Insured Retirement Institute

MID-YEAR SNAPSHOT

A look back at the policy wins, milestones, and momentum IRI has delivered for its members so far in 2026.

View the video message from Wayne Chopus, President & CEO, IRI.

IRI Testifies on the Future of Lifetime Income

The Insured Retirement Institute (IRI) made history in January when Wayne Chopus, President and CEO, testified before the House Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions. It was the first time an IRI CEO testified before a congressional committee. IRI's testimony spotlighted how lifetime income solutions like annuities help workers overcome their greatest retirement fear: outliving their savings. IRI presented four policy proposals from our Federal Retirement Security Blueprint to expand annuity access within defined contribution plans. This milestone reflects the reputation, credibility, and influence IRI has earned as the leading voice for the insured retirement industry.

A Major Win: DOL Fiduciary Rule Vacated

IRI secured a landmark victory for members and consumers when a federal court vacated the Department of Labor's fiduciary rule in April. IRI led the industry's effort to oppose this harmful rule and consistently advocated that its broad application would reduce consumers' access to their choice of retirement advice and products. This outcome protects consumers' freedom to choose their preferred financial professional and preserves access to the lifetime income solutions they need.

Kevin Hassett
Director, National Economic Council

IRI at the White House

IRI's influence reached the White House this year when Wayne Chopus, Paul Richman, Chief Government and Political Affairs Officer, and Jason Berkowitz, Chief Legal and Regulatory Affairs Officer met with Kevin Hassett, Director, National Economic Council, to discuss the President's Executive Order on expanding retirement savings access. IRI made clear that expanded savings access should be paired with policies that convert those savings into protected lifetime income. Director Hassett's team expressed strong interest in proposals from IRI's 2026 Federal Retirement Security Blueprint.

Board of Directors Carries IRI's Message to Capitol Hill

June brought members of IRI's Board of Directors to Washington, D.C., for our annual fly-in to meet with Members of Congress and key staff to champion proposals in IRI's 2026 Federal Retirement Security Blueprint. Board members advocated for legislation to expand access to workplace retirement plans and to facilitate the use of lifetime income options within plans. The message was clear: a strong retirement system must help workers not only build savings but turn those savings into income they cannot outlive.

IRI's Second Industry Hackathon Accelerates Innovation

IRI's second annual industry hackathon proved that the pace of innovation in our industry is accelerating rapidly. In just two and a half days, cross-functional teams of distributors, insurers, and solution providers built working solutions that would traditionally take months to develop. The results demonstrated that pairing open standards with modern AI capabilities can dramatically reduce long-standing industry friction. The next phase for the Digital First for Annuities initiative focuses on moving these validated concepts into production through industry-wide collaboration, standardization, and adoption.

Digital First for Annuities Continue to Drive Industry Efficiency

IRI expanded the Digital First for Annuities library with many new industry standards, including Application Status Push Notification and three Financial Transaction APIs. These standards automate key interactions that have traditionally relied on manual processes, helping firms provide faster updates, simplify withdrawal transactions, and improve operational efficiency. As adoption grows, these standards will reduce friction across the annuity lifecycle while creating a more consistent and seamless experience for firms, financial professionals, and consumers.

DFA Embedded Dashboard Boosts Transparency, Accountability

IRI launched an industry-first embedded dashboard in February, giving stakeholders real-time visibility into transformation progress, accountability metrics, and measurable outcomes across our Digital First for Annuities efforts. The dashboard makes it easier to track milestones, identify opportunities, and align priorities, which will bring transparency to the work underway. It reflects IRI's commitment to leading with data and holding ourselves accountable to the outcomes that matter most to our members.

DFA Dashboard

Another Record Event — 2026 IRI Annual Conference

The 2026 IRI Annual Conference was our most successful ever, drawing 957 registrants, including more than 250 first-time attendees, and setting new sponsorship records. The energy, quality of conversation, and breadth of participation across three days reflected the remarkable strength and momentum of this community. The conference once again proved its place as the must-attend event for the insured retirement industry.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2027 IRI Annual Conference, April 27–29 in Orlando, FL.

IRI's Influence Recognized — Again

Wayne Chopus, President and CEO, and Paul Richman, Chief Government and Political Affairs Officer, were named to Washingtonian Magazine's 2026 list of the 500 Most Influential People Shaping Policy. This marks the fifth consecutive year for Richman and the fourth for Chopus, a reflection of IRI's growing impact and credibility with policymakers in the nation's capital.

IRI Honored for Marketing Excellence

IRI was recognized with a "Trendy Award" for Best Convention Promotion Package by Association Trends, honoring the marketing campaign behind the 2025 IRI Annual Conference. This recognition reinforces IRI's brand strength and our ability to position our events as premier forums for the insured retirement industry's leaders.