Illinois Secure Choice Savings Board

Meeting of Monday, May 11, 2026

Held In-Person & Remotely by Videoconference

MEETING MINUTES

The May 11, 2026 meeting of the Illinois Secure Choice Savings Board ("Board") was called to order by Mr. Diaz shortly after 12:00 p.m. CT with the presence of a quorum.

Board Members Present

Fernando Diaz, *Designee for the Illinois State Treasurer (In person)*

John Williams, *Designee for the Illinois State Comptroller (In person)*

Demetrius Jackson, *Board Member (In person)*

Erica Marquez Avitia, *Board Member (In person)*

Staci Mayall, *Board Member (In person)*

Treasurer's Office Staff

Erica Tremble, *Assistant General Counsel (In person)*

Joe Aguilar, *Chief Investment Officer (In person)*

David Elliott, *Senior Investment Analyst, Public Market Investments (In Person)*

Sara Meek, *Chief Legislative and Policy Officer*

Yolanda Williams*, Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs*

Matt Kisling, *Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs and Outreach*

Karen Craven, *Chief of Communications & Marketing (In person)*

Maureen Jouhet, *Director of Digital Marketing and Communications*

Christine Cheng, *Executive Director of Secure Choice (In person)*

Deanna Verduin, *Deputy Director of Secure Choice*

Aaron Sweeney, *Secure Choice Outreach Specialist (In person)*

Approval of Board Minutes

Board members reviewed the February 25, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes, which were provided in advance of the meeting. There was no discussion, and no additional changes were proposed.

A motion was made by Mr. Williams, seconded by Ms. Marquez Avitia to approve the February 25, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes. The motion carried via roll call with Mr. Jackson abstaining.

Staff Updates

Ms. Cheng provided program updates stating that Q1 2026 ended with nearly 170,000 funded accounts and $316M in assets representing a 1.5% increase from the end of 2025. She noted that there were three areas of focus in Q1. The first was rebranding and development of the brand identity for My Illinois Savings. The second was preparing for the mid-June conversion with two new vendors, Vestwell as Program Manager and Marquette Associates as Investment Manager. Ms. Cheng stated that conversion communications for both employers and savers have been a priority. A series of five communications will be sent between April and June to inform employers and savers about the conversion and what action needs to be taken. The first communication was sent by Ascensus in April. Additionally, in preparation for the conversion there has been a weekly call with all parties involved to discuss areas of overlap including mock conversions. The last area of focus was enforcement. Ms. Cheng stated that the first batch of enforcement started in January, and the second batch of enforcement began in late March. She added that over the four years of enforcement action, 68% of the employers that were referred to the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) occurred this year. This has led to a tremendous volume of employer outreach and communications to employers.

Mr. Diaz noted the efforts of various departments at the Treasurer's Office involved in the conversion process. He also thanked Mr. Montigney and Ascensus for their work to ensure a smooth transition. Ms. Cheng added that the conversion would occur June 13-14 with employers and savers having access to the new portal at myilsavings.com on June 15, 2026.

Ms. Cheng reviewed FY26 year-to-date expenditures for the program, sharing that they are in line with expectations.

Mr. Williams asked if there was anything notable from the two conversion tests that were performed. Ms. Cheng stated that the Treasurer's Office is still waiting for the report.

Discussion – Secure Choice Quarterly Report

Troy Montigney of Ascensus provided a quarterly report starting with an enforcement update. He stated that more than 1,300 employers have submitted payroll with over $16M in payroll contributions as a result of compliance outreach and formal enforcement action. Additionally, 2026 Batch 2 enforcement employers were referred to IDOR in March and were referred for being completely unresponsive to date; therefore, the response rate is lagging slightly compared to other batches of enforcement employers. To date, more than 1,000 employers from 2026 Batch 2 have exempted. None of these employers have submitted payroll yet as they did not have much time between receiving the Notice of Proposed Assessment and the occurrence of portal freeze. Mr. Montigney then reviewed weekly employer activity stating that employers adding employees and employers submitting payroll were steady during Q1 but increased in the beginning of Q2 before the transition. For savers, the 30-day contribution activity exceeded $8M in Q1, and assets exceeded $350M early in May. Additionally, the number of web-registered savers increased by 1% in 2026, and the annual auto-escalation event increased the deferral rate to above 6.5%.

Mr. Montigney then reviewed conversion support and activities performed by Ascensus including the initial conversion communications, various platform functionality freezes such as new employer registrations and adding employees that occurred on May 1 to ensure integrity of data, and the launch of a dedicated transition website. He also noted the transfer of items such as email, phone number and website domain.

Mr. Montigney then presented Q1 Client Services metrics stating that call volume was up in Q1 over Q4. The average speed to answer was 10 seconds, and the abandon rate was 0.24%. He also provided a marketing update stating that the saver statement messages were completed in Q1 and that Ascensus had sent the initial conversion communication. He also noted that Ascensus will continue to make web updates as needed.

Lastly, Mr. Montigney provided a Q1 Field Team update stating that the Field Team conducted 92 one-on-one employer meetings in Q1 that focused on compliance and payroll support. He also provided an employer testimonial and stated that the remaining Field Team priorities are outreach to employers to ensure they are ready for the conversion, providing employer support, and following up with employers prioritized by the Treasurer's Office.

Eric Gaylord of Marquette Associates provided a 2026 Q1 market update, initially noting that the markets had continued to rally at the beginning of the year until the war with Iran began in March. The Russell 1000 Growth index, representing the technology companies, began to struggle in Q1. Inflation soared to 3.3% in March, driven by higher gasoline costs stemming from the conflict in Iran, which also changed the market expectations for bond markets this year. He noted that after tepid job growth at the beginning of the quarter, the jobs report was positive for March. The inflation rate combined with unemployment rates indicate that the Federal Reserve may not continue to cut interest rates. The increased energy prices and supply chain disruption is negatively impacting global GDP growth.

Mr. Gaylord then discussed the S&P 500 noting that there was a rotation out of the more expensive names and that a small number of companies were no longer dominating the market as in the past year. Volatility continued in currency movement. He also noted that despite drawdowns, earnings growth and fundamentals have held up well in recent reports. Through April, the S&P 500 was up over 10%, MSCI EAFE was up 7.5%, emerging markets were up close to 15%, and investment-grade bonds were up 0.1%.

Mr. Aguilar then reviewed program performance noting negative returns in Q1, but that there has been a reversal since the end of the quarter, particularly in equity markets. He then reviewed returns for Q1 which were slightly down for all the Target Date Retirement Funds except for the shortest dated one which remained steady. He added that each of these portfolios is in the top decile for performance versus their peers. Mr. Aguilar stated that 95% of the assets are within the Target Date Retirement Funds, and the remainder are split between the Growth Fund (approximately 4%), fixed income, and cash.

Approval of Investment Policy Statement

Mr. Aguilar stated that the new investment policy statement reflects the structural changes made with Marquette Associates as the new Investment Manager and defining the Investment Manager's role within the program. He added that there were no substantive changes to the investment options, asset allocations, or the roles of the Treasurer's Office or the Board.

A motion was made by Ms. Marquez Avitia, seconded by Mr. Jackson to approve the new Investment Policy Statement. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – Implementation Timeline for Wave 2026

Ms. Cheng discussed the communications timeline for the upcoming wave of new employers. She explained that each year there is a wave of employers who are newly covered by the state law. These employers may have previously been too young or did not meet the employee count threshold. These new employers fall in a wave designated by the year they are notified and have a deadline of November 1 of that same year to either report an exemption or initiate the onboarding process for My Illinois Savings. In the past, employers received communications 100 days prior to the deadline; however, the proposed timeline for this year is to move the first communication to 75 days prior to the deadline. This allows for more time for post-conversion outreach before adding additional employers who will also require communication and outreach. Additional communications will also be sent to the new wave of employers in advance of the deadline at the 45-day mark, 30-day mark, and 10-day mark. The Treasurer's Office will evaluate the response rate associated with sending the first communication 75 days prior to the deadline and determine if that is how the program will proceed in the future. Mr. Williams noted that Ms. Cheng had mentioned previously that employers tend to wait until the last minute to respond, and this seems like an opportunity to gather data.

Approval of Board Insurance Policy Renewal

Ms. Tremble stated that the Board has fiduciary liability and cyber liability insurance, and the current policies expire at the end of July 2026. She provided the current proposal which does not recommend any changes to the coverage; however, there is an increase in the premium due to the increase in assets under management. The premium will increase from $116,000 to $122,000.

A motion was made by Mr. Williams, seconded by Ms. Marquez Avitia to approve the renewal of the Board Insurance Policy. The motion carried unanimously.

Presentation – Environmental Landscape

Andrea Feirstein of AKF Consulting Group provided an overview of the auto IRA industry, noting several observations. Auto IRA programs with an employer mandate continue to dominate the program design; however, with new states adding programs there have also been new program design models including an exchange option and a voluntary mandate. She added that partnerships have accelerated over the las year and are expected to continue, and the industry has reached new highs on both accounts and assets. Ms. Feirstein also noted that investments remain simple, but fees are decreasing due to partnerships and RFPs for new administrators.

As of March 31, 2026, the industry has almost $2.8B in assets and over 1.2M accounts. In a year-over-year comparison, there has been a 20% increase in saver accounts and almost 44% growth in assets across the entire industry. Ms. Feirstein added that the average contribution rate continues to increase which leads to an increase in average monthly contributions. She also noted several important activities including four new programs in development, the Trump IRA Executive Order, and the Saver’s Match.

Ms. Cheng provided a reminder that Illinois statute states a saver can have both a Traditional IRA and a Roth IRA to allow for the Saver’s Match.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Old and New Business

Mr. Diaz noted that a press conference was held on May 6, 2026, to announce the new program name, My Illinois Savings, as well as the conversion. He added that the next scheduled board meeting is August 13, 2026. Lastly, Mr. Diaz acknowledged Mr. Montigney and the Ascensus team for their time, effort, and work to grow the program over the years.

Adjournment

With no further business, Mr. Diaz adjourned the meeting.