

# **DIGFOA Central Region – Half Day Seminar Making a Local Impact: Securing Grants and Greenback Incentives**

**May 29, 2025**



## **Speaker Bios**

### **Jennie Urquiza-Whitiker, Senior Grants Coordinator, Peoria Police Department**

Jennie Urquiza-Whitiker is a distinguished learning and development leader with extensive expertise in grant writing and educational program development. Currently serving as the Grants Coordinator for the City of Peoria, Jennie has successfully secured over \$21 million in state and federal grants, including significant funding for initiatives like Co-Responder, VAWA and COVID Relief.

With a strong background in literacy training and educational leadership, she has dedicated over 20 years to enhancing learning environments and providing differentiated professional development. Jennie is also a doctoral candidate in Transformational Leadership, reflecting her commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in education and community development.

Her collaborative approach and proven track record in managing complex grant processes make her a sought-after speaker on topics related to funding strategies and educational program implementation. Jennie is also passionate about fostering cultures of learning and ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, making her insights invaluable for educators and administrators alike.

### **Seth Crackel, Strategic Energy Advisor, Nania Energy Advisors**

Seth Crackel is a Strategic Energy Advisor with Nania Energy Advisors, where he has spent the past three years helping clients navigate the complex energy landscape. He specializes in electricity and natural gas supply, Illinois utility tariffs, price hedging, and risk management. Seth works closely with public and private sector organizations on group purchasing, long-range planning, and market analysis to develop tailored strategies that reduce cost and manage risk.

### **Kristin Olson, Grant Writing Specialist, Grants Galore**

Kristin has submitted 670 grant proposals over the past 27 years. With a success rate of 55%, she has secured a quarter-billion dollars in grant funds and government contracts for nonprofit organizations and units of local government throughout the U.S. She lives and works in Pleasant Plains in Sangamon County, and enjoys singing, gardening, photography, and other activities that don't involve screen time.