



Together, let's strengthen business and financial acumen in local government.

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Program Description

This next level program is designed for professionals (and elected officials) committed to deepening their understanding of financial sustainability within local government, particularly in the realm of quality of life services.

Through an engaging and practical learning journey, participants will take a deep dive into topics such as:

- understanding cost of service
- investment versus consumption spending
- the tension between stability and growth
- the “oh s*#t moments” of taxes and math
- productively engaging community and policy makers
- policy development, design and adoption

Through applied learning, peer dialogue, and practical methods and tools, participants will emerge better prepared to lead with clarity and advocate for financially sustainable decision making. The journey concludes with actionable takeaways and support for “what’s next” in each learner’s unique path.

Note: Completion of part one of the Financial Sustainability Certificate Program is recommended but not required.

Overview of Program Agenda

Day 1

8:30 am Check In and Continental Breakfast
9:00 am Program Starts
12:00 pm Lunch
3:30 pm Day 1 Concludes

Day 2

8:30 am Continental Breakfast
9:00 am Day 2 Begins
12:00 pm Lunch
3:30 pm Day 2 Concludes

Day 3

8:30 am Continental Breakfast
9:00 am Day 3 Begins
12:00 pm Program Concludes

Program Schedule & Topical Outline

1. Understanding Costs and Cost of Service – a Deep Dive
2. Investment and Consumption Spending & Return on Investment
3. Where Quality of Life Services Fit
4. Stability V. Growth
5. Taxes & Math – The Oh S*#T Moment
6. Funding That Makes Sense
7. Engaging Community & Policy Makers
8. Policy Development, Design & Adoption
9. Ideal Scope of Work – Bringing it Full Circle
10. Taking Action
11. Learner Retention
12. Where Will You Go From Here?
13. Evaluation & Program Close

Program Instructors



Jamie Sabbach has spent her entire adult life serving the local government. Afforded opportunities few will ever have, she has been a practitioner, an educator, and consultant. She speaks from a place of experience, realism, and observation.

Jamie has taught hundreds of professional development and training programs across North America and Europe and has had the privilege of testifying in front of the United States Congress on the critical importance of public lands and recreation.

She currently works alongside organizations from coast to coast assisting them in creating financially sustainable service models for their communities. She also teaches financial management at Indiana University in the School of Public Health's master's program.



Kevin Shepherd began his career as a civil engineer designing infrastructure and development projects before transitioning into community planning where he worked on master plans and sustainability strategies for cities across North America. He realized that very few cities had the money needed to maintain services and infrastructure, and that shifts needed to be made to get back on a fiscally sustainable path.

Kevin founded Verdunity in 2011 to focus on helping communities understand and address these challenges because he believes everyone deserves to live in a prosperous and vibrant neighborhood at a cost they can afford. Verdunity's work has been featured by national organizations including the American Planning Association (APA), Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), International City/County Management Association (ICMA), as well as advocacy organizations including Strong Towns and Bloomberg.

Program Locations & Dates



Illinois Association of Park Districts/Illinois Park & Recreation Association

July 22nd – 24th, 2025

Location: Addison Park District's Community Recreation Center
120 E. Oak St.
Addison, IL 60101



California Park & Recreation Society

September 30th – October 2nd, 2025

Location: Napa Valley College Library, Community Room