



## **Sam Toia**

*President & CEO*

Illinois Restaurant Association

Since 2012, **Sam Toia** has served as President & CEO of the [Illinois Restaurant Association](#) (IRA), a non-profit trade association representing the state's largest private sector employer. The IRA owns and produces Chicago Gourmet – the annual food and wine festival held in Millennium Park that unites hundreds of restaurants, chefs and beverage experts and more than 14,000 attendees for a weekend filled with food and drink tastings, entertainment, cooking demonstrations, book signings, interactive seminars and more. The Association is a proud host of the James Beard Foundation Awards, which will be held in Chicago through 2027 and celebrates excellence in cuisine, culinary writing, and culinary education throughout the country. Prior to his election, he served as the IRA's Chairman of the Board.

Toia is a graduate of DePaul University and a specialist in community and government relations. He has served in leadership positions in several civic and public agencies. Previously, he was a Board Member for McPier (McCormick Place Navy Pier) from 2003 to 2010. In 2011, Toia was appointed to the Chicago Zoning Board of Appeals. In 2017, Sam was appointed a member of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors for Choose Chicago.

As President & CEO of the IRA, Toia is responsible for managing day-to-day operations of the association, increasing its membership base, developing strategies to enhance its profitability and maintaining positive relations with public officials and state and local agencies. He is passionate about local, state, and federal issues affecting the hospitality industry.