

INNER POWER, OUTER IMPACT: STRENGTH FROM WITHIN & IMPACT BEYOND

Conference at a Glance

8:00 AM Registration & Continental Breakfast

8:45 AM Welcome, Introductions & Keynote “The Light Switch” by
Heide Frye

10:15 AM - 11:15 AM Breakout Sessions

- Stepping into Your Power
- Turning the Tide: Navigating Bonds, Grants, Partnerships & Challenges to Mitigate Community Flooding
- Breaking Barriers in Public Leadership: The Journey of Women in Local Government

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM Breakout Sessions

- When the Right Solution Turns Wrong: When Politics or External Influences Derail a Project
- Crucial Conversations - Tools & Strategies for High-Impact Communication
- Bridging the Generational Divide: Communicating Across Generations in Local Government

12:30 -1:30 PM Lunch, Awards & Business Meeting

1:45 PM - 2: 45 PM Breakout Sessions

- Financial Wellness for Women Creating Their Legacy
- Empowering Your Career: The Role of Self Advocacy

3:00 PM Closing Keynote: How to be Brave by Blair Braverman

4:00 PM After Conference Networking Event

**FRIDAY MAY 15
AT NIU
NAPERVILLE**

NIU Naperville
1120 Diehl Road
Naperville, IL

Registration and
Breakfast begin at
8 AM. The program
begins at 8:45 AM

**Sign up for
Professional
Headshots to be
taken at the
conference**

Lunch is included
in your registration

After conference
networking event at
Pour House, 1703
Freedom Dr., Naperville

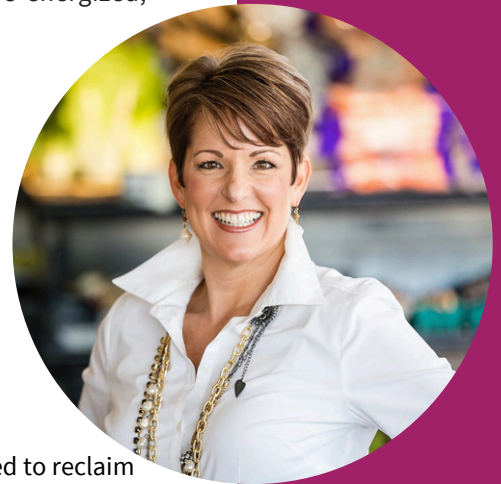
Opening Keynote

The Light Switch

Heide Frye

Based on Heidi Frye's book *The Light Switch*, this keynote illuminates how leaders plug into their core power, transforming challenges and leadership struggles into confidence, and authentic influence. Through real stories and vivid metaphors, Heidi shows that leadership is not about switching on more power but about changing its source. True power is already within, and this session helps leaders access it. You'll leave energized, grounded, and ready to lead with authentic presence and confidence.

Addresses ICMA Practice Area: 5 (Personal Resiliency and Development)



Morning Breakout Sessions

morning breakout session one

Stepping into Your Power

Heidi Frye

True power emanates from within. From the core. In this session, leaders are invited to reclaim their voice, presence, and authority, expanding their confidence, intuition, connection, and balance. By flexing the core muscles highlighted in *The Whole Leader Workout* from *The Light Switch*, leaders learn to lead authentically from inner strength, creating influence and confidence that inspires. The outcome: Whole Leaders who stand fully in their power.

Addresses ICMA Practice Area: 5 (Personal Resiliency and Development)

morning breakout session two

Turning the Tide: Navigating Bonds, Grants, Partnerships & Challenges to Mitigate Community Flooding

Bridget Wachtel, Village Manager, Village of Flossmoor, **John Brunke**, Public Works Director, Village of Flossmoor, **Matthew Moffitt**, Vice President – Water Resources, Baxter & Woodman

This session offers a practical roadmap for project management and public engagement on complex, multi-year, multi-phase infrastructure projects. Drawing on a Village of Flossmoor flood mitigation project affecting its downtown and a 700 home, post WWII neighborhood, presenters will cover: building a GO bond education campaign; identifying and presenting engineering alternatives; pursuing and securing competitive county, state, and federal grants via lobbyists and consultants; phasing construction to match funding; and coordinating intergovernmental agreements for property acquisition. Presenters will also address political realities—using political capital for a referendum, partnering with local taxing bodies, and responding to NIMBY concerns—all while sustaining progress across political leadership transitions.

Learning Objectives

- Design and implement a public education campaign for a general obligation (GO) bond referendum that effectively communicates project benefits, costs, and accountability to residents.
- Evaluate and present engineering alternatives for flood mitigation using clear criteria and visuals that resonate with non-technical audiences.
- Develop a funding strategy that combines competitive grant applications and advocacy efforts, aligning multiple funding sources with phased construction timelines.
- Navigate political and intergovernmental dynamics by building partnerships, addressing NIMBY concerns, and sustaining project momentum across political leadership transitions.

Addresses ICMA Practice Areas: 2 (Community Engagement); 6 (Strategic Leadership); 8 (Policy Facilitation and Implementation)

Morning Breakout Sessions continued

morning breakout session three

Breaking Barriers in Public Leadership: The Journey of Women in Local Government

Beth Beatty, City Manager, City of Joliet, **Pamela Reece**, Town of Normal, **Melinda Linas**, Police Chief, Lindenhurst, **Pam Gallahue**, Deputy City Manager, City of Naperville

The path to getting and being successful in a leadership position looks different for everyone. Hear from a panel of women in leadership positions in local government as they share real experiences of navigating their roles. Learn more about the personal and professional paths of women in local government leadership and how they have been able to overcome setbacks, build confidence and drive change in their organizations and communities.

Learning Objectives

- Be inspired to pursue a path of leadership in local government
- Learn things you may not know about being successful in your first year in a new position and hear what the panelists wish they had known
- Understand how your personal experiences make you unique and can be leveraged in leadership

Addresses ICMA Practice Area: 5 (Personal Resiliency and Development)

Break for beverage, snacks & networking

Mid-Morning Breakout Sessions

mid-morning breakout session one

When the Right Solution Turns Wrong: When Politics or External Influences Derail a Project

Bridget Wachtel, Village Manager, Village of Flossmoor, **Patrick Brennan**, Village Manager, Village of Kenilworth, **Tim Frenzer**, retired manager, Senior Advisor, ILCMA/ICMA

Big, bold community projects often start with strong support, clear goals, and the right intentions. But sometimes the political landscape shifts, momentum fades, or public perception changes—and a well designed solution suddenly becomes the wrong answer. This session explores real world examples of projects that were slowed, derailed, or permanently shelved due to politics, timing, or shifting priorities. Participants will discuss lessons learned, early warning signs to watch for, and strategies to navigate political turbulence before it turns a promising initiative into an abandoned one.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the common political triggers that can cause well-planned projects to stall, shift direction, or fail altogether.
- Analyze real project case studies to understand how timing, public perception, and stakeholder dynamics contribute to derailment.
- Recognize early warning signs of political misalignment and develop strategies to address them proactively.
- Apply practical communication and engagement approaches to maintain support and keep major initiatives on track even as political conditions change.

Addresses ICMA Practice Areas: 6 (Strategic Leadership); 8 (Policy Facilitation and Implementation); 9 (Community and Resident Service); 14 (Communication and Information Sharing)



Mid-Morning Breakout Sessions continued

mid-morning breakout session two

Crucial Conversations-Tools and Strategies for High-Impact Communication

Cory Poris Plasch, President/CEO, CP2 Consulting

This session equips participants with practical tools for navigating both everyday and challenging workplace conversations with coworkers, peers, supervisors, and board members. The session focuses on core communication techniques that support clarity, understanding, and effective information-sharing across a variety of workplace contexts. As one component of the session, participants will be introduced to the DiSC framework as a way to better understand differing communication styles and adjust their approach when working with individuals who think, communicate, or make decisions differently. Emphasizing real-world application, the session moves beyond theory to provide actionable strategies participants can apply immediately in their professional roles

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate effective communication techniques for navigating workplace conversations with coworkers, supervisors, and board members.
- Recognize common differences in communication styles and apply strategies—including insights from the DiSC framework—to adapt their approach for greater clarity and understanding.
- Apply practical, real-world communication strategies to improve information-sharing, reduce misunderstandings, and strengthen professional relationships

addresses ICMA Practice Areas: 4 (Staff Effectiveness); 6 (Strategic Leadership); 14 (Communication and Information Sharing)

mid-morning breakout session three

Bridging the Generational Divide: Communicating Across Generations in Local Government

Sarah Schillerstrom, SRSD Consulting, LLC.

This presentation explores how multiple generations, each shaped by distinct cultural moments, technologies, and workplace norms, show up in today's local government organizations. From Traditionalists and Baby Boomers to Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, we will examine the defining characteristics, common stereotypes, and preferred communication styles often attributed to each group. Rather than reinforcing labels, the session will unpack how these generalizations influence perception, feedback styles, expectations around authority, technology use, responsiveness, and work-life boundaries. Through practical examples, the program will identify common intergenerational challenges and provide actionable strategies to bridge communication gaps. Attendees will leave with tools to foster mutual respect, adapt communication approaches, leverage generational strengths, and create a culture of clarity and collaboration. The goal is not to eliminate differences, but to use them intentionally, building stronger teams and more effective local government leadership across generations.

Learning Objectives

- Identify key characteristics and communication preferences among the different generations
- Distinguish between generational stereotypes and meaningful trends
- Analyze common intergenerational communication challenges
- Apply strategies to bridge generational gaps

Addresses ICMA Practice Areas: 4 (Staff Effectiveness); 6 (Strategic Leadership); 14 (Communication and Information Sharing):

Lunch, Awards and Business Meeting



Afternoon Breakout Sessions

afternoon breakout session one

Financial Wellness for Women Creating Their Legacy

Kristy Sullivan, Financial Advisor, Raymond James & Associates
Maggie Welschm Financial Advisor, Raymond James & Associates

This session offers an honest, judgment free conversation about money for women navigating careers in public service while balancing family, responsibility, and long term goals. Rather than focusing on perfection or one size fits all strategies, the discussion centers on understanding why money often feels stretched, how cash flow stress impacts confidence and opportunity, and how early awareness can create more choices over time.

Panelists will explore how everyday financial decisions connect to future flexibility, retirement readiness, and the ability to say yes or no to opportunities with confidence. The goal is to help participants feel informed and empowered to take the next right step, wherever they start from.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize that cash flow pressure and debt are common experiences and learn how they can still be part of effective, real life financial planning.
- Build greater cash flow clarity by increasing awareness of where money is going and understanding how intentional choices create stability and confidence over time.
- Understand why having a retirement plan matters, why there is no better time than now to begin, and how starting where you are today can create more choice, flexibility, and long term independence in the future.

Addresses ICMA Practice Areas: 5 (Personal Resiliency and Development); 12 (Financial Management and Budgeting)

afternoon breakout session two

Empowering Your Career: The Role of Self Advocacy

Marisol Leyva, Assistant Village Manager/Human Resources Director, Village of Wheeling, **Becky Madison**, Director of Human Resources, City of Des Plaines, **Emily Rodman**, Director of Planning and Economic Development, Village of Arlington Heights, **Sarah Schillerstrom**, SRSD Consulting, LLC.

This engaging and practical session focused on the power of self-advocacy as a driver of career growth, visibility, and fulfillment. Participants will explore how to confidently communicate their strengths, boundaries, needs, and aspirations in the workplace, especially in environments that may undervalue quiet leadership or assume people will "wait their turn."

This session encourages participants to view self-advocacy not as self-promotion, but as a professional skill that supports clearer communication, stronger relationships, and more aligned career paths.

Learning Objectives:

- Define self-advocacy and explain why it's essential to career success
- Recognize internal and external barriers to effective self-advocacy
- Apply communication strategies to articulate needs, goals, and accomplishments

Addresses ICMA Practice Area: 5 (Personal Resiliency and Development)

Break for beverage, snacks & networking



Closing Keynote

How to be Brave

Blair Braverman, Dogsledder & Adventurer

How do you set off into the wilderness, knowing you'll meet tremendous and unpredictable challenges? In this talk, Blair Braverman uses stories from the trail to demonstrate that courage isn't a quality, but a practice that combines preparation, problem-solving, and trusting your future self—and she offers practical lessons that anyone can implement in their life and work.

Addresses ICMA Practice Area: 5 (Personal Resiliency and Development)



After Conference

Join colleagues for an After Conference Social Event

Old Town Pour House Naperville, 1703 Freedom Drive

Sponsorship Opportunities

Gold Level Sponsorship - \$1,500

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

Silver Level Sponsorship - \$1,000

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

Bronze Sponsorship - \$500

- Logo in the program
- Recognized at lunch

There is still time to sponsor the 2026 Women's Legacy Conference. Please contact Dawn Peters at dpeters@niu.edu or 815-753-0923.

15TH ANNUAL WOMEN'S LEGACY CONFERENCE

FRIDAY MAY 15, 2026 8AM-4PM
NIU NAPERVILLE, 1120 DIEHL ROAD, NAPERVILLE, IL
REGISTRATION FORM

Attendee Contact Information

Name: _____

First Name for Badge: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Conference Registration

5.5 CE hours | 0.5 CEUs

____ \$125.00 Conference Registration-Legacy Project Member Rate

____ \$225.00 Conference Registration-Non-member Rate

____ \$35.00 Conference Registration-Student/Intern Rate

____ \$120.00 each registrant for Groups of 5 or more from one organization

____ \$10.00 I'd like to have the photographer take a professional headshot picture

____ I plan to attend the post-conference networking event at the Pour House

____ I am a first-time attendee- The Legacy Conference Committee has scheduled a Virtual Conference Buddy Meet & Greet on Monday, May 11 at Noon where you can connect directly with several of our committee members in advance of the conference. By checking this box, you will receive a calendar invite with the Zoom link. We are thrilled to have you join us and want to ensure you feel right at home from the very start.

____ I am willing to be a conference buddy to a first time attendee

____ I have special dietary needs. Please list: _____

Registration includes continental breakfast, beverage & snack breaks, and lunch

Join or Renew Legacy Project 2026-27 Membership

____ Legacy membership \$40

____ Student Legacy membership \$10



Register by May 9th! For a full refund, you must cancel your registration by May 8th. Cancellations made after May 8th incur a \$50 fee.

Questions about the conference? Contact: LegacyProject@niu.edu or 815-753-5424

Questions about registration? Contact the registration office OutreachRegistration@niu.edu or 800-345-9472

Three easy ways to register:

ON-LINE: www.legacyprojectnow.org

PHONE: 800-345-9472

FAX: 815-753-6900

MAIL completed registration form and payment to:

Outreach Services Registration Office

Northern Illinois University

DeKalb, IL 60115

If registering by Mail with check make check payable to Legacy Project

If registering by Mail/Fax with Credit Card:

circle one: Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Name on Card: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Signature _____

cardholder's name and address must be exactly the way it appears on their credit card statement