

Page: Entry Information

Chapter

ILNS

Chapter Size

Extra Large (1201+)

Category

Leadership

Program Name

Strategic Plan in Action

If this was a joint program with another chapter, please list the chapter.

Each question is worth 20 points and will be scored using the following rubric:

(1-5) Poor Didn't effectively answer the question

(6-1) Fair Answered the question

(11-15) Good Answered the question with more detail

(16-20) Excellent Went above and beyond with proven results and visible data

Describe the program and why it fits the category. (20pts)

When it was time to refresh our strategic plan for 2026, we did not want to simply revise a document and file it away. We wanted to create a living roadmap that engaged volunteers, strengthened board-committee relationships, and empowered leaders at every level of the chapter to actively drive our mission forward.

Our Strategic Plan in Action initiative focused on implementation, ownership, and leadership development — not just goal setting.

To accomplish this, we:

1. Redesigned the strategic plan structure so that each committee had a dedicated page identifying specific objectives they could take ownership of. This ensured committee work directly supported the association's broader goals instead of operating in silos. (See File 1)
2. Clarified and strengthened board and staff liaison roles to improve communication, mentorship, and accountability between the board and committees. (See File 2 and File 3)
3. Invested in leadership training for committee chairs, focusing on proactive listening, constructive dialogue, and creating safe meeting spaces so all voices could be heard and strategic ideas could surface.
4. Launched monthly Committee Chair Idea Sharing Sessions, providing a structured space for collaboration, strategic problem-solving, and peer mentorship beyond regular committee meetings.

This initiative fits within the Leadership category because it enhanced governance structure, improved communication flow, created a succession pathway for emerging leaders, and turned strategic planning into a leadership-driven operating model.

How did this program meet the mission and vision of the chapter and CAI as a whole including fostering an inclusive environment that reflects and serves our diverse community? (20pts)

Vision of CAI-IL:

CAI-IL is the premier organization inspiring community association excellence through best business practices, professionalism, effective leadership, and responsible citizenship by connecting homeowners, community managers, and business partners.

With more than 150 volunteers across committees, we recognized that true leadership happens when volunteers understand how their work connects to the bigger picture. By clearly aligning every committee with strategic objectives, we ensured that leadership was not confined to the board level — it became embedded throughout the organization.

The communication training for committee chairs strengthened professionalism and reinforced respectful dialogue, creating meeting environments where diverse perspectives are encouraged and valued. This supports inclusion, builds trust, and prepares future leaders to serve both the chapter and the broader industry.

By connecting strategy to execution, we strengthened governance, empowered volunteers, and ensured that our mission was not simply stated — it was actively advanced.

What was the impact on the chapter and its members after completing the program? (Growth of membership, financially, public awareness, membership value, better chapter/member relationship, chapter operations, etc.) (20 pts)

The impact has been both cultural and measurable.

Stronger Committee Ownership and Engagement--Volunteers now clearly understand how their work supports chapter-wide goals. Most committees designated a "Strategic Captain" responsible for ensuring committee decisions align with strategic objectives. This created built-in accountability and deeper engagement.

Improved Governance Communication--Board liaisons are actively engaged in committee meetings, providing mentorship and guidance while ensuring information flows consistently between leadership levels. This has strengthened trust and reduced operational silos.

More Effective and Inclusive Meetings--Through communication training, committee chairs are leading more productive meetings grounded in active listening and constructive discussion. This has reinforced a culture where volunteers feel comfortable sharing ideas and participating meaningfully. (See File 4 and File 5)

Increased Cross-Committee Collaboration--The monthly Committee Chair Idea Sharing Sessions created a new leadership forum for brainstorming and innovation. (See File 6) As a result:

- The Fundraising Committee and Golf Committee partnered to create a paid VIP experience benefiting legislative fundraising.
- The Community Relations Committee and Excellence Awards Gala Committee collaborated to expand the Toys for Tots drive with multiple drop-off locations.

These collaborations would not have happened without intentional leadership structure and communication alignment.

Provide quantifiable data supporting the rationale for success. Include why this data is significant. (20pts)

The measurable results demonstrate that this initiative created sustainable leadership development and strategic alignment.

New Leader Development

- Two Strategic Captains advanced into Vice Chair roles within their committees. This demonstrates that engaging volunteers in strategic ownership builds a clear pathway for succession and leadership growth.

100% Committee Strategic Alignment

- All committees identified strategic objectives aligned with chapter goals.
- 65% of strategic objectives were completed or are actively in progress within the year.

(See File 7)

This level of alignment ensures that volunteer energy is directly tied to measurable chapter outcomes.

Increased Leadership Participation

- Monthly Committee Chair Idea Sharing Sessions have grown in attendance and engagement since launch.

These numbers are significant because they reflect a shift from passive participation to active leadership and ownership. The strategic plan is no longer a static governance document, getting dusty on a shelf— it is guiding committee decisions, leadership development, and measurable outcomes across the organization.

What are your plans to maintain the momentum of this program moving forward? (20 pts)

We intentionally designed this initiative to be something we continue year after year.

Next steps include:

Ongoing Leadership Development--We will continue offering training and tools for committee chairs focused on communication, strategic thinking, and inclusive leadership practices.

Annual Strategic Plan Review and Refresh--Each year, the board and committee leaders will formally revisit and evaluate the plan to ensure it evolves with the needs of the chapter. We often say, "There's nothing worse than a dusty strategic plan," and we intend to live by that. We already used the same concepts to develop the 2026 Strategic Plan and are meeting with each committee to assure they are actively working the plan. (See File 8)

Transparent Progress Tracking and Recognition--We will continue measuring, publishing, and celebrating committee progress to reinforce accountability and motivate volunteers.

By embedding leadership development, strategic alignment, and governance clarity into our operations, we have strengthened the foundation of the chapter. This initiative ensures that leadership is cultivated intentionally, committees operate with purpose, and the mission and vision of CAI-IL remain at the center of everything we do.

Supporting documents including flyers, postcards, pictures, videos etc. can be uploaded below. While they aren't required for your submission we certainly encourage it.

Would you like to upload additional documents?

Yes

fileUpload2

No File Uploaded

fileUpload3

Download File (https://caiawards.secure-platform.com/file/24392/eyJ0eXAiOiJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJtZWRRpYUlkIjoyNDM5MiwiaWYxsb3dOb3RTaWduZWRVcmwiOiJGYWxzZSIsImInbm93Roster_Liaisons_Board_Staff_CommitteeChairs_2024.xlsx)

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