

2025 LEGACY PROJECT CONFERENCE



reach. illuminate.
support. empower.

May 16, 2025
8 AM - 4PM
NIU Naperville
1120 E. Diehl Rd
Naperville, IL 60563

\$125 Member Registration
\$35 Student Registration
\$225 Non-member Registration
\$120 each for Groups of 5 or
more from one organization

Registration and
Breakfast begin at 8AM
and the program
begins at 8:50 AM

Lunch is included in
your registration



CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

8:00 AM Check In & Continental Breakfast

8:50 AM Welcome and Introductions

9:00 AM Opening Keynote *"Make HER Voice Visible in the Workplace"* Quinn Conyers

10:30 AM - 11:45 AM Breakout Sessions

Dare to Lead: Empowering Women to Rise in Local Government

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Verbalizing Your Value for Career Advancement

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Lunch & Awards

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Breakout Sessions

Stronger Together: Unlocking the Potential of Mentorship for Diverse Leadership

What Would You Do? Responding to Scenarios in Real Life Situations

What's Motivating Me? What's Holding Me Back?

2:15 PM Closing Keynote *"Empowered Leadership: Building a Legacy of Women Who Rise"* Kristen Ziman

4:00 PM After Conference Social and Networking

OPENING KEYNOTE



Make HER Voice Visible in the Workplace

Many women are awesome and amazing at what they do but struggle to verbalize their value, communicate with confidence or present their ideas/suggestions in a way that's clear, concise and compelling. As a result, these individuals can be overlooked for promotions, silent when they want to speak up or worse not taken seriously by their male counterparts because they lack effective public and professional communication skills. This powerful presentation turns up the volume on the voices of aspiring and current women in leadership positions. At the end of this talk, the audience will walk away with tangible tips and techniques on how they can navigate the workplace. They will learn how to leverage communication as a competitive advantage to excel in their career.



Quinn Conyers

S: How to speak with confidence before you say a word.

T: How to be aware and transparent about sabotaging self-talk and replace it with superior self talk.

A: How to be more assertive and less appreciative in their current leadership position.

N: How to establish and communicate "Non-Negotiables" to prevent burnout and resentment in the workplace.

D: How to delete weak words and replace them with wealthy words when communicating with colleagues and co-workers or speaking at internal/external events.

ICMA Practice Area 5. Personal Resiliency and Development and 14. Communication and Information Sharing

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Dare to Lead: Empowering Women to Rise in Local Government

Studies show most women apply for a job only when feeling 100% qualified. This session is dedicated to empowering women to dare to take the next step in their careers by advancing to supervisory and leadership positions. Attendees will hear from a panel of successful women in local government leadership who will share their personal stories and advice on building the confidence to take the next step, securing leadership roles, challenging stereotypes, and much more!

Learning Objectives:

- Learn about career advancement opportunities in government.
- Hear lessons learned from women who moved into leadership positions.
- Learn how you can benefit from their experiences and weave it in to your own personal value proposition.

Presenters: **Julia Cedillo**, Village Manager, Village of La Grange Park | **Suzanne Ostrovsky**, City Administrator, City of McHenry | **Kathy Thake**, Village Manager, Village of Kenilworth

ICMA Practice Area 5. Personal Resiliency and Development and 6. Strategic Leadership

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Should I Stay or Should I Go? When is it time for an organizational change?

Have you ever felt undervalued, burnt out, or unhappy? Have you ever wanted new challenges, more pay, or to work at an organization aligned with your beliefs? Have you ever debated with yourself on staying where you are or taking the leap and leaving? Hear from the panel on their stories of change and how they weighed the pros and cons of moving their careers in different directions.

Learning Objectives:

- Learn how to assess professional growth opportunities, align work with personal values, and weigh the risks and rewards of career transitions.
- Discover strategies for overcoming burnout, feeling undervalued, or seeking greater fulfillment.
- Gain skills to navigate career transitions successfully and excel in new roles or environments.

Presenters: **Inga Cushman**, Human Resources Manager, Village of Cottage Grove, WI | **Ashley Monroe**, Assistant Village Manger, Village of Riverside | **Katie Parkhurst**, AICP Director of Economic and Community Development, Village of Round Lake | *Moderator:* **Cory Poris Plasch**, President/CEO, CP2 Consulting

ICMA Practice Area 5. Personal Resiliency and Development



Sign up for Professional Headshots to be taken at the conference

Verbalizing your Value for Career Advancement

This interactive session empowers women leaders to leverage language as a strategy for intentional career growth. Participants will get a deeper dive into luxury language and how to position themselves as indispensable employees through the power of effective communication. Through practical exercises, they will enhance their communication confidence to navigate networking events, ace interviews, and excel in performance reviews, setting themselves apart as leaders in their field.

Learning Objectives:

- Strategies to enhance their communication confidence in professional settings by using wealthy words to showcase their expertise and leadership capabilities.
- Positioning tips that increase chances of promotion and career advancement by knowing how to strategically communicate your accomplishments and career aspirations during performance reviews or promotion discussions.
- Develop an impressive introduction or elevator pitch that captures attention and conveys your unique value in networking, interviews, and professional interactions.

Presenter: **Quinn Conyers**

ICMA Practice Areas 5. Personal Resiliency and Development and 14. Communication and Information Sharing

CONFERENCE LUNCHEON, AWARDS & BUSINESS MEETING



AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Stronger Together: Unlocking the Potential of Mentorship for Diverse Leadership

Mentoring is a key strategy for closing the gender gap in local government leadership and strengthening our workforces, by providing targeted support and development opportunities for women and underrepresented groups. In this session, panelists will share their experiences in fostering meaningful mentor-mentee relationships, offering practical strategies for creating inclusive, growth-oriented mentoring environments. Attendees will learn how to identify what mentees seek from mentors at different career stages, the traits of strong mentees and mentors, and how mentors can cultivate fulfilling relationships that drive leadership development. This session will also explore how you can grow both as a mentor and a mentee, enhancing your leadership potential and contributing to a more inclusive and effective workforce.

Learning Objectives:

- Learn how mentoring can help both mentors and mentees grow personally and professionally.
- Hear personal stories about developing positive mentor-mentee relationships.

Presenters: **Daisy Chavez**, Assistant to the Village Administrator, Western Springs | **Jessica Spencer**, Assistant Village Administrator, Village of River Forest | **Nicole Aranas**, Assistant Village Administrator, Village of Lombard | **Suzette Quintell**, Executive Director, DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference

ICMA Practice Areas 3. Equity and Inclusion and 5. Personal Resiliency and Development



What Would You Do? Responding to Scenarios in Real Life Situations

Navigating the challenges of a predominantly male environment can be daunting for female professionals in local government. Cultural norms and practices often pose significant hurdles that may be frustrating, and at times, even illegal. This enlightening session aims to provide practical strategies for managing these complexities. Participants will engage in meaningful discussions and real-life scenarios (with names altered for privacy) to better grasp the dynamics at play and reflect on “what would you do?” moments. By learning from both seasoned professionals and each other, attendees will empower themselves to tackle the unique challenges they may face!

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the various resources available to female professionals and explore ways to leverage your network to effectively address uncomfortable situations.
- Gain insights into navigating a sexist culture with confidence, identifying key strategies to maintain professionalism and resilience while overcoming barriers.
- Learn how to effectively call out sexist behavior in a constructive manner, fostering accountability and promoting a culture of respect.
- Discover actionable ways to cultivate a supportive environment for all employees, ensuring inclusivity and equality within your local government team.
- Join us to equip yourself with the tools needed to not only endure but thrive in your professional journey.

Presenters: **Heidi Voorhees**, Senior Vice President, MGT | **Yvette Heintzelman**, Attorney, Clark Hill

ICMA Practice Area 5. Personal Resiliency and Development

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS CONTINUED

What's Motivating Me? What's Holding Me Back?

Join us for a panel discussion regarding the Enneagram, a tool that helps explain why we make the choices we make and brings together our thoughts, feelings, and what drives each of us. Hear from a panel of non-experts who have explored their enneagram type and will discuss how they think it relates to their work and life. Attendees will also have the opportunity to discuss with peers how the model might be useful in addressing perfectionism, competitiveness and defensiveness. Attendees can take a free Enneagram test online at <https://www.eclecticenergies.com/enneagram/test>.

Learning Objectives:

- Help identify what drives you to make the choices you make.
- Learn how to use your natural drivers to enhance your career.
- Hear firsthand accounts of how to handle challenges through the lens of your natural drivers.

Presenters: **Kelly Coyle**, Partner, Clark Baird Smith | **Molly Gillespie**, Director of Communications and Engagement, Village of Buffalo Grove | **Shebnem Ozkaptan**, Budget & Administrative Manager, City of Naperville

ICMA Practice Area 5. Personal Resiliency and Development



CLOSING KEYNOTE

Empowered Leadership: Building a Legacy of Women Who Rise

In this empowering session, Kristen Ziman explores the multifaceted aspects of professional growth, highlighting the unique journey of women leaders in government and public service. She emphasizes their ability to adapt, overcome challenges, and continuously evolve. Attendees will gain valuable insights into leadership, life, successes, and failures, all presented through a transformative and relatable lens. This session goes beyond a typical event—it's an empowerment experience designed for those eager to advance their leadership potential and connect with like-minded individuals committed to driving meaningful change in their organizations. Kristen will share actionable strategies for cultivating resilience, building confidence, and harnessing the power of optimism to achieve personal and professional growth.



Kristen Ziman

ICMA Practice Area 5. Personal Resiliency and Development

POST CONFERENCE NETWORKING

Join colleagues for an After Conference Social Event Old Town Pour House Naperville, 1703 Freedom Drive



Be sure to renew your 2025-26 Legacy Project Membership with your conference registration.

2025 LEGACY PROJECT CONFERENCE

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Gold Sponsors (\$1,500)

- Logo in the program
- Recognized at lunch
- Sign at the door
- Includes conference registration for two
- Conference registration list with email contacts
- Exhibit Table in Atrium

Silver Sponsors (\$1000)

- Logo in the program
- Recognized at lunch
- Includes conference registration for one

Bronze Sponsors (\$500)

- Logo in the program
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Email on image file of your logo at least 300 dpi resolution to Dawn Peters at dpeters@niu.edu by May 1!