



# Hotel Caring Initiative- Social Impact Analysis

July 2025  
Prepared for:



# Project Background

Hotels are more than just places to stay – they are pillars of community vitality and service.

Hotel Caring is an initiative showcasing the positive social impact the industry has on local communities. As a research partner with the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association (IHLA), Tourism Economics conducted the research and analysis.

The project is intended to highlight all the philanthropic activities carried out by hotels.

This report presents results from the study carried out to scan and map out a portion of the philanthropic activities carried out by hotels in the state of Illinois.



# Methodology and Data Sources

A survey of hotel operators was the primary form of data collection. The survey was followed by direct communications with the hotel respondents to complete missing data items and confirm/validate the data submitted.

The survey was in the field for a five-month period starting January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Philanthropic activities covered in the survey included cash or in-kind contributions, fundraisers, food/supply drives, employee initiatives, refugee support, and training. Specific details such as hours of volunteering or number of room nights donated were requested.

For each category of giving, the analysis relied on calculating the following:

1. The average contribution per hotel
2. The median contribution per hotel
3. The share of hotels within a specific bracket of giving (e.g., percentage of hotels that provided in-kind donations within each defined range)

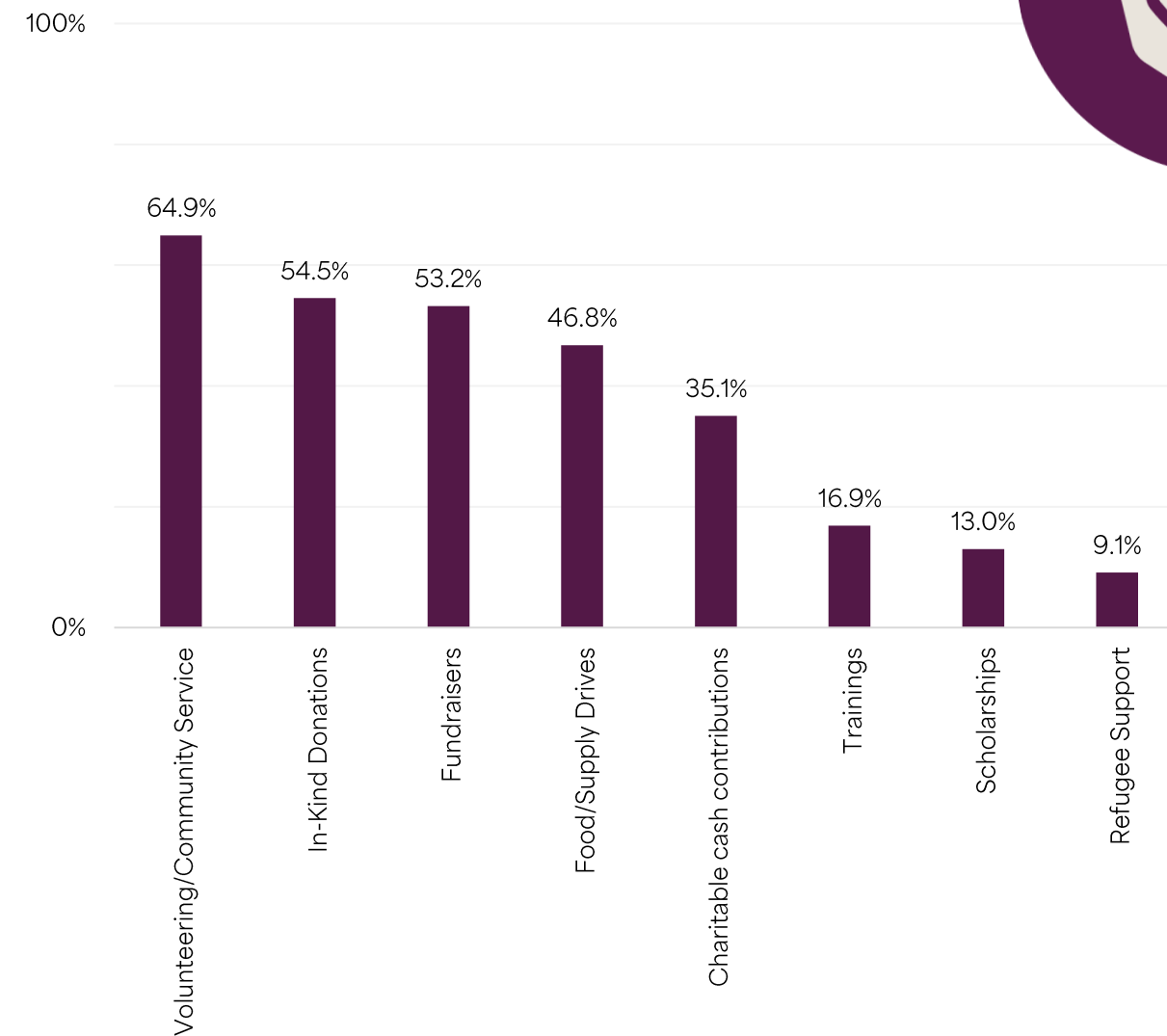
Based on hotel size and the share of hotels participating in each type of giving, estimates of total giving, by category, were extrapolated for Illinois.

# Types of Giving

The most common type of giving among hotels in Illinois is volunteering/community service. This is followed by in-kind donations and fundraisers.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

### Types of giving, Illinois



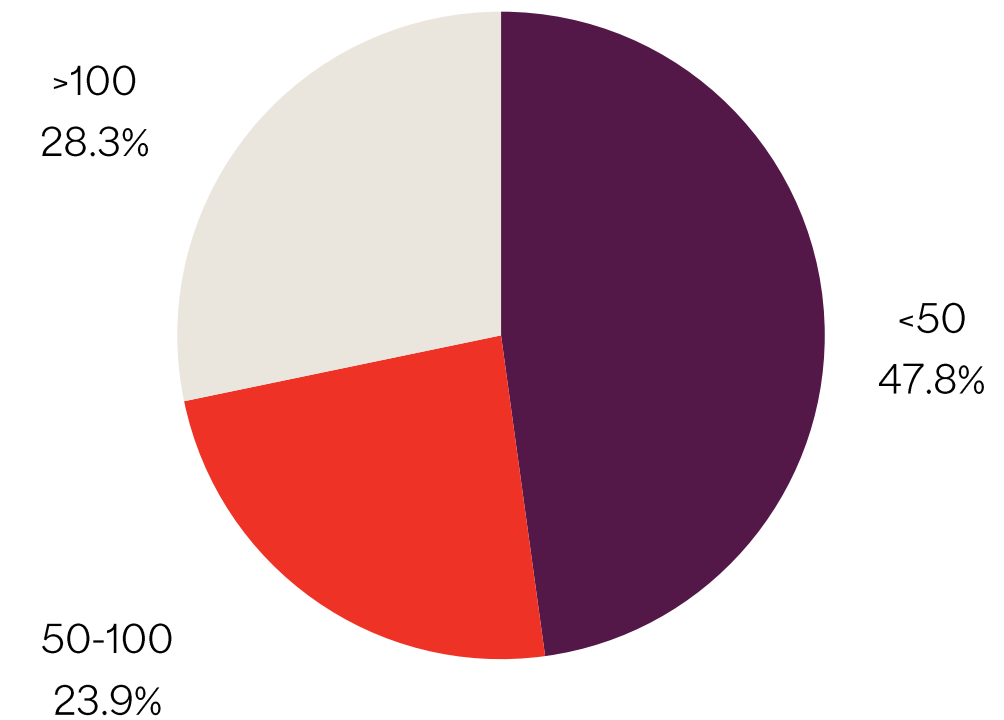
# Volunteering & Community Service

More than six in 10 (**65%**) hotels in Illinois participated in community service activities in 2024. On average, a hotel in Illinois donated **316 hours** to the community in 2024. The median contribution was **59 hours** (i.e., 50% of hotels donated a number of hours greater than 59 hours).

More than a quarter (28%) of the hotels in Illinois volunteered more than 100 hours in 2024. Another quarter (24%) of hotels donated between 50 and 100 hours. The remaining half (48%) volunteered less than 50 hours to the community in 2024.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by number of hours volunteered in the community, Illinois



# Volunteering & Community Service

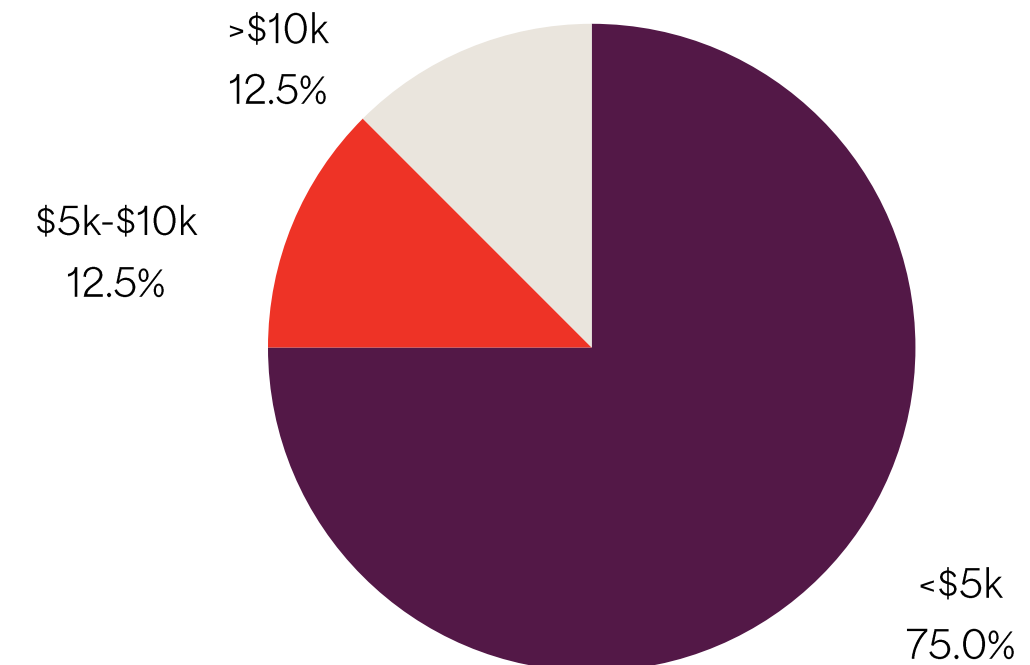
The efforts primarily focus on food security, support for children and families, homelessness relief, and extensive volunteering at organizations like Feed My Starving Children, Greater Chicago Food Depository, Ronald McDonald House, as well as various other shelters.

The average dollar value for the hours volunteered in the community is estimated at **\$8,507** per hotel.

More than one in 10 (13%) of hotels volunteered a number of hours worth \$10,000 or more. An equal share (13%) of hotels volunteered hours estimated between \$5,000 and \$10,000, while the majority (75%) of hotels donated hours worth \$5,000 or less.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by dollar value of hours volunteered in the community, Illinois



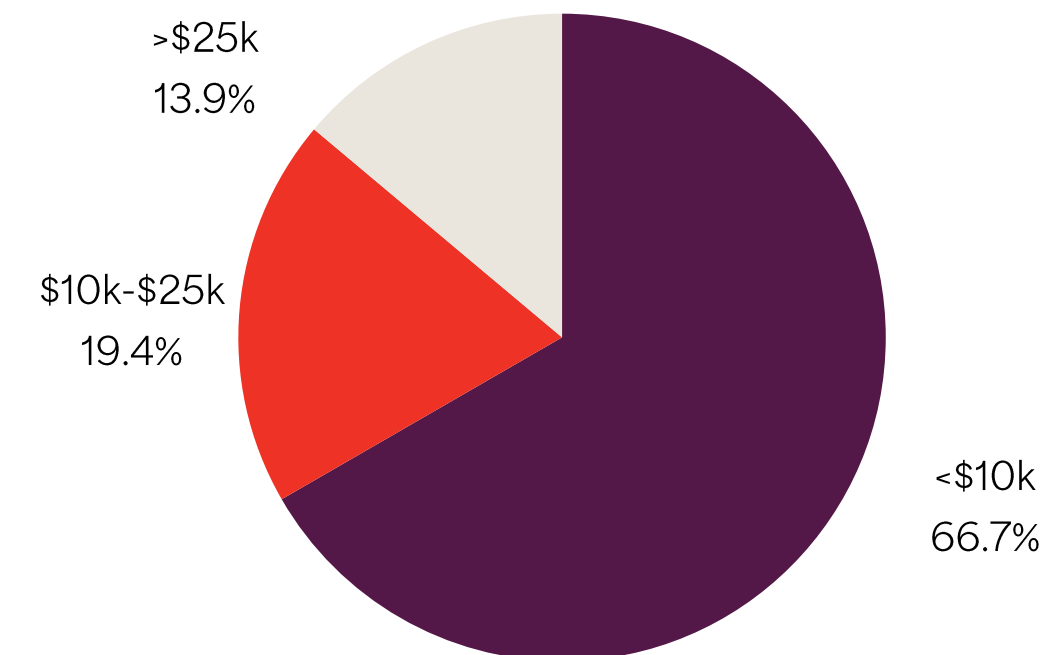
# In-Kind Donations

More than half of **(55%) hotels** in Illinois provided in-kind donations\* in 2024. On average, a hotel in Illinois donated in-kind donations estimated at a value of **\$11,479 in 2024**. The median contribution was **\$5,000** (i.e. 50% of hotels donated in-kind donations of a value greater than \$5,000).

More than one in 10 (14%) of hotels in Illinois gave in-kind contributions with a value of \$25,000 or more. Almost two in 10 (19%) gave in-kind contributions estimated at a value of \$10,000-\$25,000, and the majority (67%) of hotels contributed with in-kind donations at a value of less than \$10,000.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by size of in-kind contributions, Illinois



\* Examples of in-kind donations include hotel rooms, catering, and event space provided at no or reduced cost for nonprofit organizations



# In-Kind Donations

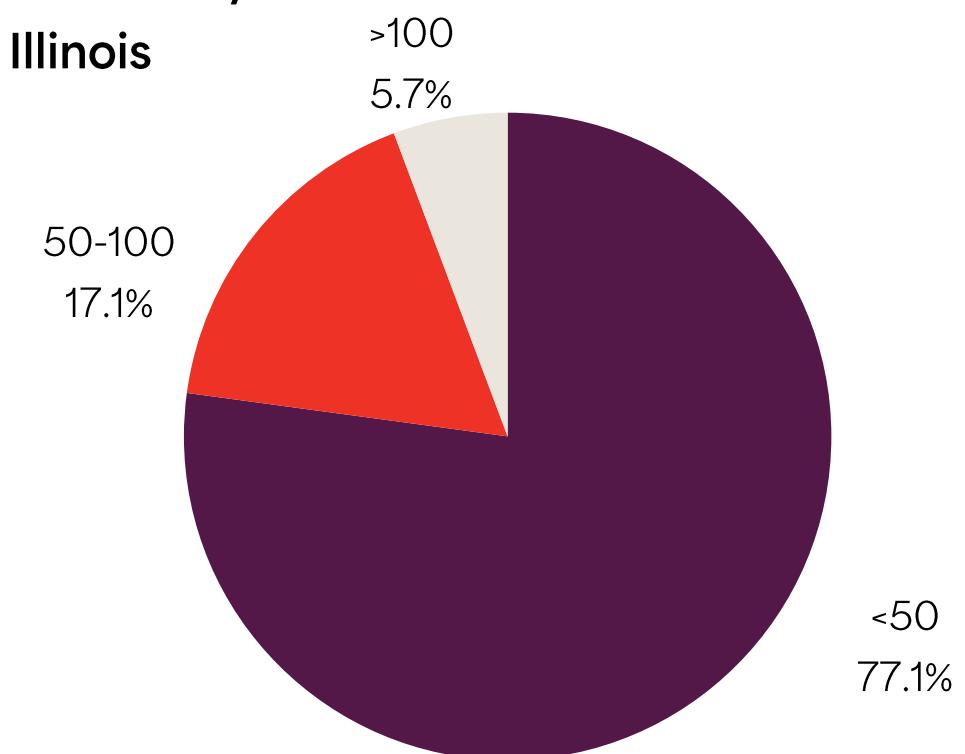
Beneficiaries of the in-kind contributions included Children's Miracle Network, Ronald McDonald House, Feed My Starving Children, and the Salvation Army, as well as support for animal shelters.

In addition, **44% of hotels** donated room nights, with the average donated per hotel estimated at **37 room nights**. The median contribution was **25 room nights** (i.e. 50% of hotels donated more than 25 rooms in 2024).

Almost one in 10 (6%) of hotels in Illinois donated more than 100 room nights, 17% donated between 50 and 100 room nights, while the majority (77%) donated less than 50 room nights.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by number of donated room nights, Illinois



# Fundraisers

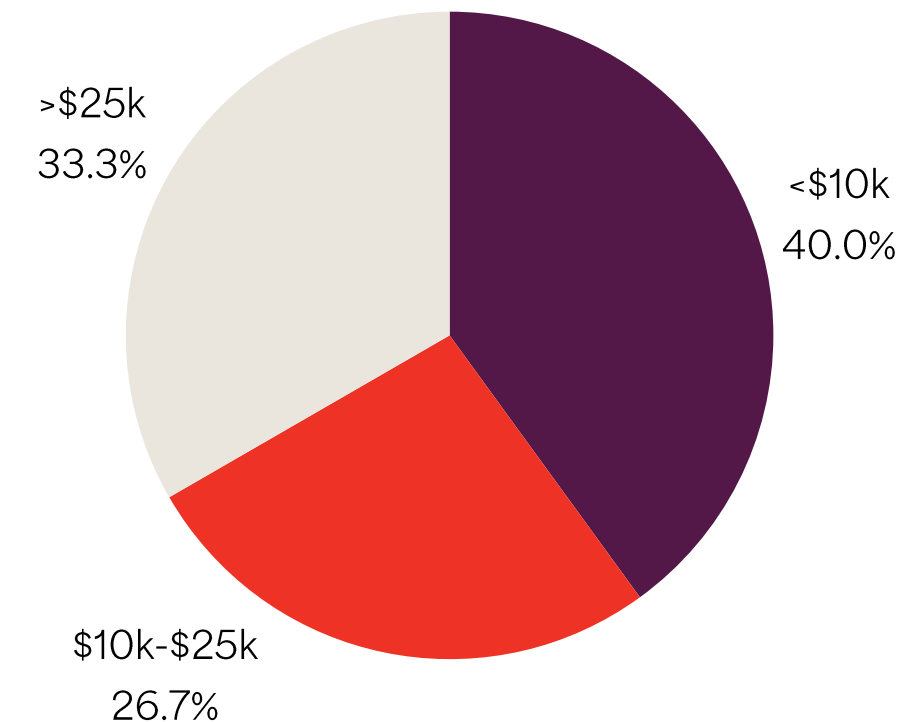
More than half (**53%**) of hotels in Illinois organized fundraisers in 2024. On average, a hotel in Illinois raised **\$19,544** through fundraisers in 2024. The median value of a fundraiser was **\$15,000** (i.e. 50% of hotels raised more than \$15,000).

Beneficiaries of the fundraisers included the Children's Miracle Network, St. Jude Children's Hospital, the American Heart Association, Paws Chicago, as well as several other local organizations.

Four in 10 hotels (40%) raised \$10,000 or less through fundraisers in 2024, while the majority of hotels (60%) raised funds with a value of more than \$10,000.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by value of funds raised, Illinois



# Food/Supply Drives

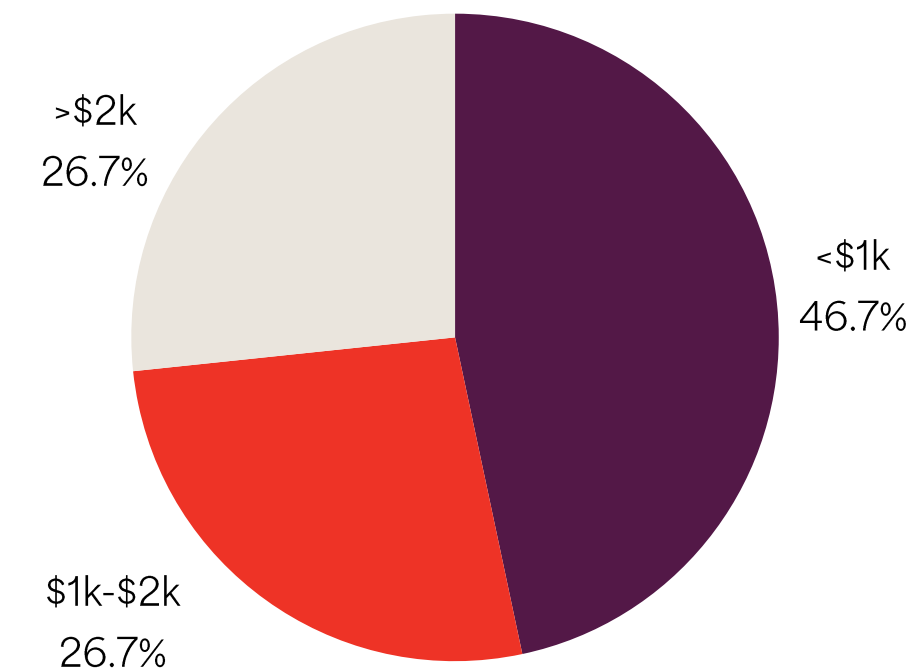
Almost half (**47%**) of hotels in Illinois organized food/supply drives in 2024. On average, a hotel in Illinois organized food/supply drives estimated at a value of **\$1,849**. The median value of a food/supply drive was **\$1,500** (i.e. 50% of hotels organized food/supply drives with a value greater than \$1,500).

Beneficiaries included the Children's Miracle the Northern Illinois Food Bank, Feed My Starving Children, and Deborah's Place.

More than a quarter (27%) of hotels in Illinois organized food/supply drives with values greater than \$2,000 in 2024. Another quarter (27%) organized drives valued between \$1,000 and \$2,000, while 47% organized drives worth \$1,000 or less.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by value of food drive, Illinois



# Charitable Cash Contributions

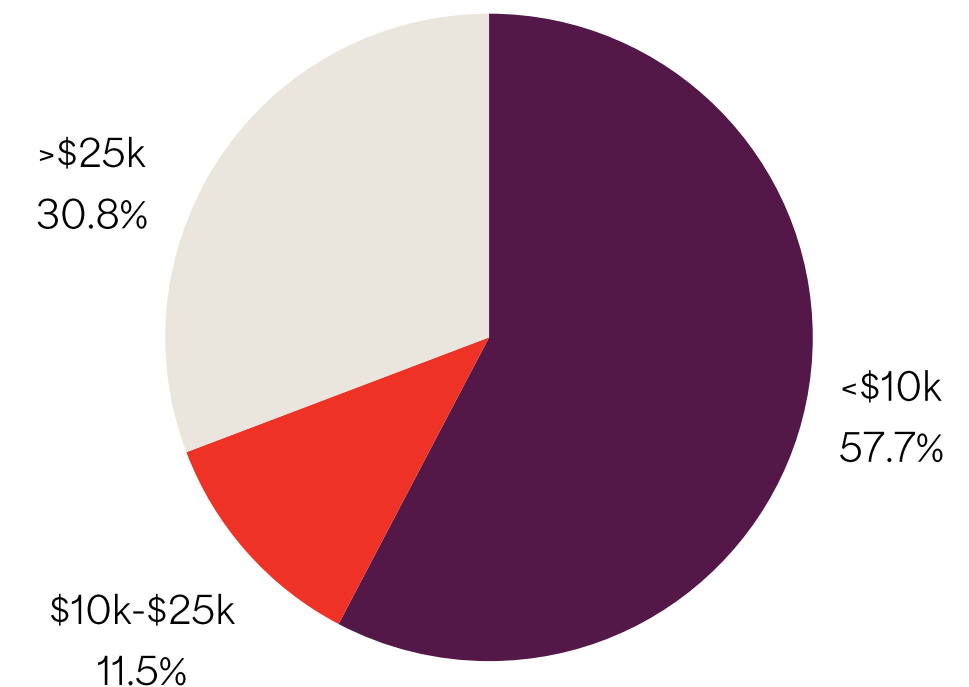
More than a third (**35%**) of hotels in Illinois gave cash contributions. On average, a hotel in Illinois donated **\$18,157 in cash** in 2024. The median contribution was **\$10,000** (i.e. 50% of hotels donated an amount greater than \$10,000).

Beneficiaries of the cash contributions included the Children's Miracle Network, Operation Smile, St. Jude Children's Hospital, the American Heart Association, among many other local schools and organizations.

Almost a third (31%) of hotels in Illinois gave cash contributions with an amount of \$25,000 or more in 2024. Another 12% gave an amount between \$10,000 and \$25,000. The remaining 58% of hotels gave an amount less than \$10,000.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by size of cash contributions, Illinois



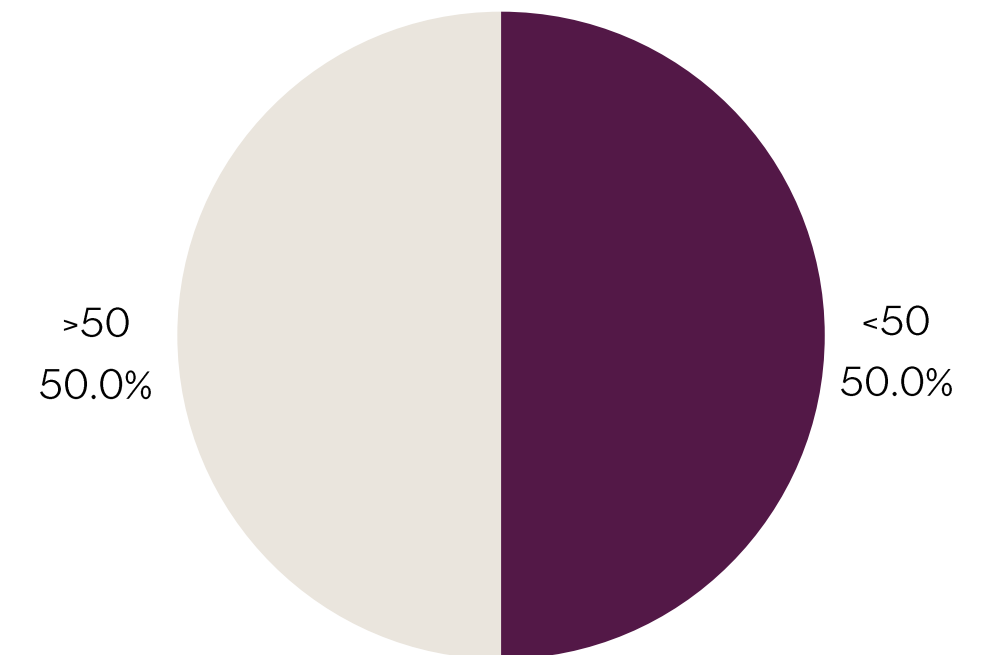
# Trainings

Almost two in 10 (**17%**) of hotels in Illinois organized no-cost workforce trainings. On average, a hotel in Illinois held **446 hours** of workforce training in 2024. The median value was **76 hours** (i.e., 50% of hotels provided more than 76 hours of training).

Half (50%) of hotels held more than 50 hours of no-cost workforce training in 2024, while the other half held less than 50 hours of workforce training.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by hours of workforce training, Illinois



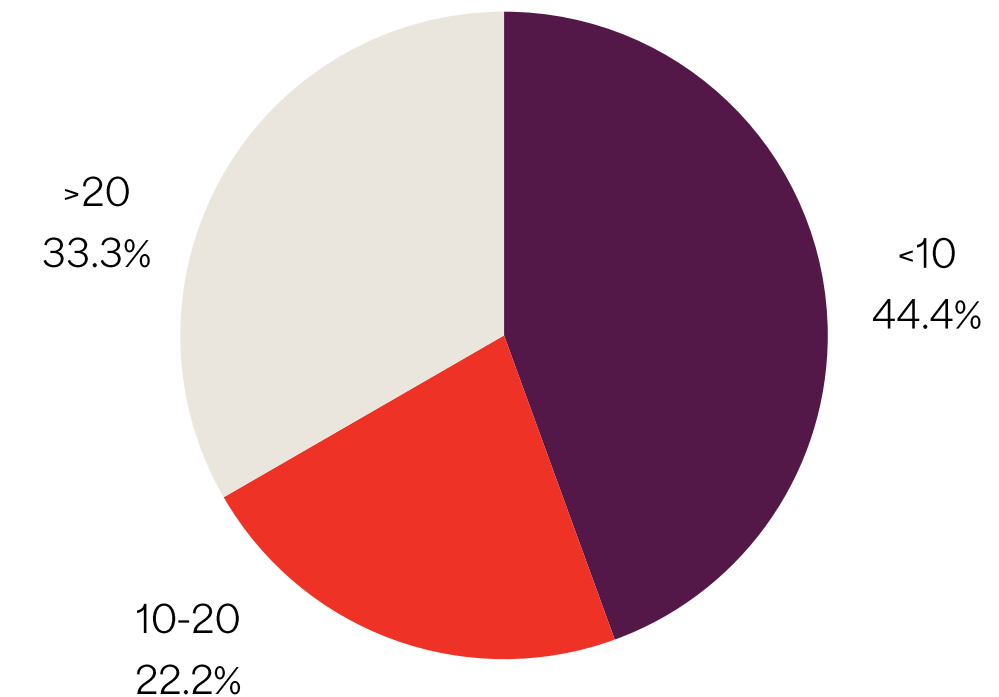
# Trainings

On average, **82 individuals** participated in no-cost workforce training per hotel and acquired skills in front desk operations, culinary and food and beverage service, and guest service and communication. While many of the hotels provided the training to their staff, a number of hotels extended the training to students from local high schools and vocational academies, such as Southside Occupational Academy.

A third (33%) trained 20 individuals or more, 22% trained between 10 and 20 individuals, while the remaining 44% of the hotels trained 10 individuals or fewer.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by number of individuals participating in trainings, Illinois



# Scholarships

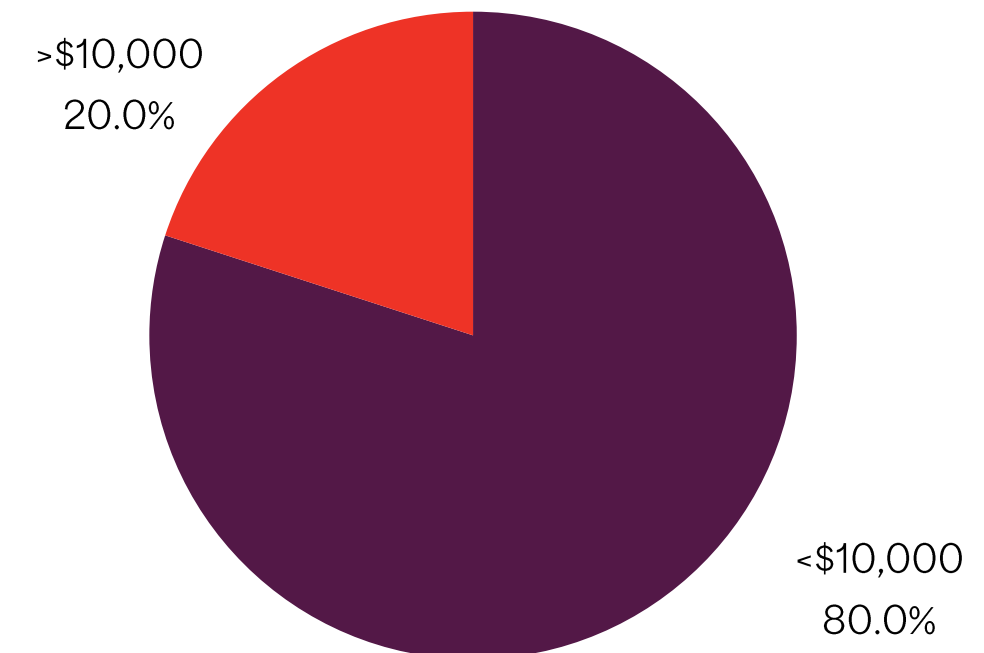
More than one in 10 (**13%**) **hotels** in Illinois supported scholarships. On average, a hotel in Illinois supported scholarships with an estimated value of **\$47,000**.

The donations were mainly part of the IHLA Education Fund, and some were directly made to educational institutions such as College of DuPage and DePaul University.

The majority of hotels (80%) supported scholarships with more than \$10,000, while the remaining 20% supported with a value of less than \$10,000.

## HOTEL CARING SURVEY RESULTS

Share of hotels by value of scholarships provided, Illinois



# Social Impact Analysis Approach

To estimate the size of philanthropic contributions by hotels in Illinois, Tourism Economics designed a model to extrapolate the total amount based on hotel size and the share of hotels participating in each type of giving.

A conservative assumption – based on the distribution of hotels by class – was made to adjust for potentially lower levels of typical giving among non-respondent hotels.

The results on the state level are presented in this section by type of giving.



# Volunteering/Community Service

It is estimated that hotels in Illinois donated a total of **46,997 hours** in **2024**, with a value of **\$1.1 million**.

## In-Kind Donations

It is estimated that hotels in Illinois donated a total of **4,437 room nights** and in-kind contributions with a value of **\$1.3 million in 2024**.

# Food/Supply Drives

It is estimated that hotels in Illinois organized food/supply drives with a total value of **\$183,000** in **2024**.

# Charitable Cash Contributions

It is estimated that hotels in Illinois donated a total of **\$1.1 million** in **cash contributions** in **2024**.

# Trainings

It is estimated that hotels in Illinois organized **13,316 hours** of no-cost workforce training, teaching a total of **2,455 members** of the community.

# Scholarships

It is estimated that hotels in Illinois provided scholarships worth **\$1.0 million**.

# Total Contributions

Aggregating hotel contributions in the various forms of giving, it is estimated that hotels in Illinois contributed **\$6.6 million** in the form of cash, in-kind, fundraising, scholarship, and food drive donations.

# Key Findings – Illinois

## Average Giving Contributions In Illinois

On average, a hotel in Illinois contributed \$21,095 in the community in 2024, with 50% of hotels making a contribution higher than \$3,470.



**\$21k**

### Average Contribution

in the form of cash, in-kind, fundraising, scholarship, and food drive donations



**316**

### Average Volunteer Hours

for various activities ranging from beach clean-ups to blood drives.



**446**

### Average Training Hours

in the form of no-cost workforce trainings to members of the community.

# Key Findings – Illinois

## Total Giving Contributions In Illinois

It is estimated that all hotels in Illinois contributed \$6.6 million in the community in 2024 in the form of volunteering, cash, in-kind, fundraising, scholarship, and food drive donations.



**\$6.6M**

### Total Contribution

in the form of cash, in-kind, fundraising, scholarship, and food drive donations.



**46,997**

### Volunteer Hours

for various activities ranging from beach clean-ups to blood drives.



**13,316**

### Training Hours

in the form of no-cost workforce trainings to members of the community.

# About IHLA

The Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association (IHLA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the interests of the lodging industry throughout Illinois. Representing a wide range of hotels, from large downtown properties to small independent motels, the IHLA provides advocacy, education, and networking opportunities for its members. Its primary mission is to promote the growth and prosperity of the Illinois lodging industry by addressing key legislative issues, fostering professional development, and facilitating communication among industry stakeholders.

One of the IHLA's core functions is its advocacy work. The association actively lobbies at both the state and local levels to influence legislation and regulations that impact hotels. This includes advocating for favorable tax policies, responsible tourism initiatives, and fair labor laws.

By providing a unified voice for the Illinois lodging industry, the IHLA works to ensure that the concerns and needs of hotel operators are heard by policymakers, helping to create a more supportive business environment for its members.

Beyond advocacy, the IHLA offers valuable resources and services to its members. This includes educational programs, workshops, and conferences designed to enhance professional skills and keep members informed about industry trends. The association also provides opportunities for networking, allowing hoteliers to connect with peers, share best practices, and collaborate on common challenges. Through these efforts, the IHLA plays a vital role in strengthening the Illinois lodging industry, fostering a vibrant and competitive market for hotels across the state.



# About Tourism Economics

Tourism Economics is an Oxford Economics company with a singular objective: combine an understanding of the travel sector with proven economic tools to answer the most important questions facing our clients. More than 500 companies, associations, and destination work with Tourism Economics every year as a research partner. We bring decades of experience to every engagement to help our clients make better marketing, investment, and policy decisions. Our team of highly-specialized economists deliver:

- Global travel data-sets with the broadest set of country, city, and state coverage available
- Travel forecasts that are directly linked to the economic and demographic outlook for origins and destinations
- Economic impact analysis that highlights the value of visitors, events, developments, and industry segments
- Policy analysis that informs critical funding, taxation, and travel facilitation decisions
- Market assessments that define market allocation and investment decisions

Tourism Economics operates out of regional headquarters in Philadelphia and Oxford, with offices in Belfast, London, Frankfurt, Ontario, and Sydney.

Oxford Economics is one of the world's foremost independent global advisory firms, providing reports, forecasts and analytical tools on 200 countries, 100 industrial sectors and over 3,000 cities. Our best-of-class global economic and industry models and analytical tools give us an unparalleled ability to forecast external market trends and assess their economic, social and business impact. Headquartered in Oxford, England, with regional centers in London, New York, and Singapore, Oxford Economics has offices across the globe in Belfast, Chicago, Dubai, Miami, Milan, Paris, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington DC, we employ over 400 full-time staff, including 300 professional economists, industry experts and business editors—one of the largest teams of macroeconomists and thought leadership specialists.

