

ILLINOIS GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION 2009-2013 DOWNSTATE CHAPTER STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Illinois Government Finance Officers Association (IGFOA) was founded in 1958 and is the statewide association of government finance professionals.

Vision

To be the premier source of local government finance expertise in Illinois.

Mission

To promote excellence in governmental finance through leadership, education, support, and communication so as to advocate best practices and advance the competence and effectiveness of local government finance officers in Illinois.

IGFOA is an association of government finance professionals with objectives to:

- . Study, discuss, and recommend improvement in all aspects of government finance programs,
- . Provide a means for the exchange of ideas and experiences among governmental finance officers,
- . Promote and encourage professional competence through continuing education and training of government finance officers,
- . Promote and foster the professional stature of all persons engaged in government finance activities,
- . Collect, analyze, and distribute information relative to the organization and administration of governmental finance activities,
- . Promote legislation and regulations that endorse efficiency and fiscal soundness for governmental units in Illinois, and
- . Promote interest in and awareness of the government finance

About the Downstate Chapter

The Downstate Chapter represents IGFOA members outside of the Chicago metropolitan area and reflects the diversity of Illinois from Galena to Carbondale and Quincy to Danville.

As of September 2009, 114 IGFOA members claimed Downstate as their primary chapter. Governments represented include cities, towns, villages, counties, sanitary districts, park districts, state agencies and intergovernmental agencies – anywhere a finance professional might be employed.

HISTORY OF DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS GOVT. FINANCE OFFICER'S ASSOCIATION

In November of 1983, 8 finance officers from cities in central and downstate Illinois met at the Holiday Inn in Normal, Illinois to discuss their interest and possibility of establishing a Downstate Illinois Government Finance Officer's Association. This meeting was arranged by Ron Hill, Finance Director of Normal, Illinois. It came from discussions among downstate Finance Officers at the Illinois Government Finance Officer's annual conference. It was their desire to be able to meet periodically to discuss and receive training on topics that may be of particular interest to downstate communities and to be able to interact on a social level in smaller group than annually at the state conference.

At this meeting, attendees agreed to form this organization and to elect the following officers:

President: Ron Lappi, Decatur
Vice-President: Ron Hill, Normal
Secretary, Paul Sorgen, Carbondale
Treasurer: Ron Eldridge, Urbana

Primary duties of the officers were:

President. Coordinate all activities of the organization and oversee other officers.

Vice-President. Coordinate training programs and assist President.

Treasurer. Pay bills, collect fees, and prepare annual financial report.

Secretary. Prepare and maintain minutes of meetings.

Past President. Serve as chapter representative to IGFOA.

First formal meeting was in April 1984 in Decatur, Illinois. There was a golf outing on Thursday followed by a cookout at Ron Lappi's residence Thursday evening, followed by training session next day on Friday.

Then began a normal schedule of one-day training session in January (usually held at Springfield), larger 2 day conference held in April (moved to August in 2004) at various locations, and one-day conference held in July at various locations (switched to April in August 2004).

Locations that the DIGFOA has held their training sessions are: Decatur, Normal, Bloomington, Champaign, Urbana, Carbondale, Springfield, Mt. Vernon, Alton, Eagle Creek State Park, Starved Rock State Park, Giant City State Park, Pere Marquette State Park, and Peoria.

Finance Officers that have served as President have been:

Ron Lappi, Decatur; Ron Hill, Normal; Ken Modglin, Rantoul; Paul Sorgen, Carbondale, Allen Horsman, Bloomington; Beth Couter, Decatur, Ron Eldridge, Urbana, Delora Siebrecht, Urbana, Jenifer Johnson, Champaign, Patti Martinez, Normal; Dallas Whitford, Springfield, Leslie Lundy, Champaign.

Chapter Challenges

- Covers very large geographic area
 - includes several diverse economic regions
 - travel time and costs are often prohibitive factors in attending meetings and conferences
- Pool of volunteer leaders limited
 - Finance officer turnover relatively low and has necessitated “recycling” past leaders
 - Limited number of Downstate cities have contributed multiple staff to leading chapter
 - Economic downturn brought unanticipated financial strain to current Board members making it very difficult for them to devote time to chapter volunteer service.
 - Opportunities to train and mentor potential leaders limited due to:
 - Recession necessitated staffing reductions and increased workplace demands on current and potential volunteers
 - Distance and time involved in volunteering on state-wide committees
 - Geographic disparities within chapter

Chapter Opportunities

- Tenure and experience of Downstate finance officers is very rich and diverse. Downstate members are very familiar with the challenges of managing public funds in full service communities and have much to offer IGFOA as instructors, panelists, and by sharing resources.
- Interest in ongoing training is strong as witnessed by participation in Downstate Chapter conferences and IGFOA Annual Conference. A small number of Downstate chapter members frequently participate in IGFOA seminars in Chicago Metro area and often request similar training in their region.
- Response to meetings held in southwest and southeast Illinois was very positive.
- Technology now allows for connecting volunteer at various locations for
 - Training
 - Participation on state association committees

Chapter Action Objectives

- Restructure leadership team to govern Downstate Chapter
- Expand training offered
- Deliver consistent, reliable training throughout Downstate area

Restructure leadership team to govern Downstate Chapter

- Reflect the geographic diversity of the chapter
- Reflect the diverse experience of the chapter members
- Provide board member training and support to assure reliable succession of chapter leaders
- Clarify and strengthen role of Board

Action	Assigned	Timeframe
Strategic action plan review and discussion – revise as appropriate	Downstate Chapter Board; IGFOA President-elect, Executive Director	Late July – early August 2009 COMPLETE
Hold regional meetings with Downstate Chapter members to review strategic action plan and longer term effort and receive additional input. Meeting sites include <input type="checkbox"/> Urbana <input type="checkbox"/> Dixon <input type="checkbox"/> Mount Vernon <input type="checkbox"/> Edwardsville <input type="checkbox"/> Peoria	Downstate Chapter President, IGFOA President-elect, Executive Director	August – September 2009 COMPLETE
Authorize staff support and funding anticipated in draft Downstate Chapter Strategic Action Plan.	IGFOA Executive Board	August 2009 COMPLETE
Review Chapter Board structure and redefine as needed to include regional representation throughout Downstate Chapter	Downstate Chapter Board subcommittee and Executive Director	Early August 2009 COMPLETE
Recruit candidates for Downstate Chapter Board from planned regions	Downstate Chapter President	Early September 2009 COMPLETE
Adopt Downstate Chapter Strategic Action Plan – meeting at IGFOA Annual Conference	Downstate Chapter	September 2009
Elect Downstate Chapter Board members - meeting at IGFOA Annual Conference	Downstate Chapter	September 2009
Set schedule for periodic Chapter Board meetings either in person or via teleconference	Downstate Chapter President	September 2009
Advise IGFOA Executive Board of substantial changes to Strategic Action Plan and request additional support as needed	Downstate Chapter Board	September 2009
Volunteer leader orientation for Downstate Chapter Board in conjunction with fall seminar	IGFOA staff	October – November 2009
Provide coaching and support to volunteer leaders by attending Downstate Chapter Board meetings	Executive Director	Downstate Chapter Board meetings
Recruit regional volunteers to serve as logistics coordinators, panelists and instructors at Downstate Chapter training events	Downstate Chapter Board	October – November 2009
Review and revise Strategic Action Plan, evaluating success	Downstate Chapter Board	At least every six months

Expand training offered

Deliver consistent, reliable training throughout Downstate area

- Seminar draw generally should be expected within a 50 to 100 mile radius
- Develop regular schedule of training opportunities throughout Downstate Chapter regions
- Consistent effort over the first 2 years is very important
 - Can't give up after one or two attempts as longer term success with DIGFOA will likely be slow
 - Additional Chapter recommendations may come at the end of the first 2-year effort
- The DIGFOA vision would be promoted at all seminars/meetings to generate some excitement.
- Initially offer training in 4-hour increments to allow for travel to and from site within same day
- As warranted expand mix of topics and duration of training seminars
- Experiment with linking various regions via sites equipped with appropriate Internet training rooms to deliver live training to several regions simultaneously, maybe using various Colleges and Universities. So far have identified no cost sites in Urbana and Peoria and are looking for additional ideas from members.
- Initial training seminars to be provided by current IGFOA Instructors with focus on developing a corps of instructors that will provide Downstate training on an ongoing basis
- State association will be primary provider of seminar material, with Downstate instructors supplementing with their own examples/case studies.
- Offer training on basic, intermediate, and hot topics as appropriate in a particular region
- Continue to support partnership between IGFOA and IASBO for professional support staff conference in Springfield and offer additional support staff programs as demand develops

Deliver consistent, reliable training throughout Downstate area, con't

Action	Assigned	Timeframe
Refer to earlier action items regarding development and adoption of Downstate Chapter Strategic Action Plan –steps concurrent with or to be incorporated with plan and contingent on plan adoption		
Gather input at regional meetings with Downstate Chapter members on training topics of interest	Downstate Chapter President, IGFOA President-elect, Executive Director	August 2009 COMPLETE
Identify at least three regional sites for Internet linked training facilities	Executive Director	September 2009 2 identified
Develop draft training schedule for Downstate Chapter through March 2010: include seminar topic and locations	Downstate Chapter President & Executive Director	September 2009
Secure commitment from IGFOA instructors to teach seminars included in draft schedule	Career Development Committee	September 2009
Identify and secure commitment from Downstate Chapter volunteers to host training and arrange logistics at each site (set-up, food and beverages, on-site registration, CPE monitors)	Downstate Chapter	September 2009
Support Professional Support Staff Conference offered by IGFOA and IASBO	Downstate Chapter	September 24, 2009 and ongoing
Provide on-line registration and back office meeting support for seminars	IGFOA staff	Per schedule
Recruit Downstate Chapter member volunteer instructors and begin incorporating them in training programs	Downstate Chapter Board	October 2009 – March 2010
Monitor seminar evaluations and participation	Downstate Chapter Board and Career Development Committee	ongoing

Input gathered at regional meetings

- Members are interested in hot topic seminars and have many ideas about the topics of interest
 - Internal control systems – especially with downsizing
 - Accounts receivable processing and productivity improvements
 - Building a better budget document
 - Putting performance measurements to work
 - Revenue forecasting and management
 - Understanding the property tax appeal process
 - Debt alternatives, especially to improve downtowns
 - Getting out from under OPEB
 - Managing technology and improving productivity, such as payment processing
 - Annual accounting and financial reporting update
 - Annual pension update
 - OPEB and expectations/requirements for addressing liabilities
- The market for basic seminars may be limited as turnover is relatively low, however chapter should periodically offer basic accounting, basic cash management, utility billing and basic budgeting
- Holding seminars from 10 AM to 3 PM is ideal to allow attendees to get there and back within the workday.
- Non-members should be encouraged to attend. Consider pricing seminars to attract non-members. If at least one person for the government is a member, allow any staff from that government to attend at member rate.
- Look for opportunities to collaborate with other associations in each region. Avoid scheduling regional seminars and conferences around the same time as other groups IGFOA members are likely to belong to.
- Provide time during each seminar for comparing notes about challenges attendees are facing.
- Suggested quarterly training for support staff and twice a year for finance directors
- Interest in training for CPE credit was high
- Value of CPE training at roughly \$25 per hour was high
- Try not to duplicate seminars between southern and southwest region
- Try to build on and capture the interest of existing regional networking groups for government finance professionals
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Proposed Board Members 2009-2010

President: Ron Hill, Town of Normal
 Vice President: Jen Johnson, City of Champaign
 Secretary: Liz Walden, City of Urbana
 Treasurer: Scott Brandon, Village of Rantoul
 Member at Large: Jan Little, City of Peoria
 Member at Large: Gloria Osborn, City of Galesburg
 Past President: Ron Hill, Town of Normal

Regional Coordinators (Non-voting)

Initially: Coordinate on-site requirements for training programs
 Help to build attendance
 Slowly: Begin to enlist presenters for the seminars

Central Illinois: Current Board will cover this area
 B-N; C-U; Peoria, Springfield

Southern

Merle Hollmann (Mt. Vernon)
 Steve Hale (Marion)
 Deb Zimmerman (IMET)

Southwestern - St Louis area

Jennifer Zoelzer (Madison County)
 Kelly Korte (City of Highland)

Northwest - Quad Cities

Kathy Carr (Moline)
 Jim Hughes (East Moline)

Seminars

- Southwestern - Internal controls - October 22, 2009
- Southern - Accounting Update - November
- December - No seminars
- January - No Seminars
- February - Winter conference (covered by Board - Central Illinois area)
- March and future months to be determined (see Strategic "Action Plan schedule)
- Hope to have a seminar almost every month

Draft training schedule

Region	Topic	Timeframe
Southwest	Internal Controls - CONFIRMED	October 22, 2009
Southern	Accounting and Financial Reporting update	November 2009
Central	Winter Conference	February 2010
Northwest	Internal Controls	March 2010
Southwest	Hot Topics in Local Government Finance	April 2010
Southern	Hot Topics in Local Government Finance	May 2010

IGFOA will explore opportunities to link regions via Internet to present live training

Desired outcomes

- Downstate Chapter Board members are representative of various regions covered by Chapter.

- Downstate Chapter Board members are involved and engaged in planning and delivering Chapter programs.
- Training and coaching to Downstate Chapter Board members and volunteers at least once each year by state IGFOA
- Mentoring of Downstate Chapter Board members by past presidents of Chapter
- Reliable, rolling training schedule developed and publicized at least 6 months in advance
- Quality training available within 100 miles of each Downstate chapter member at least once each year – and grow target to at least three times each year by end of five-year period.

Financial considerations

- State IGFOA will not charge a licensing fee for seminar materials or instructor training
- State IGFOA will provide staff support as outlined in plan, with expectation that as appropriate and with coaching, support functions will be taken on by Downstate Chapter volunteers
- State IGFOA and Downstate Chapter will divide positive net revenue from joint training programs 50/50, however IGFOA will bear responsibility for negative net revenue for the first three years, or up to \$5,000 in total, whichever comes first.

For Approval