from 10% of registered voters in every township within the county
- Signatures must be collected within 90 days to place the referendum on the ballot. If this requirement isn't met in every township within the county, the question can be thrown off the ballot
- If the vote fails, it cannot be resubmitted to voters for four years

CESSATION

- To dissolve the township structure of government, the referendum must pass by a majority of votes in each of at least three-fourths of the townships containing at least a majority of the population in the county
- The county board may (by resolution or ordinance) restructure into a commission form of government on or before 180 days after the township organization ceases. If the board votes to assume the a commission form of government, an election shall be held at the next general election in an even-numbered year

TRANSITION

- Township organizations cease in the county as soon as a county board is elected and qualified
- The county assumes all rights, powers, duties, assets, property, liabilities, obligations, and responsibilities of the dissolved townships

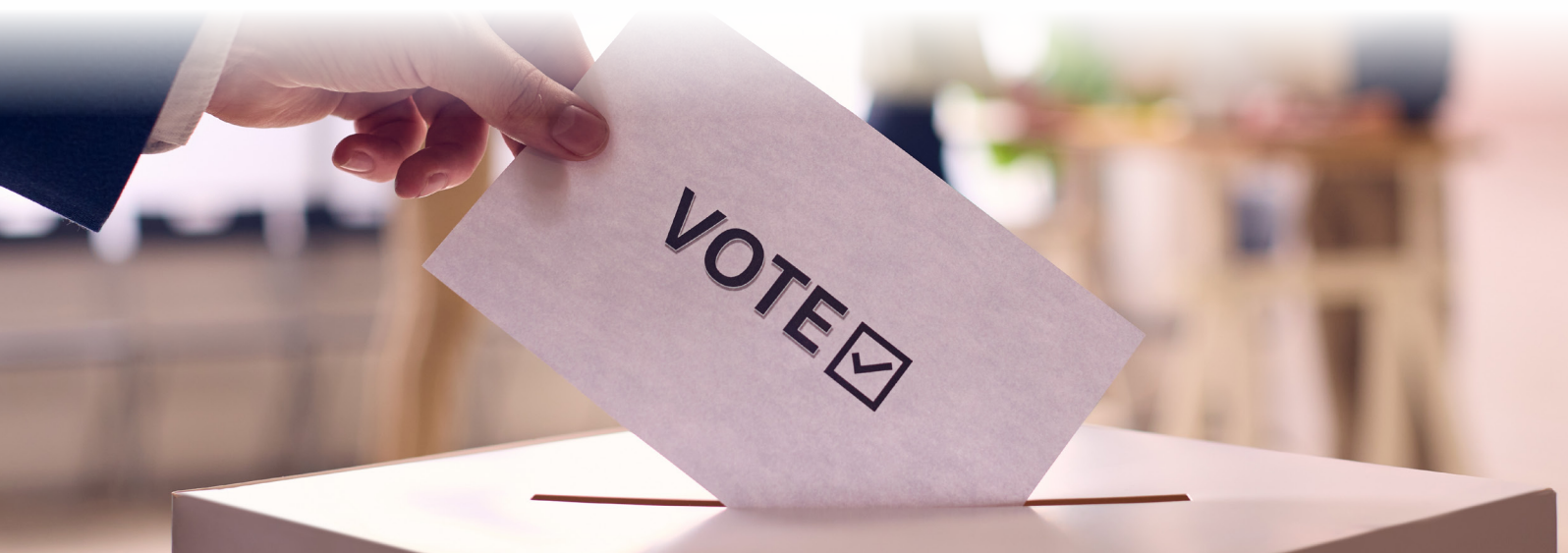
McHenry County Only

Effective August 9, 2019, a new law gave voters only within McHenry County the ability to more easily dissolve township governments, Public Act 101-230.

Under this law, voters may place a consolidation referendum on the ballot by collecting either a total of 250 petition signatures or a number of signatures equal to 5% of the ballots cast in the last comparable election, whichever number is larger.

If the referendum is successful, the township in question must be dissolved at least 90 days after the referendum with all property, assets, personnel, contractual obligations, and liabilities of the dissolved township and road districts within the dissolved township transferred to McHenry County.

With each of these options, the 170-year history of township government is in the hands of the resident voters.



Township Officials and Their Duties

In Illinois, we have two types of townships: civil townships and congressional townships. Congressional townships refer only to a measurement, or survey of land normally consisting of a six-mile square, grid pattern across the state and identified by a numbering system. A civil township is a unit of government where the functions of the township are administered by local government officials, as detailed below.

Township Supervisor : Serves as the chief executive officer of the township and chair of the board of trustees. The supervisor also serves as the treasurer of all the township funds and the ex-officio treasurer of the road and bridge funds. A primary responsibility of the supervisor is to oversee the township's public general assistance funds.

Township Clerk : Serves as the keeper of all the records, except those for active general assistance cases. The township clerk also serves as the clerk for the board of trustees and the ex-officio clerk of the road and bridge district, and is responsible for the placement of all advertisements and public notices for the township, road district and local election administration. Serves as the liaison between the unit of government and the public. The township clerk also convenes the Annual Town Meeting and serves as the moderator until one is elected from those present at the meeting.

Township Trustees : Each township has four trustees elected at-large. They, along with the supervisor, make up the township board of trustees and serve as the township's legislative body and policy making board. The trustees are also responsible for overseeing the financial and general operations of the township, including approving the township and road district budget, auditing bills, and management of township funds and functions.

Township/Multi-Township Assessor : Determines the value of most of the real property in the township(s) for tax purposes. However, the assessor does not levy taxes on those properties. Levies are made by the units of government serving those properties. The assessor is also responsible for keeping updated records on property ownership and changes to properties within their jurisdiction.

Highway Commissioner : The township highway commissioner is an elected official of the road district. While road districts typically align with township boundaries and receive budget approval from the township trustees, road districts are their own unit of government. The key responsibilities of the highway commissioner within this district are road maintenance including overseeing repair, snow removal, resurfacing, and upkeep of the township roads. The highway commissioner also purchases and maintains equipment and materials necessary for road maintenance and prepares an annual budget to fund road district operations.

Township Tax Collector : In Illinois, township tax collectors are currently elected officials in only three counties: Madison, Peoria and Will. A township collector is allowed in counties having a population of more than 100,000 but less than 2,000,000 residents. The primary duty of the collector is to bill for the collection of property taxes within the boundaries of the township.

The Benefits & Drawbacks of Townships

CATEGORY	BENEFITS	DRAWBACKS
GENERAL	Township Government is close to the people and generally easily accessible – officials are likely to be your neighbors or acquaintances. It is often aware of conditions and needs within the township and can quickly respond. The township's Annual Town Meeting is the closest thing to a true democratic process still found in any unit of government in Illinois.	While townships are empowered under statute to provide a wide range of services, few downstate townships exercise all of these authorities. For the most part, particularly in rural areas, townships' major functions are providing roads and administering general assistance funding. The 1,426 townships contribute to the confusion voters have about which of our many local units of government provides what services.
DEDICATION & PROFESSIONALISM	In government in general, individuals elected to office are generally more dedicated to fulfilling their responsibilities than would be an employee hired to complete the same task. The majority of township officials are part-time and work for relatively low salaries or per diems keeping costs lower than other general-purpose units of government.	The vast majority of township officials are part-time which might not allow for the opportunity to dedicate time to thoroughly learn the laws/business of government. There is rarely professional staff available on a day-to-day basis to provide that knowledge. Townships generally do not hire professionals to assist in the issues they deal with.
FINANCING	Few downstate rural townships have full-time staff. The bulk of the work is done by volunteer efforts helping to keep costs down. Voters can generally "see" where township dollars are going. This allows for informed decisions on those expenditures. Voters have opportunities to review proposed budgets at township budget hearings. Voters can also conduct official business of the township at the Annual Town Meeting.	Townships are funded primarily by property taxes – placing a tax burden on farmland owners. Unless there is a publicized controversy, budgets generally receive little public scrutiny. Some tax rate changes may be made at the Annual Town Meeting where traditionally few voters attend. This means a small handful of people (often only the elected township officials) set tax rates.
ROAD SYSTEMS [Assuming major routes are already maintained by the county or state.]	Road districts vary in size and function! Generally, rural downstate districts provide roads that reflect the revenue available and the dedication and capability of the Highway Commissioner. Being close to the users, township road districts can generally respond quickly to needs and problems. The roads within the township are the district's highest priority. They do not have to compete for funding and attention with other roads throughout the county. Township officials are generally capable of maintaining roads that meet the needs of a lower-volume, farm to market road system.	Generally, rural downstate township road districts lack professional engineering oversight for routine maintenance and day to day operations. A concentration of property wealth in one township may result in a well-funded local road system there, but might not share that wealth with surrounding, less fortunate road districts.
HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER [This same position is often established in Districts within commission counties. Only Unit Districts do not have Highway Commissioners.]	Generally, these individuals are dedicated and take pride in maintaining a good road system within the limits of the resources available to them. Most Highway Commissioners work for low wages/salaries/per diem – contributing far more time and management than could be bought in the labor market. Limited to a relatively small geographic area, the Highway Commissioner becomes very familiar with the entire system of township roads and knows where problems exist or may occur.	Highway Commissioners hold near autonomy in decisions regarding township roads with no opportunity for review by an elected board or township voters. Highway commissioners can OPERATE independently, with little opportunity to influence their actions except through replacement at election time. There are no professional or experience qualifications required of Highway Commissioners. There are no performance incentives for Highway Commissioners except re-election.

IFB Policy on Intergovernmental Cooperation

The actions permitted through state law and the Illinois Constitution are supported by IFB state policy (IFB Policy 106, Page 89, Line 36), which supports:

- Expanded use of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act by units of local government.
- The shared use of buildings, equipment, personnel, and programs by units of local government to reduce the cost to each unit.
- County Farm Bureaus working with local government officials and other interested parties to encourage local government cooperation.

Intergovernmental Cooperation: An Option for Effective Local Government?

Illinois has more units of local government than any other state with nearly 7,000 units. On one hand, some state legislators and concerned citizens believe this multiplicity of governments is a primary contributor to high property taxes and that consolidation of these units is a surefire method of providing tax relief. On the other, state task forces and commissions created to study consolidation have indicated that considerable progress can be made on tax savings and effective government through the promotion of shared services and intergovernmental agreements.

What is Intergovernmental Cooperation?

Intergovernmental cooperation is just as it sounds. It occurs when two or more units of government agree on a course of action that is mutually beneficial. These agreements can apply to a wide range of cooperative efforts, such as sharing in volume materials and large equipment purchasing, professional services, sharing of building space, combined planning efforts, etc. There's almost no limit to what two or more units of government can share if they can forge a mutually acceptable joint governmental agreement.

The goal of these types of arrangements is to reduce duplicative services, improve the delivery of services and increase cost-effectiveness. In some cases, local governments use intergovernmental cooperation agreements to address issues beyond their jurisdictional boundaries as seen with transportation services and economic development.

Legislative History

In 2011, the General Assembly passed, and then-Governor Quinn signed the Local Government Consolidation Act of 2011 that created the Local Government Consolidation Commission. In its 2013 report, the commission noted that "when the goal is improving the efficiency of service while maintaining service quality and controlling costs, cooperation proves much more successful than efforts focused on reducing the number of local governments in an area."

In 2015, former Governor Rauner signed Executive Order 15-15 that created the Task Force on Local Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates. In its 2015 report, this task force stated that "significant progress can be made on the topic of consolidation through the promotion of shared services and intergovernmental agreements."

Current Tools for Intergovernmental Cooperation

Illinois Constitution: Article VII, Section 10, of the Illinois Constitution grants all units of local government the authority to contract or otherwise associate among themselves to obtain or share services. It also allows them to jointly exercise, combine, or transfer any of their powers or functions in any manner not prohibited by law.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (5 ICLS 220/1 *et seq.*): states that any powers, functions or authorities exercised by a unit of local government may also be exercised, combined and enjoyed jointly with other units of local government.

Governmental Joint Purchasing Act (30 ICLS 525/0.01 *et seq.*): allows

any governmental unit to purchase personal property, supplies and services jointly with one or more other governmental units.

How Local Governments Can Improve Intergovernmental Cooperation

In 2022, the General Assembly passed legislation as an alternative to consolidation. Signed into law as Public Act 102-1088, the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act took effect on June 10, 2022. Through the Act, units of local government (except municipalities, counties, and school districts) were given one year to form a committee to study the governmental unit's governing statutes, ordinances, rules, procedures, powers, jurisdiction, shared services, intergovernmental agreements and interrelationships with other governmental units and the State.

Once formed, the committees were required to create a report containing recommendations regarding efficiencies and increased accountability to the county board in which the governmental unit was located.

These reports should offer greater insight into local governments' operations and the scale and scope of intergovernmental agreements (if any).

Effective and Efficient Government and You

While the topic of consolidation is sure to resurface in almost every future legislative session, it is important to know that there are current statutory tools available designed to aid local governments in delivering programs and service effectively and efficiently.

Talking Townships with Jerry Crabtree



Jerry Crabtree, originally from Franklin County Illinois, is the Executive Director of the Township Officials of Illinois. He has an extensive background in local government, including experience in the Illinois Senate, Attorney General's Office, and departments within the Executive Branch.

Q What is a quick township overview, and how might local county Farm Bureaus connect with their newly elected township officials?

A There are 1,426 townships in the state. One township is a six-mile square – 36 square miles. They exist in 85 counties. Many of our counties have associations of Township officials that meet periodically. If your county has an active association, that's one of the best ways to meet your township officials.

Q What value does township government have to the average citizen - what roles / functions do townships perform that are going to be of interest to farmers?

A State law in the township code mandates that there are three primary services that townships have to provide.

1. Road and bridge maintenance, through the highway commissioner or road district. Approximately 72,000 miles of road are maintained by townships in Illinois.
2. Property assessment. People argue that property assessment could be done at the county level, Townships work with counties to cross reference assessments. Sort of a check and balance practice.
3. General assistance. This is a public aid benefit that is provided mostly to single residents or others who have exhausted all state and federal assistance programs.

We also have a section in the township code that allows communities to fund additional services if the community supports it through a levy. We have townships that fund senior service programs, township parks, township fire departments, a hospital, transportation services, food banks, and more.

Q Are the services offered by townships, cost effective?

A It's the cheapest unit of government across the board. In Sangamon County, where I live, the average highway commissioner salary is under \$30,000. That's a drop in the bucket compared to what county government pays their road crews. There is no union wage. Not all of our highway commissioners or township officials get health insurance. Only 25 percent of our townships are in the state retirement program. If township responsibilities were to be taken on by county governments, retirement benefits, etc.,

at a time when county budgets are already struggling. Only an average of 2% - 3.5% of property tax goes to townships, which is nothing compared to the 60% that goes to school districts. Our former president is in Schuyler County, and he maintains 63 miles of road on about \$25,000 per year. You're not going to find anybody who can do that for the same amount of money.

Q This past year we saw several legislative proposals to consolidate township government, that T.O.I. opposed. What, in your opinion, was the issue with these proposals?

A We have a census that's done every 10 years, and the census data indicates that Illinois has a huge number of units of local government. So, there's a push to allow county boards to unilaterally take over township responsibilities, just to reduce the number of units of local government. However, townships maintain 72,000 miles of road in this state, and county governments are not financially prepared to take on that responsibility. I don't think the legislature is aware that most township road districts are paid far less than county officials. They are not union. They do not have health insurance. Not all townships participate in a retirement benefit program. Only a small percentage are in IMRF. For a lot of our members that live in rural locations, the only government they can interact with is the township government – the road crew that's maintaining their snow removal and their summer programs where they resurface those roads and take care of the cemeteries.

Q What is T.O.I.'s position on township consolidation?

A The Township Officials of Illinois are not opposed to consolidation if it makes sense. We have always supported it when it makes financial sense and services are not eliminated. Our most important objective with consolidation is that the final decision is made by the voters (general public). There are some townships that are financially struggling. If you can prove that it makes fiscal and responsible sense, then we support consolidation. But we can't support a strongarm approach. I have seen five consolidations since I've been here, and three or four of them were successful, but some caused problems. They had to hire more people. It became a fiscal nightmare. The public should be involved in the process. The final say should always be with the people affected – the voters.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1,426 township in the state.

Exist in 85 counties

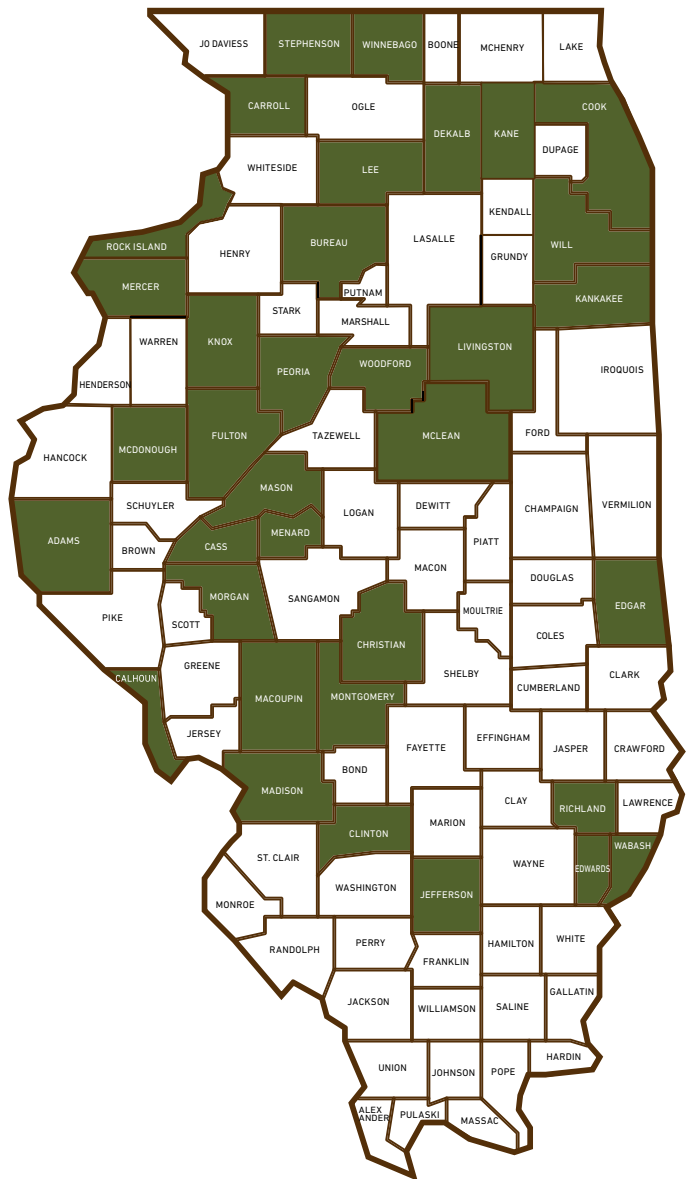
1 township = 36 square miles

72,000 miles of road maintained

Thank You, County Farm Bureaus!

To date, 35 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 | 19. Macoupin |
| 2. Bureau | 20. Madison |
| 3. Calhoun | 21. Mason |
| 4. Carroll | 22. McDonough |
| 5. Cass | 23. McLean |
| 6. Christian | 24. Menard |
| 7. Clinton | 25. Mercer |
| 8. Cook | 26. Montgomery |
| 9. DeKalb | 27. Morgan |
| 10. Edgar | 28. Peoria |
| 11. Edwards | 29. Richland |
| 12. Fulton | 30. Rock Island |
| 13. Jefferson | 31. Stephenson |
| 14. Kane | 32. Wabash |
| 15. Kankakee | 33. Will |
| 16. Knox | 34. Winnebago |
| 17. Lee | 35. Woodford |
| 18. Livingston | |



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