

ADVOCACY REPORT

Illinois Chamber Advocacy | Spring 2026

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Illinois Chamber Announces New CEO | Jimmy Clayton

The Illinois Chamber of Commerce was proud to announce Jimmy Clayton the new President and CEO of the Chamber on April 1, 2026. Clayton was selected by the Chamber's Search Committee and unanimously approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

"The Illinois Chamber of Commerce has a rich history from 1919 of advocating for Illinois Business of every size, sector, and region," stated Dan Wagner, Chairman of the Board and Senior VP of Government Relations at The Inland Real Estate Companies. "Jimmy Clayton is exactly the right person for the CEO position," Wagner offered.

Clayton previously served for over 15 years in many advocacy and lobbying positions with the Illinois REALTORS. "Clayton's lobbying experience, reputation, coupled with his work ethic and innovative ideas while balancing attention to detail are qualities that the Chamber was looking for in our new CEO," stated Search Committee Chair Tony Reinhart, Ford Motor Company.

"I am honored to be joining the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and look forward to building our membership and rekindling the strong history of the Illinois Chamber's position and stature in service to Illinois businesses," Clayton said.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RELATIONS



Jan. 12 | The Illinois Chamber thanks the Consulate General of Canada in Chicago, especially Margaux McDonald and Jillian Senkiw, for hosting Chamber's own Laura Ortega and Chairman Dan Wagner. We look forward to continuing this partnership!



Jan. 14 | Illinois Chamber Director Laura Oretga and Chamber's Chairman Dan Wagner, together with Illinois Manufacturers' Association CEO Mark Denzler, were honored to meet with Ms. Yvonne Chiu, Chairwoman of the Global Digital Delivery Alliance (GDDA), and Mr. Dennis Lei, Director General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago.



Thank you for the invitation and the opportunity to connect. We look forward to many future opportunities to collaborate!



Feb. 27 | Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Illinois Chamber's 2026 Global Trade Outlook at the Instituto Cervantes of Chicago. Your engagement made the event a great success!

Our keynote, Phil Levy, shared how 2026 is shaping up to be a pivotal year as the impact of tariffs and policy fragmentation continues to unfold—driving ongoing diversification and supply chain realignment.

In our fireside chat, Venkat Veeramni and Phil Levy underscored the need to manage geopolitical, logistics, and currency risks, and how companies investing in data-driven strategy, resilience, and strong international partnerships will be best positioned to thrive.

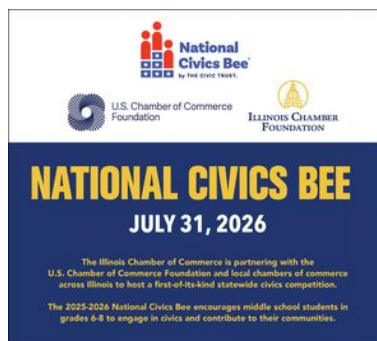
Our Regional Global Partners Panel reinforced that international connections—especially at the sub-national level—remain a critical advantage in today's fast-changing global environment.

Big thanks to our Sponsors and Partners for their support. We could not have made it without you!

CHAMBER UPCOMING EVENTS AND NEWS



Our 9th Annual Women in Business Conference is happening on **Monday, June 8, 2026**. Come network with leaders, share insights, and be inspired to take your business and career to the next level!



The Illinois Chamber Foundation will host its second Annual State Civics Competition in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation on **Friday, July 31, 2026**.



Mark your calendars! Our 2026 Annual Luncheon will take place at the Hilton Chicago Continental Room in Chicago on **Thursday, September 24, 2026**. Be sure to follow our social media channels for more updates!

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM



The Illinois Chamber of Commerce represents member companies across the state: employers of every size, sector, and industry. Today, Illinois businesses benefit greatly from the State's tremendous assets: Illinois' place as a national transportation hub, a strong talent pipeline, a world-class higher education system, and a growing center of tech development and innovation.

Our Government Relations team advocates on behalf of businesses across Illinois, working closely with policymakers and stakeholders to promote policies that strengthen the state's economy and support job growth.

- [Jordan Ryan](#), VP of Government Relations
- [Ramiro Hernandez](#), VP of Public Policy & Strategy
- [Aubrie Mozingo](#), Manager of Government Relations
- [Lori Hiltabrand](#), Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel
- [Andrew Cunningham](#), Senior Director of Government Relations

The Illinois Chamber of Commerce Introduces State Legislative Agenda

The Illinois Chamber's 2026 State Legislative Agenda is among the most ambitious, responsive, and bipartisan legislative packages introduced to date.

Whether it is tackling the evolving needs of a modern workforce, preparing students for the future of work, or addressing the rising concerns around energy availability, reliability, and affordability, the Illinois Chamber's 2026 Legislative Agenda provides thoughtful solutions to some of the most pressing challenges Illinois businesses and residents alike are facing today. We are grateful to have over a dozen legislative champions partnering with us this year to advance the efforts of Illinois businesses.

2026 Legislative Agenda

Mar. 3 | Illinois Chamber's Senior Director of Government Relations, Andrew Cunningham, was invited to speak at the Illinois Concrete Pavement Association's annual meeting in Springfield. Cunningham provided a state transportation and infrastructure update to attendees, covering some of the major legislative discussions over the past year, including topics like mass transit reform, the Road Fund balance, project delivery, and autonomous vehicles. Thank you to Executive Director Robert Rescot, for the invitation and engagement with the Chamber!



Mar. 25 | Every week while the General Assembly is in session, the Chamber's government relations team is closely tracking and actively lobbying legislation that will have an impact on your business and operations.



Jordan Ryan, VP of Government Relations, testified in opposition to HB 4725 (Hoffman), which would create the Workers Protection Unit under the Office of the Attorney General. The Chamber is currently opposed to the bill as passed out of committee, and we are hopeful to continue further conversations with both sponsors in the House and Senate.

Mar. 30 | The Illinois Chamber is proud to share that HB 5195 (Walsh) passed out of the House Energy & Environment Committee unanimously (28-0-0). Vice President of Public Policy, Ramiro Hernandez testified in support of the measure during the hearing.



This bill is an IL Chamber initiative that aims to address the future of energy in Illinois, specifically through an economic lens, through the creation of the Illinois Future of Energy Choice and Economic Impact Commission. The Commission is comprised of representation from state agencies, business associations, and labor groups, and it will cover topics like the impact of current energy policies on the State's economy and the viability of existing energy policies to meet energy demands.

In addition to the Chamber, this initiative is supported by Local 150, IBEW, the Illinois Pipe Trades Association, and other partner business associations.



Feb. 26 | Illinois Chamber Board Chairman Dan Wagner had a great meeting with Kristin Richards, Casimir Peters, and Andrea Vallejo from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

These conversations are all about building strong relationships and staying connected as we work together to support businesses and communities across Illinois.



Mar. 4 | A wonderful evening at the Dawoodi Bohras of Chicago Iftar Celebration in the Village of Willbrook.

Illinois Chamber Board Chairman Dan Wagner had the pleasure of meeting Zaman Mehdi from the Consulate General of Pakistan Chicago. The gathering provided a meaningful opportunity to foster dialogue, strengthen partnerships, and celebrate shared values.

Thank you to the Dawoodi Bohra community for hosting such a welcoming and impactful event!



Mar. 16 | The Illinois Chamber of Commerce was proud to take part in Chicago's St. Patrick's Day celebrations!

Illinois Chamber Board Chairman Dan Wagner attended alongside Executive Director of the Chamber's International Business Council Laura Ortega and Chamber Board Member Paul Newman of Motorola Solutions.

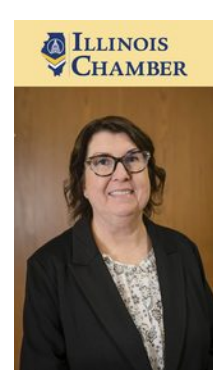
Vice Consulate General of Ireland Padraig Manning welcomed guests and introduced Ireland's Senior Cabinet Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, James Browne, who highlighted the strong and longstanding relationship between Ireland and the City of Chicago.

GROW | CONNECT | CELEBRATE

WELCOME | Cheryl Mezydlo

Director of Membership and Business Development

Cheryl brings more than 20 years of leadership experience in membership growth, engagement, and strategic relationship building. Throughout her career, Cheryl worked for large, mission driven associations within Illinois, holding senior roles focused on strengthening member value, driving sustainable growth, and fostering meaningful connections within the business community. Cheryl holds a bachelor's degree in finance from Lewis University in Romeoville, IL.



WELCOME | Aubrie Mozingo

Manager of Government Relations

Aubrie held two previous chamber positions, one as the intern at the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, and the other as the government affairs intern at the Lincoln Square Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce. Most recently, Aubrie worked as a Legislative Coordinator for the Illinois Office of the Speaker, where she staffed several members and committees and assisted with developing legislative agendas and served as administrative support. Aubrie graduated with her bachelor's degrees in political science and public policy at University of Illinois Springfield.



Jan. 24 | The Illinois Chamber of Commerce applauds Illinois Supreme Court decision in Concerned Citizens & Property Owners, et al., v. The Illinois Commerce Commission that will help support the much needed and revolutionary Grain Belt Express project set to construct and operate innovative HVDC transmission lines in Illinois.

The Court's action represents a significant win for Chamber-member Invenergy and Illinois businesses and residents at a time when energy demand is at an all-time high.

[Read More](#)

The Illinois Chamber is proud to be a partner organization to the Illinois America 250 Commission!

The Illinois America 250 Commission was established by state law to organize an inclusive, statewide celebration that uplifts local stories, highlights significant places, and programs, and showcases how Illinoisans bring to life the ideals of the Declaration.

[Learn More and Partner Here](#)



Mar. 19 | Great conversations and strong momentum at the Illinois Chamber of Commerce Q1 Board Meeting today at Hanson Professional Services in Springfield!

A big thank you to Cheryl Mezydlo, Director of Membership, and the Government Relations team for delivering an insightful presentation and helping drive meaningful discussion around our priorities for the year ahead.

Looking forward to building on this energy as we continue advocating for Illinois businesses!



Mar. 23 | Illinois Chamber's Communications Director, Darbi Keltner, had the privilege of serving as a judge at the Illinois Section AWWA 4th Annual Water Taste Test!

- District 3 Winner: City of Springfield, Illinois
- District 3 People's Choice: Otter Lake Water Commission
- District 4 Winner & People's Choice: City of Collinsville
- District 5 Winner & People's Choice: Town of Normal, IL

Well done to all the participants for showcasing the quality and excellence of their water systems!

Thank you, [HDR](#) for having us back!

Spotlight on Members

Since opening in November 2024, [Wind Creek Chicago Southland](#) has made a big impact in Chicago's south suburbs. This \$530 million integrated resort has generated 1,100 jobs, contributed over \$118,000 to local municipalities, and welcomed more than two million guests in its first year.



[John Boos & Co.](#) has been setting the standard for unwavering quality and innovation since 1887. Founded in Effingham, their products are celebrated worldwide for craftsmanship that makes a difference in kitchens, businesses, and homes alike. We're proud to have you in our business community!



We're proud to highlight [Molex](#), a valued Illinois Chamber member for nearly 20 years. As a global leader in connectivity solutions, they power innovation across industries and help keep the world connected.

molex

[United Airlines](#) is a valued chamber member and recognized for their continued investment in Chicago and the region, expanding in a big way at Chicago O'Hare, announcing its largest schedule ever with up to 750 daily flights this summer.



[Illinois American Water](#) continues to invest in Illinois' infrastructure! In 2025, Illinois American Water invested over \$280 million in statewide water and wastewater upgrades, enhancing reliability and supporting local jobs across Illinois.



Congratulations to Heather Bailey of [Amundsen Davis, LLC](#), a valued Illinois Chamber member and frequent presenter at our events, for being named one of Crain's Notable Women in Law! This is well deserved!



Gov. JB Pritzker and the [Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity](#) (DCEO) announced that global biotherapeutics leader [CSL](#), a proud member of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, will invest nearly \$1.5 billion to build a new manufacturing facility at its Kankakee campus. This expansion will create 300 new full-time jobs and retain over 1,200 existing positions.



Together, we're building a stronger, more prosperous Illinois.



Sent to: dkeltner@ilchamber.org

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Illinois Chamber of Commerce, 215 E. Adams, Springfield, IL 62701, United States