



State of Illinois  
Department of Central Management Services

# 2021 NASPEs

## Eva N. Santos Communications Award



WomenIn Series



# 2021 NASPEs AWARD

## *Eva N. Santos Communication Awards*

Nominations from dues-paying states are considered for eligibility. Nominated leaders and programs should have a positive effect on the administration of state human resource programs. A state's central human resource department or line agency human resource operations may administer nominated programs.

Programs and projects must have been operational for at least six months and must be transferable to other states. Selection criteria are based on the questions asked on the award application. Included in this packet are the specific criteria for each award and their categories. Nominations are encouraged in all areas of human resource management administration.

Additionally, please provide the project initiative in one of the following formats:  
[cms.illinois.gov/whm](https://cms.illinois.gov/whm)

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### **NOMINATION INFORMATION**

Title of Nomination: WomenIn Series                      State: IL  
Contact Person: Marjani Williams  
Contact's Title: Deputy Director of Communications & Information  
Agency: Illinois Department of Central Management Services  
Mailing Address: 100 West Randolph – Suite 400, Chicago, IL 60601  
Telephone: (312) 485-2705      Fax: N/A  
E-mail: Marjani.williams@illinois.gov

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### **NOMINATOR INFORMATION**

Nominator: Sarah Kerley                      Title: Chief Administrative Officer  
State: IL    Agency: Department of Central Management Services  
Telephone: (312) 718-1317      Fax: N/A  
E-mail: Sarah.Kerley@Illinois.gov

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#### **ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST:**

Meet all eligibility requirements. • Meet deadline requirements stated on the NASPE website. • Be entered in the correct category and be correctly identified. • Include a complete nomination packet. • Conform to all copyright laws.

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### DETAILS

#### 1. Please provide a brief description of the submission.

Since 2019, the Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) has increased its efforts to celebrate and recognize diversity in the workplace. One prime example, CMS recognized **Women's History Month** by hosting its largest monthlong celebration to date, featuring women in government, business and all areas of leadership. This celebration was developed to support our efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in public service and statewide hiring. To support employee recognition and engagement efforts, standout women at CMS were also recognized by their managers for their exemplary work and support in agency operations. The CMS **Women's History Month** celebration kicked off on March 8, 2021 with an internal event, *The View from CMS*, in recognition of International Women's Day and continued throughout the month, with the **WomenIn** series.

**WomenIn** featured panel discussions and one-on-one interviews with women leaders in and at all levels of government operations (local, state and federal), Law, public safety, communications, technology, innovation, wealth generation and strategic planning. CMS closed out the month on March 31, 2021 as a co-sponsor of Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton's **We Are One: Advocating for Self-Care** event which featured an engaging panel discussion about the ways that women and girls can practice self-care and advocate for healthier outcomes related to their mind, body and soul.

The success of this program was in no small part due to a comprehensive, well-deployed communications strategy. The **WomenIn** imaging was consistently implemented through fliers, social media posts, website content, program invitations, and follow-up messages.



For more information about how this communication plan was implemented, including links to fliers, session recordings and interviews, please visit [cms.illinois.gov/whm](https://cms.illinois.gov/whm).

#### 2. How long has the submission been in existence?

Illinois Department of Central Management Services has placed greater emphasis on promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace since 2019. The **WomenIn** series was launched in March 2021 and was an explicit opportunity to promote women in the workplace and serve as a recruiting tool.

#### 3. Why was this submission created?

March is the month when we gratefully remember renowned women in our history who have made life better for us all – those who have striven continuously, often at great personal cost, for fairness and equity, and those who have used the equity thus secured to accomplish great things in government, in business, in science, in the arts, and to contribute caringly to the quality of life for all.

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We recognized this as a great opportunity to demonstrate the diverse fields in which women have excelled, inspire other women to pursue leadership roles, and create an impact on the development of self-respect and new opportunities for young women.

Every State is full of female leaders, whose journey and experience can serve as a beacon to other women in their field and across industries. CMS's **WomenIn** series featured many distinguished panelists, including:

	<b>Margaret Weichert</b> <i>Managing Director, Accenture Former Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget Former Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management</i>		<b>Andrea Zopp</b> <i>Former Deputy Mayor, City of Chicago Former President and CEO, World Business Chicago Former President and CEO, Chicago Urban League</i>
	<b>Leslie Scott</b> <i>Executive Director National Association of State Personnel Executives</i>		<b>Annette Nance-Holt</b> <i>Commissioner Chicago Fire Department</i>
	<b>Danielle DuMerer</b> <i>Vice President of Technology, John G. Shedd Aquarium Former Chief Information Officer, City of Chicago</i>		<b>Dr. Ngozi Ezike</b> <i>Director Illinois Department of Public Health</i>
	<b>Carole L. Brown</b> <i>Head of Asset Management, The PNC Financial Services Group Former CFO, City of Chicago Board member, Chicago Transit Authority</i>		<b>Jamie Rodgers, MPA</b> <i>Deputy Director National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA)</i>
	<b>Maryam Ahman</b> <i>President, Chicago Bar Association</i>		<b>Alicia Tate-Nadeau</b> <i>Director, Illinois Department of Emergency Management Retired Brigadier General, Illinois National Guard</i>
	<b>Jenn Rosato Perea</b> <i>Dean, DePaul University College of Law School</i>		

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**Women's History Month** provides a valuable opportunity to gather these examples of excellence, allow them to share their stories, and provide support for other women. Joining forces with groups like Cleveland Ave, City of Chicago, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Brown Brothers Harriman Center for Women & Wealth (CW&W), and Cook County State's Attorney's Office (see the full list [HERE](#)), and co-sponsors National Association of State Chief Administrators and the National Association of State Personnel Executives, allowed us to broaden our reach and to bolster the quality of our program.

This was our largest and most robust communications strategy in support of a recognition month. Its success laid the foundation for more and varied communications in support of other programming in the future.

#### **4. How does this submission support the goals and objectives of your agenda/department?**

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services is firmly committed to creating a workforce that reflects the State of Illinois' diversity and leverages the knowledge, creativity, and determination of our staff to advance the Administration's priorities. CMS has built and will continue to foster an inclusive agency that treats each employee with respect and dignity and feels empowered to serve the residents and State agencies of Illinois.

Pursuing excellence through diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is a primary focus of our agency. Our commitment to these values is unwavering and CMS leadership understands that if inequities exist, we have work to do. We must continue to strengthen our efforts to ensure a more equitable environment.

Our mission and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is to develop equity-based inclusion strategies that will ensure all have the right to the same fair treatment and level of services. It is a work environment that is expected from our top leadership and that is reflective of the many diverse populations who call this great State of Illinois home. Celebrating diversity in the workplace is consistent with our diversity, equity, and inclusion plan.

#### **5. Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of this submission? If so, how?**

While we do not have specific analytics, we had fantastic participation and follow-up from participants across the State enterprise, as well as with our external partners. Anecdotally, various (male and female) interviewees have mentioned our **WomenIn** programming as content and messaging that resonated with them during the recruitment process.

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