



IGFOA presents the
Central Region Lunch and Learn: Salary & Benefit Costing Unlocked
Wednesday, May 20, 2026
Central Illinois Regional Airport at Bloomington

AGENDA

May 20, 2026

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| 11:30 AM - 11:50 AM | Registration and Networking |
| 11:45 AM - 12:00PM | Lunch is served |
| 12:00 PM – 11:50 PM | Salary & Benefit Costing Unlocked
Speakers: Molly Talkington, City of Rolling Meadows and Julie Zolghadr, Retired – City of Springfield |

This session provides an interactive exploration of governmental budgeting with a focus on salary and benefit costs—the largest and most predictable component of municipal budgets. Participants will examine how to accurately forecast personnel-related expenses, incorporate best practices from GFOA, and use internal and external comparables to support compensation decisions. Through guided discussion and exercises, attendees will connect key budget principles to their own municipal operations and gain tools for more transparent, data-driven fiscal management

Learning Objectives: *Participants completing this session will be able to:*

1. Understand the composition of total compensation and the impact of salary and benefit forecasting on overall budget stability;
2. Apply strategies for incorporating turnover, hiring lag, and collective bargaining changes into personnel cost projections; and
3. Evaluate the use of internal and external comparables to ensure equitable, competitive, and sustainable compensation practices.

Program Level: Intermediate

Prerequisites: Participants must understand governmental budgeting basics

Field of Study: Finance –Technical

NASBA CPE: Earn About 1 CPE

12:50 PM Closing Remarks

IGFOA reserves the right to modify the agenda, sessions, and speakers

Speakers' Biographical Information

Molly Talkington, MPA, Finance Director City of Rolling Meadows

Molly Talkington is currently the Finance Director for the City of Rolling Meadows, serving in that role since May 2022 and bringing 20 years of experience to the City. Prior to joining the City, she was the Finance Principal/Comptroller for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, an agency that focuses on regional transportation planning. She has held positions throughout the State, such as the Finance Director for the Village of East Dundee and the City of DeKalb, the Budget Officer for the City of Champaign, and the Budget Analyst in the City of Naperville.

Molly has a Master of Public Administration from Northern Illinois University and a Bachelor of Science in History from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She served as the Downstate Chapter President for the Illinois Government Finance Officers' Association (IGFOA). As a member of IGFOA and the Government Finance Officers' Association, she leads and moderates training sessions for other government professionals and continues to volunteer in other capacities for both organizations. She is the current President for the Government Finance Officers' Association's Women's Public Finance Network and a member of the Committee on Retirements and Benefits Administration. Most recently, she was appointed as a Commissioner of the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Pingree Grove and Countryside Fire Protection District.

Julie Zolghadr

Julie Zolghadr was a member of the budget staff for the City of Springfield since 1989 and served as the budget division manager since 1995. Her division oversaw the activities of 12 city agencies with a total annual budget of approximately \$260M across 40 funds. The division reviewed all spending documents, personnel transactions, pending legislation, and provided key support to the City's labor relations function through analyzing collective bargaining economic requests.

Julie is a regular presenter for Illinois Government Finance Officers Association, Illinois Municipal League, Illinois Municipal Clerks Association, Illinois Municipal Treasurers Association, and the Illinois Association of County Board Members. Most recently, she served as a presenter for the June 2022 Austin Texas national GFOA convention where she spoke to the looming issue of what happens after ARPA. She is an advocate of making budget information accessible, transparent, and understandable to all readers. Julie retired from the City of Springfield on May 5th, 2023, and has since become adept at drywall mudding, cleaning out closets, and yelling out the answers during Jeopardy.