

Speaker Biographies and Abstracts

Keynote Speaker:

Sandi Fowler, City of Cedar Rapids, IA, Deputy City Manager

Sandi Fowler has served in the City Manager’s Office since 2008, was promoted to Assistant City Manager in December 2012, and was recently named Deputy City Manager. In twenty-eight years with the City of Cedar Rapids, Fowler has also served as the Assistant to the Public Safety Commissioner (1990-1999), Neighborhood Liaison (2000-2008), and Assistant to the City Manager (2008-2012).



In February 2014, Fowler’s responsibilities were expanded to include supervision of the Development Services Departments which include Public Works, Building Services, Community Development, Transit, and the Development Services Team. Fowler provided leadership to City facility flood recovery projects and served as project lead for the City Hall renovation and City Services Center building.

Fowler received a BBA in Management from Mount Mercy University in 1993, and a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from Upper Iowa University in 2008. In 2015, Fowler attended the Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program at Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Abstract

Cedar Rapids: Data and Tools Used in Planning and Carrying Out a Successful Resilience Strategy

June 2008 brought to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a millennial flood that surpassed the Cedar River’s flood stage by nearly 20 feet, 11 feet above the 79-year-old record. A city with 130,000 population, the disaster resulted in \$5.4 billion in community-wide damage, more than 310 City facilities damaged or destroyed, and more than 10 square miles of the city underwater, including downtown and nearby neighborhoods. The past ten years have seen a \$1.064 billion recovery that included more than 1,400 buyouts of residential and commercial property to remove residents from harm’s way, and the revitalization of city facilities and the community. Cedar Rapids has worked tirelessly to leverage data about area residents, properties destroyed, and rebuilding that needed to occur to successfully recover from this major disaster. Today, Cedar Rapids is continuing to build back stronger and better through the funding and construction of a \$550 million flood control system. The data and tools Cedar Rapids used, and those they wished they had, will be shared as part of this community’s success story.