# Strategic Planning Proposal For the Village of Winnebago, IL



July 2024

Prepared by: NIU Center for Governmental Studies Dekalb, Illinois





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Joey Dienberg, Village Administrator Village of Winnebago 108 West Main Street Winnebago, IL 61088

RE: Proposal to provide strategic planning services

Dear Mr. Dienberg:

In response to the Village's request for a proposal to facilitate the Village's strategic planning process, the following outline and approach are offered for your consideration. Based on recent discussions, our team proposes a series of exercises which are outlined below:

- Enable the Village to confirm the leadership's long-term vision and organizational direction;
- Review prior strategic plans and other necessary documents;
- Provide an environmental scanning analysis of the governing and community environment through focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders;
- Facilitate a strategic planning workshop(s) with the Village Board and senior staff to establish goals, and develop a strategic plan;
- Launch an action planning session of the consensus goals; and
- Provide an easy-to-understand strategic planning report and executive summary for use by the Board, staff, and broader community.

As the list of representative projects reflects, members of our proposed team, and the Center for Governmental Studies as a whole, have provided similar services for a variety of organizations, other agencies, and local governments across Illinois.

Thank you for the opportunity to be considered to assist the Village of Winnebago with this important undertaking. We would be pleased to meet further with the Village's leadership team to review our proposed approach, amplify the outline presented in the attached, and confirm the goals and expectations for the project.

Sincerely,

Melissa "Mel" Henriksen, MPP

Assistant Director

Melissa MS

Strategic Management, Policy, and Community Development

NIU Center for Governmental Studies

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# Village of Winnebago Strategic Planning and Environmental Scanning/Analysis Proposal

July 2024

Direct questions to

Melissa "Mel" Henriksen Assistant Director Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies

#### Strategic Planning

"The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and change amid order" - A.N. Whitehead

Strategic planning, at its core, is leadership's expression of the future. Whether it be a private or public organization, the world in which all organizations operate continues to rapidly change and grow more complicated as witnessed by the changing dynamics of our region, our state, the nation, and the globe.

The following proposal has been prepared as a follow up to conversations with the Village to develop a proposal to initiate a comprehensive strategic planning process for the Village of Winnebago (the "Village"). In response to the desires expressed by the Village, the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies ("NIU-CGS") is recommending a participative format enabling the Village's Board and senior staff to collaboratively gain insights, share perspectives, and undertake an exploration of organizational and community dynamics generating a consensus view of the Village's future. The result of the process will be a thorough discussion of stakeholder and leadership views of the Village's most critical goals, objectives, organizational arrangements, and priorities for both the short-and long-term.

#### INTRODUCTION

As the Village's leadership is aware, strategic planning initiatives are not a new phenomenon for progressive organizations. The value of such processes continues to be recognized by leaders at the policy and administrative levels in both private and public organizations. The world in which we all operate continues to rapidly change and grow more complicated. In turn, the challenges, and choices that the Village faces in establishing policies, providing vital services, and setting priorities are likewise more complex and challenging than ten years ago, five years ago--even one year ago. Like many organizations in the state and across the country, the Village's population and economic dynamics continue to evolve and change, and the services, programs, and policy actions necessary to meet its mission will continue to evolve. Consider some of the trends within and beyond the Village's borders: healthcare trends, the global pandemic, changing demographics, value shifts, growth, economic contraction, tax limitations, demands for service, funded and unfunded mandates, technology changes, etc. These are just a sample of the many factors that impact the how, what, when, where, and why of operating and providing services in today's civic environment.

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

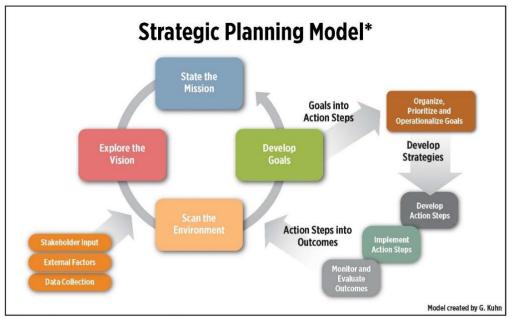
The framework presented outlines the recommended exercises and goal-setting techniques that will be employed to undertake a holistic review of the Village's strategic direction. A sound strategic planning process helps to focus leadership, energize the organization, and engage stakeholders. It should be seen as an avenue to not only map out the future, but also to foster a sense of ownership and boost the overall effectiveness in setting the course for the Village in partnership with the community.

Although the word "planning" appears in the description, it must be emphasized that the result of this process is not to create a plan that sits on a bookshelf like a trophy. Rather, the primary outcome is to foster strategic thinking and communication among Board members and senior staff leading to an evaluation of the current strategic plan components, including prioritized goals that incorporate the overall vision for the Village's short- and long-term future.

#### Strategic Planning Cycle: Scanning, Planning, and Action

Taken as a whole, the strategic planning process that is envisioned and described here can be represented in a model of the various steps and elements in a cycle of input, environmental scanning, goal setting, prioritization, action planning, and re-examination of the Village's progress.

An illustration of the strategic planning cycle described is presented below:



<sup>\*</sup> Model generally represents the steps that are taken for this type of initiative.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT COMPONENTS

#### Component A: Pre-Workshop – Strategic Planning Readiness

#### Virtual Kick-Off Session

As part of initiating actions and launching the project, the facilitator(s) will convene a project review kick-off meeting with the Village Administrator and other project staff designated or desired by the Village. The meeting will explore the following: (1) confirm expected outcomes; (2) review status of mission, vision, and values to determine the need for any updating; (3) review prior strategic plans and goals and determine how to best share the progress at the workshop(s) (if applicable); and (4) set project schedules and finalize the exercises and options included in the process.

#### Component B: Pre-Workshop – Environmental Scanning

#### Stakeholder and Background Information Gathering

This pre-workshop component is an important piece designed to help ground the process as listening is vital to planning. The project team will use various techniques for gathering background data ranging from desktop review of documents to interviews and preparatory group discussions. These steps are an important part of "taking stock" by the project team to help understand current policy and operational perspectives, perceptions, and preferences.

The avenues identified for collecting and involving internal and external stakeholders to gain inputs and perspectives include interviews and focus groups and one optional component – a demographic and community analysis. The proposed work plan highlights the key organizational and stakeholder groups that should be considered for input for the Village as a whole. Each technique has its own strengths and outcomes, and each requires different time commitments, data collection efforts, and analysis which are explained below and reflected in the final scope and cost.

**Interviews** are an interactive/source-focused approach that provides participants with an opportunity to share personal perspectives at a 1-1, or 1-2 level with a professional interviewer. It results in highly personalized participation and the in-depth sharing of ideas. It is the most laborintensive approach to gathering stakeholder input. A list of 5-6 key questions will be developed to help guide discussions. The focus of the interview sessions is to gain an initial perspective by building a balanced and informed view of the Village, from each stakeholder's unique vantage point.

**Focus groups** are also an interactive approach that helps assure broad participation and the sharing of ideas in a non-threatening group environment created by the facilitator. Participants are led through a structured but informal discussion that will focus on discussion questions that highlight key areas of insight for the process. The advantage of focus groups is the efficiency of gaining multiple insights at one time, the dynamic discussion that takes place among multiple participants, and the robust nature of the comments. Similar to the interview approach, the aim of the focus group sessions is to gain a balanced and informed view of the Village from each stakeholder's unique perspective. The ideal size for focus groups is approximately 12-15 participants, lasting approximately 60-90 minutes.

#### Suggested Background Interviews and Focus Groups

Virtual and in-person options are available\*

#### Organization Views

- Village Senior Staff and Leadership
  - Village Administrator (1 interview, 60 minutes)
  - Village President (1 interview, 45-60 minutes)
  - Board of Trustees (4 individual interviews, 30 minutes each)
  - Village Clerk (optional, 1 interview, 30 minutes)
  - Mix of front-line and supervisory staff (1 focus group)
    - o If preferred, senior-level/dept. head staff interviews can be conducted and focus group can be for front-mid-line staff only

#### ➤ Community Views and Perspectives

- Community Stakeholders
  - Civic/Intergovernmental Institutions (e.g., secular community, non-profits, School District, Library District, etc.) (1 focus group)
  - Business Community (cross-section of varying size, industry, tenure, etc.) (1 focus group)
  - Invitational Resident (cross-section of residents including diversity in age, gender, race, geography, residential tenure, etc.) (1 focus group)

#### Data Analysis and Thematic Summarization of Stakeholder Input

• NIU-CGS will provide a summary of themes and key issues/desires as expressed by stakeholder focus groups and interviews.

# Demographic Data Analysis and Community Profile for Jurisdictions with <5,000 Residents (optional component)

The demographic and community profile can offer insights on often overlooked demographic and economic community dynamics. Changing demographics play a crucial role in the service expectations of the community. Planning for policies, programs, infrastructure, staff, and services are unavoidably linked to the socio-demographic character of a community. The following outline is suggested for jurisdictions with less than 5,000 residents. Much of the demographic and housing information depends on a survey by the U.S. Census Bureau that is highly susceptible to uncertainty and sampling error in smaller communities. For example, the American Community Survey might show an estimate of 10% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino, with a margin of error of +/- 30%. E.g., the percentage could range anywhere from 40% to 0%. To give smaller communities actionable data without these limitations, we offer a simplified demographic profile that does not rely as heavily on sample-based data collections. Separate costs for this optional component are listed in the Budget section.

#### Population Trends:

- Estimated total population over time 2010 2023
- Median age range

- Race/ethnicity profile from 2020 Census (full count of population)
- Median household income range
- Average household size range

#### Property Tax Base Characteristics:

- Equalized Assessed Valuation trends by property type:
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Residential

#### Commuting and Employment Base Profile:

- Inflow/outflow of workers and residents
- Profile of Village resident workers
  - Work location
  - Industry profile
- Profile of Village workers
  - Work location
  - Industry profile

#### Component C: Strategic Planning Leadership Workshop(s)

#### Board and Senior Staff Workshop Agenda

Five to six contact hours needed, on average\*

- Mission Affirmation and Vision Review
  - Affirmation: what is our raison d'etre or mission?
  - Review, affirm, or adjustments: what is our vision of the future for the Village, the community?
    - Imagine the Village 5, 10, 15 years from now...
- Stakeholder Input Analysis
  - Presentation of summary of themes identified by stakeholder focus groups and interviews. Would also include a demographic analysis summary if selected.
- Environmental Scanning Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (S.W.O.C.)
  - Part I: Small group S.W.O.C. Analysis warm-up exercise
  - Part II: Large group S.W.O.C. Analysis
    - Identify internal strengths and weaknesses
    - Identify external opportunities and challenges
- Strategic Goal Review and Development
  - Development of short- and long-term goals from exploration of key issues discussion.
  - Categorization of goals (routine or complex and short- or long-term)

## Agenda options include:

- ✓ One weeknight (3:00 p.m.– 9:00 p.m.);
- ✓ One weekday (9:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m.); OR
- ✓ Two weeknights (6:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. each night)

#### Component D: Post-Workshop Follow Up - Goal Prioritization

#### **Goal Prioritization**

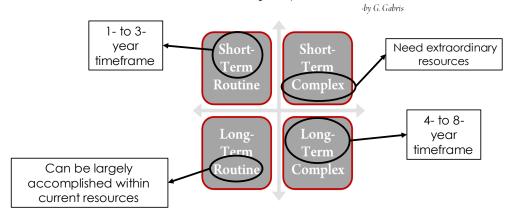
- Goal refinement and consolidation as needed and development of strategic priority areas with Village staff and the CGS project team
- Online ranking/goal prioritization can be conducted with all workshop participants or the Village Board only, if preferred
- Goal ranking survey results prepared and shared with Village leadership

#### **Goal Prioritization Process Overview**

Following the classification exercise, the Village Board (or all workshop participants) will be asked, through a post-workshop *online* exercise, to delineate why certain goals should be given high priority, and some, although worthy, should receive lower priority. Point values will be assigned to each goal within each quadrant of the classification matrix. The resulting consensus ranking of short- and long-term goals will be the outcome of this phase of the process.

Goals can be classified as short-term (1- to 3-year timeframe) or long-term (4- to 8+-year timeframe) and as complex and routine. As a reminder, **Routine goals** are not simple or easy but could largely be accomplished by the organization with required budget and staffing allocations, and/or with minor external assistance. **Complex goals** are complicated/multi-layered goals that require extraordinary resources such as technical specialists, funding, the collaboration/agreement of another unit of government, or an outside organization, business, or agency.

#### Time and Complexity Goal Classification Grid



#### Component E: Post-Workshop Implementation Review – Action Planning Launch

- Presentation of tools and techniques implementation launch in the organization
- Operationalizing the goals clarification of goals statements
- Structural assignments and goal coordination responsibilities
- Scheduling of start dates, milestones, and status reports
- Approaches for action steps/work plans

#### FINAL REPORT

A final report documenting both the process and outcomes will be provided to the administrative leadership for approval. A standalone executive summary will also be produced. Both will be provided in electronic form.

#### **ESTIMATED RANGE OF COSTS**

The base strategic planning project cost, including all project components (A–E) is estimated at \$18,500–\$19,900. The estimated costs presented here would include professional/analytical fees and project expenses (including mileage/travel) for all phases of the base project, from inception through action planning launch, including background research, process design, environmental scanning, analyses, leadership workshop team facilitation, and all related project expenses. The range is representative of the scope of options including the number of focus groups and interviews selected as well as the number of workshops required. A more definitive budget can be provided after discussions on final components.

Project Phase/Element	Project Budget
Component A: Pre-Workshop – Strategic Planning Readiness	
Component B: Pre-Workshop – Environmental Scanning	
Component C: Strategic Planning Leadership Workshop(s)	
Component D: Post-Workshop – Goal Prioritization	
Component E: Post-Workshop – Action Planning Launch	
Final Designed Report and Executive Summary	
Total Base Cost for Strategic Planning Process	\$18,500 - \$19,900
Optional Add-On Project Components & Associated Cost Estimates	
Demographic Data Gathering and Analyses	\$3,300-3,500

\*Please note: Additional components or tasks would represent an additional research effort and will result in additional costs beyond the cost estimate presented and will be charged at a rate of \$140 per hour for professional staff, \$60 per hour for support and technical staff, plus related expenses. CGS will advise the client before starting any additional work and secure authorization to proceed before undertaking additional assignments.

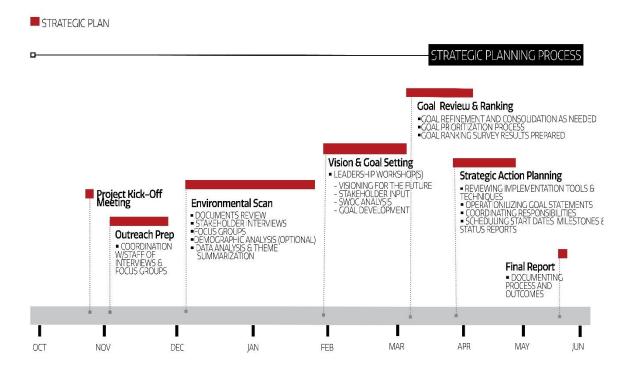
The Village will be responsible for securing and reviewing meeting sites and/or coordinating with NIU-CGS all online and in-person notices, invitations, and postings. The Village will also be responsible for reviewing, securing, and funding any costs for facilities and refreshments, including technology or equipment, room rentals and setup, supplies, and/or other logistical items for all workshops and project sessions. The Village should check with its legal counsel to make sure all meeting postings and formats are consistent with any Open Meetings Act requirements and procedures.

#### PROPOSED TIMELINE

The workshops and meetings for the 2024 strategic plan will be held on dates that are mutually convenient for both the Village's participants and the NIU-CGS lead facilitator and project team. The anticipated start date for the project is October/November 2024.

## WINNEBAGO PROJECT TIMELINE ESTIMATES

The Project Timeline below illustrates how the Strategic Planning process will be coordinated throughout the duration of the project timeframe. In addition, certain outcomes will inform subsequent phases of the planning process.



\*\*Estimated duration – dates are to be determined and are subject to the facilitator(s) and the Village's project team's availability, progress of exercises, and return of requested data or decisions from the Village. The timeline may vary based on optional and/or any additional components selected.

The project completion date is dependent on the scope of services selected, the timing and sequence of the various planning components, timely communication, and the scheduling of workshops that permit the gathering and analysis of stakeholder input prior to the leadership workshop. A series of pre-workshop discussion session(s), a five- to six-hour strategic planning workshop(s), and a two-hour follow up action planning launch session with the Village Administrator and staff or other leaders are included in the planned base project meeting activities.

#### APPROVAL/ACCEPTANCE

An engagement letter between the Center for Governmental Studies and the Village of Winnebago with a final scope of services, proposed fees, expenses, and terms, will be prepared upon Village approval and acceptance of the final project framework and approach.

#### REFERENCES AND REPRESENTATIVE PROJECTS

Representative strategic planning projects in Illinois led by Greg Kuhn, Mel Henriksen, CGS, and team members include:

Representative strategic planning projects in Illinois led by Greg Kuhn, Mel Henriksen, CGS, and team members include:

- 1. Village of Elburn, IL
- 2. City of Villa Grove, IL
- 3. City of Farmer City, IL
- 4. City of Rochelle, IL
- 5. Hanover Township, IL

#### Contacts:

- 1. John Nevenhoven, Village Administrator, Village of Elburn, <u>jnevenhoven@elburn.il.us</u>, 630-365-5062
- 2. Jacki Athey, City Administrator, City of Villa Grove, jacki.athey@villagrove.org, 272-832-4721
- 3. Sue McLaughlin, City Manager, City of Farmer City, <a href="mailto:smclaughlin@cityoffarmercity.org">smclaughlin@cityoffarmercity.org</a>, 309-928-2842
- 4. Jeff Fiegenschuh, City Manager, City of Rochelle, jfiegenschuh@rochelleil.us, 815-562-6161
- 5. James Barr, Township Administrator, Hanover Township, jbarr@hanover-township.org, 630-837-0301

Additional strategic planning projects in Illinois led by Dr. Kuhn or undertaken by CGS include the Villages of Burr Ridge, Park Ridge, North Aurora, Orland Park, West Dundee, Northfield, Carol Stream, Glen Ellyn, Long Grove, Deer Park, Pingree Grove, Sugar Grove, Winfield, Woodridge, Riverside, the Cities of DeKalb, Dixon, Des Plaines, Normal, Geneva and St. Charles, the Lindenhurst Park District, the Naperville Park District, the DeKalb Park District, the Elburn-Countryside Fire Protection District, Oswego Fire Protection District, Bartlett Fire Protection District, Carol Stream Fire Protection District, the Schaumburg Fire Dept., Peoria, and Winnebago County.

#### MISSION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF NIU AND CGS



NIU's Center for Governmental Studies, founded in 1969, is a public service, applied research, and public policy development organization that recently celebrated 54 years of public service. Its mission is to provide expertise that helps decision-makers implement efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches to economic, social, governance, public policy, and information management issues.

CGS' research and services include work in a variety of areas including community and economic development, workforce development, strategic and comprehensive planning, public management and training, association management, informatics, survey research, data visualization, and health and technology engagement. Clients include municipal, county, state, and federal agencies, as well as nonprofit and for-profit organizations. For more information, please call 815-753-0914 or visit www.cgs.niu.edu.

CGS has established itself as the center of choice for civic organizations in Northern Illinois needing to gather, analyze and operationalize information from their constituents. Assistance has been provided to state and federal agencies, colleges and universities, school districts, libraries, park districts and municipalities as well as a variety of other organizations. Since its founding, CGS has provided expertise to help decision-makers throughout Illinois implement efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches to public policy, public and strategic management, social, economic and information management issues. As noted above, this expertise is made available to all levels of governmental entities, private enterprises, public-private partnerships, and other types of institutions such as higher education.

As part of NIU's Division of Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development (OERD), CGS fulfills its outreach and engagement mission through public service, applied research, technical assistance, and public policy development activities that are supported by interdisciplinary teams.

#### **CGS TEAM DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project team will consist of seasoned specialists and researchers with extensive experience conducting strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, survey research, data assessments, and leadership training. In addition to these core team members, other expertise within CGS will be used for various aspects of the project (i.e., project management and analysis, data research, etc.).

#### CGS PROJECT TEAM – FACILITATORS AND ANALYSTS



Greg Kuhn, Ph.D., Director. Dr. Kuhn is a former Village Manager who now conducts research, teaches, and consults with governmental units in Illinois and across the Midwest. Dr. Kuhn completed his doctoral studies mid-career with emphasis in Public Administration at the Local Government Level, Organization Development and Public Policy at Northern Illinois University. Greg served as Village Manager in Clarendon Hills, Illinois, and Asst. To the Manager in Skokie, Illinois. Greg has also provided organizational and leadership services to governments on a consulting basis as Director of Local Government Management Services at Sikich, LLP., Managing Vice-President of the PAR Group, and Senior Associate in Governmental Services at Korn-Ferry International.

Greg has taught a variety of courses at both NIU and Northwestern including graduate courses in strategic planning, leadership, human resources, budgeting, and public policy, earning two teaching awards at both schools. In total, Dr. Kuhn has over 43 years of public management experience as an administrator, consultant, and instructor. Greg is a specialist in strategic planning, organizational development and design, governance, and training.



Melissa Henriksen, MPP, Assistant Director of Strategic Management, Policy, and Community Development. Ms. Henriksen has a diverse background including strategic and comprehensive planning, economic and community development, technical assistance, rural health care research and grant writing. She is a specialist in the areas of strategic planning, conducting focus groups, wage and benefit studies and asset/needs assessments, community and economic development, and rural health research. Mel has led or co-facilitated strategic planning efforts for municipalities, non-profits, schools and other districts, boards of directors, and institutes of higher education. For the past 16 years, she has managed funded projects for the

Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN), the National Association of Development Agencies (NADO), the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as state and local organizations focused on economic and community development and health care. These projects included coordinating surveys, community focus groups, strategic planning to identify potential challenges and solutions, demographic analysis and distilling themes and findings from a variety of qualitative information to share with key stakeholders.

Mel holds a B.A. degree in Political Communication and Public Relations and a master's degree in public policy, both from the University of Northern Iowa. Mel is a former Board member for the Illinois Rural Health Association and chaired its Research, Education and Conference Committee. In addition, she is a former Kettering Foundation Research Fellow and received the ICAHN Service Award for her research in rural health care and its economic impact on rural communities. Mel has been a speaker for several Civic Leadership Academy (CLA) classes and has taught courses at NIU and Kishwaukee College including strategic performance management and American government.



Jeanna Ballard, MPA, Senior Research Specialist. Ms. Ballard has a varied background in strategic and comprehensive planning, technical assistance, and performance improvement studies. She has helped facilitate strategic planning workshops, focus groups, interviews, organizational design reviews, leadership development seminars, and compensation analyses. Jeanna has co-facilitated strategic planning for elected officials, non-profits, municipalities, counties, townships, park districts, libraries, council of governments, and institutes of higher education. For the past two years, Jeanna has provided staff support for funded projects for the Illinois Critical

Access Hospital Network (ICAHN). Most recently, she has worked on local government strategic planning initiatives. These projects included coordinating online surveys, community focus groups, goal development sessions, identifying potential challenges and solutions, and distilling themes from a variety of quantitative and qualitative information to share with key stakeholders.

Jeanna holds a dual MPA degree via her joint studies at Northern Illinois University and Renmin University of China in Beijing. She joined the Center for Governmental Studies in 2017 and serves as an elected Representative on NIU's Supportive Professional Staff Council and is the Chair of the Advocacy Committee. Jeanna has seven years of public service experience serving in local, county, and federal levels of government and is a former Banovetz Fellow. Jeanna has also been a speaker for several Civic Leadership Academy (CLA) classes and taught courses at NIU in public service leadership and management.



Alli Hoebing, MPA, Research Specialist. Ms. Hoebing is a research specialist focusing on Association and Public Management. Alli graduated from NIU's Master of Public Administration program with an emphasis in local government administration. As an undergraduate at NIU, Alli was a member of the Pre-Law Honors Society and collegiate Mock Trial team, majoring in political science, public law, and communication.

At CGS, Alli works with both the Strategic Management, Policy, and Community Development and the Associations Management teams,

including the Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA) and affiliates, the Wisconsin City/County Management Association (WCMA), the American Planning Association's Illinois Chapter (APA-IL), and serves as the Executive Director of the Illinois Local Government Lawyers Association (ILGL). In her work with associations, Alli assists with conferences, committees, financial reports, research and analytics, and strategic planning.

Other Project Staff and Support – Dr. Kuhn and the project team will also be joined and assisted by other staff members of the Center for Governmental Studies and the University for certain project elements or at critical junctures of the project.