

2025 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. 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 25 years of public sector experience. Nicole received her undergraduate and masters 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.

Julia Cedillo

Julia Cedillo has served as the Village Manager of La Grange Park, Illinois, since 2011. She has had the privilege of working with a dedicated team of elected officials and staff to advance strategic initiatives, enhance infrastructure, and promote sustainable development within the community. Before becoming Village Manager, she served as Interim and Assistant Village Manager in La Grange Park and worked as a Management Analyst for the Village of Woodridge. Her career in local government began as an intern for the City of DeKalb while earning her Master of Public Administration (MPA) at Northern Illinois University (NIU).

Julia remains actively engaged in the municipal management profession and values opportunities to collaborate with peers. She is honored to serve as a Director-at-Large on the Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA) Board of Directors and as a member of the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) Governmental Affairs & Policy Committee and Sustainability Committee. She previously chaired the Illinois Municipal League (IML) Managers Committee and the Intergovernmental Risk Management Agency (IRMA). In addition, she has held leadership roles as Chair of the NIU MPA Board of Advisors, President of the Metropolitan Managers Association Board, and President of the Illinois Association of Municipal Management Assistants (IAMMA).

Daisy Chavez

Daisy Chavez currently serves as the Assistant to the Village Manager for the Village of Western Springs. She began her career in Western Springs in 2016 as an intern in the Village Manager's Office and the Municipal Services Department. Over the years, she has held roles as Communications Coordinator and Management Analyst, while also managing the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) program for the Police Department. Additionally, she served as a Human Resources Generalist for the Village of Downers Grove and City of Elmhurst.

Daisy holds a Bachelor of Arts in Justice Studies and Spanish from Northeastern Illinois University and a Master's in Public Administration from DePaul University. She was recognized as a Regional 30 Under 40 honoree by the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce. Daisy is a member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA), Local Government Hispanic Network (ILGHN) and serves on the ILCMA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

Quinn Conyers

Quinn Conyers is a high-energy keynote speaker and public speaking expert who teaches entrepreneurs and business owners how to make their message memorable, leverage luxury language, and use speaking as a strategy for accelerated business growth. With over 20 years of experience, she has transformed hundreds of individuals from public speakers into powerful presenters allowing them to have conversations that convert into clients, customers and contracts.

A trusted voice in the business and speaking industry, Quinn has spoken for leading brands such as Nike, Walmart, PayPal, Visa, UPS, the United Nations, and Meeting Professionals International. She is also a featured expert in *Essence*, *Black Enterprise*, *Smart Meetings Magazine*, and *Good Morning Washington*.

As the author of two books, *Speak Black Woman: How Women in Business Can Profit from Public Speaking* and *Speak Up: The Ultimate Guide to Dominate in the Speaking Industry*, Quinn equips business owners with the tools to verbalize their value, attract premium-paying clients, and amplify their voice as a vehicle to rapidly grow their business, book or brand.

Recognized as an AT&T Dream in Black Future Maker, a Top Speaking Coach & Trainer by Zone of Genius, and a Smart Speaker: Communication Enhancer by Smart Meetings Magazine, Quinn's expertise has made her a sought-after keynote speaker for business conferences, women's leadership summits, and entrepreneurship focused events.

A proud graduate of both West Chester and Howard University, Quinn has also taught Speech Communications for five years at Coppin State University and is a certified Women-Owned Business (WBENC).

If you're an entrepreneur or leader ready to elevate your voice, attract high-end opportunities, and turn speaking into a business growth strategy, Quinn Conyers is the keynote speaker who will show you how.

Kelly Coyle

Kelly Coyle is a Partner with Clark Baird Smith LLP. Kelly focuses her practice on helping employers successfully navigate through a range of labor and employment law issues. Kelly's labor experience includes litigating grievance arbitration matters; litigating both representation and unfair labor practice cases before the ILRB and ELRB; and counseling employers on their rights and obligations under the Illinois Labor Acts and their respective collective bargaining agreements.

In addition to her labor experience, Kelly also focuses on assisting employers with their non-union, employment matters. Kelly regularly counsels and represents employers regarding statutory medical leave issues under the FMLA and ADA, disability concerns under Illinois and Federal law, fitness for duty issues, and PSEBA matters. Kelly also has experience representing employers in employment discrimination claims before the IDHR and the EEOC. Additionally, Kelly has conducted multiple, neutral workplace misconduct investigations on behalf of employers; and has conducted numerous trainings related to anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies and best practices, and regularly assists public employers on the handling of FOIA requests.

Prior to joining Clark Baird Smith LLP, Kelly gained invaluable experience working for the ILRB as an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). As an ALJ, Kelly was responsible for conducting numerous hearings, addressing a variety of pretrial issues, conducting in-depth labor law research, and drafting more than a dozen decisions.

In 2018 and 2019, Leading Lawyers recognized Kelly as an "Emerging Lawyer" in the Labor Law (Management) field. Leading Lawyers grants less than 2% of Illinois attorneys the distinction of Emerging Lawyer.

Inga Cushman

Inga Cushman was recently promoted to Assistant Administrator/Human Resources Manager for the Village of Cottage Grove, WI after being hired in Cottage Grove as the Human Resources Manager in August 2023. Before working in Cottage Grove, Inga worked for the City of Milton, WI for 16 years in various capacities which include communications, human resources management, tourism, historic preservation, and developing the City's strategic plan. She earned her MPA from Northern Illinois University and is a SHRM Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP).

Molly Gillespie

Molly Gillespie is the Communications and Engagement Director for the Village of Buffalo Grove, where she leads strategic efforts to strengthen internal and external communications, build trust, and foster civic pride. With over a decade of local government experience, she has earned multiple awards for her work and successfully guided the adoption and integration of Buffalo Grove's brand across the organization. Known as a "jill of all trades, master of some," Molly brings a creative, people-first approach to public service and storytelling.

Yvette Heintzelman

Yvette Heintzelman represents private and public sector employers in state and federal litigation, and in grievance arbitrations, before the Illinois Labor Relation Board, local Pension Boards, and Board of Fire and Police Commissioners.

Yvette represents Public Safety Departments in disciplinary matters interpreting the Peace Officers Disciplinary Act and the Firefighters Disciplinary Act and associated agreements, laws, and regulations. Her experience in disability matters includes analysis of the intersection between FMLA, ADA and workers compensation as well as analysis and assessment of applications for and defense of municipal decisions under the Public Employee Safety Benefit Protection Act and the Public Employee Disability Act.

Yvette defends employers against discrimination claims filed under Title VII, Americans with Disabilities Act, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, wrongful discharge, and various other employment related claims. She has extensive experience defending employers against claims filed by the EEOC as well as in multi-party employment litigation.

Yvette also provides advice and counsel to public safety departments on management of personnel and liability issues. She provides training on investigation of internal complaints, development of policies and procedures and compliance with applicable law. She presents for professional organizations such as the Northwest Police Academy, the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, the Illinois Municipal League, Illinois Public Employer Labor Relations Association and the International Association of Police Chiefs on issues relating to legislation and public safety liability and misconduct.

Public and private sector employers rely on Yvette to help them address labor and employment issues and avoid litigation through a proactive approach to responding and resolving various employment problems. She works with her clients to navigate labor relations issues, establish human resources policies and procedures necessary to comply with constantly evolving labor and employment law as well as conform to the employer's method of operations. Yvette also provides necessary training to ensure that all personnel are informed and are able to implement and comply with policy and procedures. She has presented numerous training courses and presentations, such as sexual harassment training, anti-discrimination training, personnel policy manual training, free speech, FOIA, supervisor training, disciplinary investigations, with a specific emphasis on public safety personnel.

Yvette works closely with the ILACP on training for law enforcement administrative personnel and has trained on issues such as the Quota Bill and the Brady enforcement. She recently worked with members of the ILACP regarding amendments to the 2021 Safe-T Act and preparation for training departments on their compliance obligations. She is certified by the Force Science Institute regarding investigation of critical incidents and use of body cameras.

Ashley Monroe

Ashley Monroe is currently the Assistant Village Manager for the Village of Riverside, after returning three years-ago from a position as the Deputy City Manager in Iowa City, Iowa. Prior to moving her family out of state for her job, Ashley was also the Assistant To the Village Manager, Management Analyst, and Assistant Planner in Hoffman Estates, and Administrative Intern in Homewood, Illinois. Her work in communities with populations ranging from 9,000-80,000, has led to insights on the complexities, differences, and similarities in how small and large public organization's function. She also taught four years of Introduction to Public Management for graduate students at the University of Iowa, and in doing so, continued to develop creative, capable people excited about joining the public service profession. Ashley holds undergraduate and MPA degrees from Northern Illinois University.

Suzanne Ostrovsky

Suzanne Ostrovsky is the City Administrator of McHenry, Illinois. Suzanne was previously Assistant Village Manager and Assistant to the Village Manager in Hoffman Estates, and she started her local government career as a Management Analyst for the Village of Hinsdale. A mid-career convert, Suzanne spent more than a decade in commercial real estate and marketing/communications before receiving her MPA from DePaul University (Chicago) in 2012.

Shebnem Ozkaptan

Shebnem (Sheb) Ozkaptan serves as the Budget and Administrative Manager for the Community Services Department at the City of Naperville. She brings over 25 years of government experience, having previously interned with Illinois State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka and the Village of Woodridge. Throughout her career, Sheb has built a strong foundation in public administration and continues her dedicated service with the City of Naperville. Outside of work, Sheb is an avid Disney enthusiast and enjoys visiting the parks as often as she can.

Katie Parkhurst

Katie Parkhurst serves as the Director of Economic and Community Development since joining the Village of Round Lake in March 2018. Katie leads Round Lake's business attraction and retention program, planning and zoning, development reviews, and oversees building permits, inspection services and code enforcement. Prior to Round Lake, Katie has 18 years of municipal experience in planning, zoning and economic development. Katie has earned accreditation from the American Institute of Certified Planners. Katie holds a Bachelor of Science in Geography and Environmental Science from Carroll University and a Master of Urban Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Cory Poris Plasch

Cory Poris Plasch is President/CEO of CP2 Consulting, a strategic planning and organizational development firm. Cory has served in variety of leadership positions in the public and private sector including Executive Director of the Wisconsin City/County Management Association, Membership Director for the Alliance for Innovation, and most recently as Vice President of Strategic Development at POLCO. Her local government experience ranges from 911 Dispatcher to management positions in several Illinois communities. She speaks across the country on topics including the use of data, civic engagement, engaging hard-to-reach populations, and innovation in local government. Cory has helped numerous local governments and other public-sector organizations succeed in better engaging their communities so that all stakeholders (including historically underrepresented populations) are included, driving positive change. She has a master's degree in public administration from Northern Illinois University and a certification in Strategic Planning from George Washington University Center for Excellence in Public Leadership.

Jessica Spencer

Jessica Spencer serves as the Assistant Village Administrator for the Village of River Forest. She obtained her graduate degree in Public Administration from the University of Illinois Springfield. Post graduation in Springfield, she embarked on a career in government, contributing her skills at the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services within the Bureau of Managed Care. In this role, Jessica played a significant part in procurement management and operations, driven by her goal to directly impact communities and enhance residents' lives. Over nearly a decade, she has dedicated her expertise to various local governments, either through direct employment or consultancy. Her contributions have benefited municipalities such as the villages of Campton Hills, Westchester, Itasca, Oak Brook, and the City of Chicago.

Katarzyna Thake

Katarzyna (Kathy) Thake is an experienced local government leader with proven performance of working to effectively improve the community she serves. Kathy has been the Village Manager in the Village of Kenilworth since August 2024. Prior to her time in Kenilworth, Kathy served as the Deputy Village Manager and many other roles for the Village of Niles since 2007. With over 18 years of experience in operational management, she oversees various functions of the Village, such financial management, economic development, and cross departmental cooperation. Katarzyna is a dedicated team builder who is performance-driven and results oriented. Katarzyna holds an M.B.A. from North Park University School of Business and Nonprofit Management and is a recent graduate of the Senior Executive Institute from the University of Virginia. She served as past President of The Legacy Project, which advance women in local government and has been always involved in ILCMA various committees.

Heidi Voorhees

Ms. Voorhees has more than 35 years' experience in executive recruitment, general management consulting and local government administration and is a Senior Vice-President at MGT. She is the former co-owner and founder of GovHRUSA, and GovTemps USA, both companies now a division of MGT. Ms. Voorhees spent 19 years in local government including ten years as the Wilmette, Illinois Village Manager. She also worked in Schaumburg, IL and Kansas City, MO. She is a frequent speaker on current workforce issues and demographics at state and national conferences. Heidi has a Bachelor of Science Degree from Illinois State University and a Master of Public Affairs Degree from the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs.

Kristen Ziman

Kristen Ziman is a dynamic leader and keynote speaker known for her transformative impact across various industries. With over 20 years of leadership experience, Kristen has a proven track record of driving organizational excellence, fostering innovation, and empowering individuals and teams to achieve their full potential.

Holding two master's degrees and having completed executive education at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Kristen brings a wealth of academic and practical knowledge to her audiences. Kristen's approach to leadership is characterized by a deep commitment to accountability, innovation, and community engagement.

Her influence extends far beyond her previous role as the first female Chief of Police in Aurora, Illinois. As a published author of the memoir "Reimagining Blue," she shares insights on leadership, resilience, and the power of optimism, drawing from her extensive experience to inspire professionals across all fields.

Her experience in managing critical incidents, including the tragic mass shooting at the Henry Pratt Company in 2019, underscores her expertise in crisis leadership and her dedication to building resilient organizations. Kristen's leadership philosophy is universally applicable, offering valuable lessons to professionals in all sectors who are looking to optimize performance and foster a culture of excellence.

She is a sought-after speaker and consultant, recognized for her ability to guide organizations through cultural evolution and empower leaders to create lasting, positive change.