

2024 WOMEN'S LEGACY CONFERENCE



SPEAKER AND PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

(listed alphabetically)

Nicole Aranas

Nicole Aranas currently serves as Deputy Village Manager in the Village of Lombard, having served the Village since 2013. Before joining Lombard, Nicole served as the Community Development Director for the Village of Itasca for ten years. Nicole began her career as a municipal attorney providing legal counsel to public entities, officials, employees, boards, and commissions. In total, Nicole has more than 23 years of public sector experience. Nicole received her undergraduate and master's degrees in urban and Regional Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and holds a law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law.

Ellen Baer

Ellen Baer is the Village Manager of Western Springs, serving in this position since 2021. She has 32 years of experience in local government administration. Prior to serving in her current position, Ellen served as the Director of Administrative Services in Western Springs; the Assistant Village Manager in Orland Park for 13 years; and held administrative positions in Lombard, Naperville, and Riverside. Ellen has a master's degree in public administration from Northern Illinois University, and a bachelor's degree in political science and public administration from Lewis University. She is a founding member of the Legacy Group and a member of ICMA, ILCMA, and Metro Managers.

Brigitte Berger-Raish

Brigitte Berger is a seasoned civil engineer with over 30 years of experience. She currently serves as the Director of Engineering and Public Works in the Village of Wilmette managing various infrastructure projects. Skilled in budget management, project planning, and team leadership, Brigitte fosters collaboration through liaison roles with key committees within her organization. Recognized for achievements within the industry with her most recent award as an American Public Works Association Top Ten Public Works Leader of the Year in 2021, she is a registered Professional Engineer, and is Past President of the American Public Works Association, Chicago Metro Chapter.

Christina Burns

Christina Burns is the County Administrator for Kendall County. Prior to beginning with Kendall County last year, she previously served as the Deputy Administrator for the Village of Oswego. Christina has specialized in shared services, human resources especially focusing on organizational development, and public relations. After working in newspapers for a few years, Christina began her local government career with an internship with the Village of Glen Ellyn, moving next to the Village of Clarendon Hills. Outside of work, Christina spends time with her husband and two young children. And a fair amount of Bluey.

Stephanie Calvillo

Stephanie Calvillo is the Communications and Marketing Coordinator for the Village of Lombard, overseeing internal and external communications, event coordination, and managing digital platforms. With a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from Northern Illinois University, she previously served as a Public Information Officer at the DuPage County Health Department during the COVID-19 pandemic. Outside of work, Stephanie enjoys spending time with her family and indulging in a new book whenever possible. With a passion for community well-being and a commitment to effective communications, Stephanie consistently strives to make a positive impact in her professional and personal life.

Julia Cedillo

Julia Cedillo has been the Village Manager of La Grange Park since 2011, having previously served as both Interim and Assistant Village Manager. Prior to her tenure in La Grange Park, she worked as a Management Analyst in the Administration Department of the Village of Woodridge. Julia's career in public administration began as an Intern for the City of DeKalb while she pursued her Master of Public Administration Program (MPA) at Northern Illinois University (NIU). She has held leadership roles in various organizations, including past Chair of the IML Managers Committee and past President of the Metropolitan Managers Association Board. Julia remains actively engaged in the field as a member of the International City County Illinois City County Management Association (ILCMA) and continues to contribute to ICMA's Governmental Affairs & Policy Committee and the ICMA Sustainability Committee.

Amy Cotter

As a Success Coach with 20+ years of experience, Amy has partnered with organizations, entrepreneurs and individuals interested in forward movement toward personal and professional success.

Through customized programs and one-on-one executive coaching, she assists in the process of broadening perspectives, increasing efficiencies, and supporting successful strategies to accomplish desired results. Amy specializes in Executive Coaching, Organizational and Leadership Enhancement (Individuals & Teams), Strategy Development, Vision / Mission / Values Execution, Culture Change, Strengthening Communication and Conflict Resolution.

She has had the privilege of partnering with Municipal clients including the City of Elgin, Village of Schaumburg, City of Crystal Lake, Village of Oak Park, Village of Woodridge, Village of Montgomery, Village of Barrington, Fox Valley Park District, Geneva Park District, Northbrook Park District, Forest Preserve District of Kane County, as well as organizations such as IPBC, Kraft Foods, Dean Foods, TreeHouse Foods, Revlon Cosmetics, Dexcom and Neurocrine Biosciences, Inc.

Amy holds a degree in Leadership and Management from Judson University. She is a certified Co-Active Coach through the Coaches Training Institute and is certified as a True Color International Facilitator.

Karie Friling

Karie Friling is the first female Executive Director for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and has served in this role for the past three years. Prior to this, she served 27 years in professional municipal government leadership, as a former Village Manager, Assistant Village Manager, and Director of Development Services, serving the communities of Peoria, Orland Park, and Homer Glen. She holds a master's in public administration and is an ICMA Credentialed Manager. Her most proud accomplishment is being a working mother of four amazing daughters.

Trace Henley

Trace Henley is a champion for culture, caring, and connection. She is a manager for Health Partners, a managed care organization that exists to be a bridge between providers and payers. Her role encompasses contract management, credentialing consultation, and new program development, especially her primary passion: a leadership institute dedicated to providing free training to help health-care professionals lift and lead themselves and others. Trace's biggest training interests include teambuilding, culture and climate, employee experience, and—most of all—boundaries. She wholeheartedly believes the best foundation for personal and professional growth begins with studying the works of Drs. Brenè Brown and Adam Grant, as well as Cy Wakeman and the exceptional leadership of Ted Lasso on Apple+.

Trace earned a bachelor's in communication and a master's in organizational leadership, and she holds certifications as a SHRM Senior Certified Professional and as a group facilitator. She serves as the president for Heritage League of Siloam Springs and the immediate past president for Arkansas MGMA. She is also on the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce's Teen Leadership Experience executive committee.

Trace enjoys the music of Maud Crawford and Brandi Carlile, and her new favorite hobby is hosting Friends-themed Jeopardy games. When Trace isn't working on lifting and leading at work and in her volunteer efforts, she and her husband, Ben, are leaning into it at home by helping two amazing kids, Boone and Dani, make the world a kinder, more loving, more accepting, more equitable place for all.

Paula Hewson

Paula Hewson is the Assistant Village Manager for the Village of Schaumburg. Schaumburg is the largest center of economic development in the State of Illinois, outside the City of Chicago with a population of 78,723. Paula has been with the village for 20+ years starting as a Planner moving up in the organization reaching her current assignment as Assistant Village Manager. Paula's primary responsibilities include supervision of the Manager's Office staff and five departments (HR, IT, Finance, Community Development, and Transportation), development and monitoring of the village's \$341 Million budget and \$219 Million 5-year Capital Plan. She also leads negotiations with the village's 6 bargaining units. She is also the Office of Professional Standards Manager coordinating investigations into complaints against employees including Police and Fire.

Paula lives with her husband and two teenage sons and has a daughter studying at Purdue in Data Science. For fun she enjoys competing in triathlon, going on hikes, and spending long summer days on her dock in northern Ontario, Canada.

Pat Mahon

Pat Mahon is the Deputy Village Administrator for the Village of South Holland. As the Deputy Village Administrator, she assists the Village Administrator with managing the day-to-day operations of the village, including being responsible for all municipal departments. A village that consists of 22,000 residents and has a \$70 MM annual budget. As the former EEO Officer, she continues to work with all departments to ensure the recruitment, hiring and promoting of qualified minority and female employees. She also provides legal advice on employee and labor relations and is the chief negotiator for all Union negotiations.

She has served on several Boards over years and is currently serving as a Board member of the South Suburban Housing Collaborative; Housing Choice Partners of Illinois; Historic Pullman Foundation; and the Metra Citizen Advisory Board.

In her spare time, she continues to support organizations that provide assistance to those affected with the AIDS virus, as well as those organizations that are tirelessly searching for a cure for breast cancer. She also likes to stay active by jogging and bike riding. She has been married for 35 years to her husband, Patrick, and they currently reside in South Holland, Illinois.

Heather McGuire

Heather McGuire holds a BA in Psychology from DePaul University in Chicago, and earned her JD from the Northern Illinois College of Law in DeKalb, Ill. She began her career as an attorney for a municipal law firm in Will County, working primarily in real estate, development and as general counsel for various local governments, non-profit organizations, and a local community college district. After the firm closed, she became an on-staff City Attorney for the City of Crest Hill, where she oversaw litigation, negotiated and managed city contracts and familiarized herself with complex issues including employment and labor law, zoning, and economic development. That experience provided the necessary capabilities to shift into government administration, and Heather was promoted to Assistant City Administrator while still acting as the City's Chief Legal Officer, before being appointed as City Administrator in 2016. Heather is currently the City Administrator for the City of St. Charles, where she oversees a full-service organization that includes police, fire, and electric and water utilities with approximately 275 employees and an annual budget of \$200,000,000.

Avis Meade

Avis Meade is a seasoned communications strategist with over a decade of experience sculpting narratives and sidestepping misinformation pitfalls. She is the current Communications Manager for the Village of Arlington Heights and has served Lake County Government and the Village of Lombard in communications roles.

Drawing from her learned experience, Avis often characterizes her job as "tricking people into learning something," and focuses on creative ways to convey important information. Armed with an endless supply of Parks and Rec quotes, she directs her communication efforts to bridging gaps between government initiatives and community understanding. Avis believes that positivity always wins out and lives by the words of Leslie Knope when she says, "What I hear when I'm being yelled at, is people caring loudly at me."

Antoinetta Mosley

Antoinetta Mosley is a courage curator, keynote speaker, and diversity, equity, and inclusion strategist who helps individuals and organizations reach their highest potential by teaching them the power of consistently cultivating courage.

She is the Chief Encouragement Officer (CEO) at I Follow the Leader, a strategic consulting firm specializing in culture-building strategy, initiatives, and education. As a Certified Diversity Professional (CDP)[®], Antoinetta has worked on a range of projects for organizations of all sizes, including small to global nonprofits as well as Fortune 500 companies, and travels the country as a sought-after speaker on cultivating courage, courageous conversations, and courageous leadership.

Karyn Robles

Karyn Robles is the chief of Planning for the Illinois Tollway and is responsible for the agency's strategic programming and planning, intergovernmental agreements, environmental and landscaping, community relations, property management, geographic information system and geometrics. With more than two decades of experience in public transportation, Robles is currently leading the planning process to help inform, shape and develop the Tollway's next capital plan and provide a framework to advance its long-term capital priorities.

Robles, who joined the Illinois Tollway in 2023, previously served as the Director of Transportation for the Village of Schaumburg, where she oversaw the intricacies of the village's transportation network. Prior to Schaumburg, Karyn also held leadership roles in transportation and planning with the City of Naperville and positions with the cities of Carmel and Bloomington, Indiana. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Miami University (Ohio), majoring in Public Administration and Urban and Regional Planning, and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Sarah Schillerstrom

With a successful career in local government spanning nearly two decades, Sarah quickly rose through the ranks and held multiple positions across various departments, including Public Works, Administrative Services, Human Resources, and the Village Manager's Office. During her tenure, she served as the Human Resources Director for almost a decade and concluded her service as the Deputy Village Manager. She started her career as a L.P. Cookingham-Noll Fellow and Budget Analyst with the City of Kansas City, MO.

Sarah founded SRSD Consulting, LLC because she believes public servants deserve a workplace where they have opportunities to grow and develop, are supported by strong leaders, and are valued for their contributions. SRSD supports public sector organizations in developing and implementing strategies to retain their best people, cultivate strong leadership and future successors, and intentionally create an organizational culture that people want to embrace.

As a certified professional coach, Sarah utilizes a coaching approach and draws on the principles of Energy Leadership[™], to identify the root causes and barriers to progress, and guide individuals, teams, and organizations in effecting incremental, consistent, and impactful change.

Erika Storlie

Erika Storlie has been the Village Administrator for East Dundee, IL since 2021 after a long career at the City of Evanston where she served in many roles including Citizen Engagement Manager, Deputy City Manager and City Manager. She would describe her path to local government management as non-traditional, but she loves working to improve communities and inspiring others to lead from all levels of their organizations. Storlie has a bachelor's degree in organization behavior from Northwestern University and a master's degree in public administration from Kent State University.

Jennie Vana

An accomplished leader and highly regarded expert in government communications with 25+ years of experience, Jennie delivers strategic and effective communications to inform and engage diverse audiences, foster relationships, and build trust.

She currently serves as the Deputy of Communications and Engagement for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) – northeastern Illinois' metropolitan planning organization. Jennie and her team share important information about transportation and the region's comprehensive plan and work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to influence and advance policies that make the region (and its 8.4 million residents) a stronger, more resilient place to live.

She has also worked at the county and municipal levels leading high-performing, award-winning teams. As a former journalist, she has a passion and talent for creative and authentic storytelling.