



# Illinois Pensions Newsletter

A PUBLICATION OF IPPFA

May 2026

[ABOUT IPPFA](#)

[HEROES FAMILY FUND](#)

[WEBSITE](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

[Heroes Family Fund Topgolf Charity Event](#)

[MidAmerican Pension Conference](#)

## ONLINE TRAINING

[Online 16 Hour Certified Trustee Program](#)

[Online 8 Hour Seminar](#)

## A Special Message from Former IPPFA President, James McNamee



Dear Friends:

As I wrap up my time as the founder and president of IPPFA, I would like to extend my thanks to all current and former members and sponsors who have helped make the Illinois Public Pension Fund Association to the organization it is today.

When I was a trustee of my police department's pension fund back in the early 1980's, I knew that something more was needed to ensure a best practices approach to the fulfillment of our fiduciary duties to pensioners and our public retirement plans. Founded in 1985, initially as a police pension fund group, we grew to add our fire/EMS brothers and sisters in 1995. Today we have 485 of the

"downstate" police and fire funds as members of IPPFA as well as Chicago fire and police and some of the other large Chicago and Cook County retirement systems.

Our key missions have always been board training, legislation monitoring, and assisting pension funds and first-responders with any of their needs. Along the way, here are just a few of the highlights that stand out.

**Establishment of Supplemental Retirement Plans.** Retirement is greatly enhanced when workers save and invest their own money and do what they can to reduce retiree medical costs. IPPFA, through the newly named NPPFA Benefits Division, created a qualified Section 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, emphasizing reasonable fees, well-diversified investment options and a strong commitment to education and member services. Likewise, our voluntary employee beneficiary association (VEBA) and trust arrangements assist employees in setting aside money for retiree insurance and other medical costs. The tax savings on this latter program contributes greatly to reducing the impact of retiree medical coverage.

### **IPPFA Heroes Family Fund: Helping Member Funds Assist Those Who Serve Us.**

The Fund was established in 2003 and is overseen by the IPPFA President and Board of Directors. Initial funding came from a gift from the late pension fund attorney Richard Puchalski and donations from individuals, institutions, estates and special events have grown the fund. The Heroes Family Fund has paid over \$250,000 in benefits to over 50 families.

The largest grants of \$5,000 are paid for line-of-duty death or severe injury. IPPFA can get these benefits quickly to people when they need them.

**Post-Traumatic Stress.** In 2018, IPPFA became aware of state funding available to assist law enforcement. Our efforts led to the creation of a two-day training program by IPPFA and Northern Illinois University to assist police officers in expanding their knowledge of post-traumatic stress disorders. The program was offered from 2019 to 2022 at no charge. The seminars were conducted by a licensed clinical psychologist with the assistance of sworn personnel with substantial careers in public safety.

As the program progressed, it was expanded to include fire/EMS personnel as well sheriff's officers and 9-1-1 personnel. Programs in the western part of the state were extended to Iowa and Missouri first-responders. In total, twenty training sessions were conducted across Illinois and 733 first responders were trained. This program was highly rated by those who attended and the impact will be felt for years to come.

**Internal Revenue Code Compliance.** The IPPFA was instrumental in forming the IRS Qualified Plan Coalition which obtained a "qualified plan" IRS determination for the Downstate police and fire systems. By forming this coalition, we protected the tax-exempt status of the plans. While not our goal at the time, this qualified ruling later became crucial to supporting contributions made by members who took advantage of police-to-police portability and fire-to-fire reciprocity. It is estimated that each downstate police and fire pension fund saved \$20,000 in IRS and professional fees by having the IPPFA-led coalition obtain the qualified plan ruling.

**Expanded Member Training and Communication.** IPPFA offers programs to assist public safety professionals in understanding their retirement benefits and preparing for retirement. Emphasis is placed on subjects where the public employee is different than private sector workers, such as Social Security and 457(b) savings plans. A key program element is our IPPFA Retirement Guide. This book covers the basics of the Downstate pension systems, Social Security, deferred compensation and retiree healthcare savings. Thousands have been sold and the book has been updated twice as laws change. A companion book, the Chicago Police and Fire Retirement Guide, provides information for Chicago PD and FD personnel.

In a major communication outreach nationwide, IPPFA played a key role in educating police/fire retirees on an important tax break for public safety retirees' medical insurance premiums. We heard from across the country that retirees were made aware of this tax savings because of IPPFA outreach.

**Research Projects.** IPPFA has undertaken research projects on issues that will assist pension boards as well as police and fire retirees and active employees preparing for retirement. Projects have included a survey on second careers after retirement, pension obligation bonds, medical insurance options at Medicare age, the concept and potential pitfalls of investment portfolio consolidation and the use of revenue-producing public assets to fund pensions.

**Concluding.** And all of this was in addition to our annual training, trustee certification and special programs for members and municipal officials and the ongoing support given to every member fund by the President, Board of Directors and our staff.

I knew something good would happen when people joined together to support the goal of retirement security for those who have dedicated their careers to the safety of others. I did not expect it to grow this big or be this successful. For that, I humbly extend my thanks to all who contributed: directors, sponsors, legislators, advisors, staff members and the community of public pension professionals across the country. I hope that I will continue to see you, remain part of the dialog and continue to make any small contribution I can to public employee retirement security.

Yours truly,  
James McNamee  
Former IPPFA President

## NEWS LINKS

[Workers' and retirees' confidence for a comfortable retirement continues to decline amid fears of changing government programs](#)

[House approves redistricting amendment, fearing federal Voting Rights Act will be eliminated](#)

[Court shoots down bid by IL judges to undo Tier 2 pension reforms](#)

[What Comes Next in LACERA v County of LA & the Stakes for Trustee](#)

[Costs of state employee health benefits continue steep rise](#)

[CMS Finalizes 2027 Medicare Advantage and Part D Payment Policies that Strengthen Accountability and Long-Term Sustainability](#)

[Understanding food noise - and how to turn down the volume](#)

## UPCOMING PENSION TRUSTEE TRAININGS

### 2026 MidAmerican Pension Conference

*September 30 - October 2, 2026*



### Marriott Schaumburg

50 N. Martingale Rd.  
Schaumburg, IL 60173

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

## Heroes Spotlight: Patrol Officer Jaimie Cox



### **Rockford Police Department End of Watch: November 5th, 2017**

Patrol Officer Jaimie Cox of the Rockford Police Department made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty on November 5, 2017, during a traffic stop near the intersection of East State Street and Dawn Avenue in Rockford, Illinois.

At approximately 1:00 a.m., the vehicle involved in the stop attempted to flee, dragging Officer Cox before crashing two blocks north of the initial location. Despite sustaining critical injuries, Officer Cox demonstrated extraordinary resilience and dedication by calling for assistance. Responding officers located him near the crash scene, and he was transported to a nearby hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries.

The driver of the fleeing vehicle was found deceased inside the vehicle from a gunshot wound sustained during the incident.

Officer Cox was a proud veteran of the United States Army National Guard and had served with the Rockford Police Department for one year. Prior to that, he served with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Division of Law Enforcement. His military service included a deployment to Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan from 2008 to 2009. In recognition of his service, he was awarded the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, and the Illinois National Guard Abraham Lincoln Medal of Freedom Ribbon.

Jaimie was known for his kindness, selflessness, and patience. He had a unique ability to see the good in others and approached both his work and personal life with humility and purpose. Whether spending time outdoors fishing and hunting or working on home improvement projects, he appreciated the simple things in

life. He was committed to serving others and never hesitated to go beyond what was required, embodying the true spirit of sacrifice.

In honor of his legacy, the Jaimie Cox Foundation was established to support first responders, veterans, underprivileged youth, and individuals pursuing higher education. The foundation also encourages community members to display blue lights outside their homes as a symbol of support for those who serve and remembrance for those who have fallen.

Officer Jaimie Cox's service, sacrifice, and character continue to inspire his community and all who serve.

### **Join Us in Supporting the Heroes Family Fund**

Help us honor Jaimie and others like him by contributing to the Heroes Family Fund. Your generosity ensures that we can continue supporting the families of our fallen heroes in their time of need.

**Guardian Sponsor: \$10,000+**

**Protector Sponsor: \$5,000–\$9,999**

**Courage Sponsor: \$2,500–\$4,999**

**Bravery Sponsor: \$1,000–\$2,499**

**Honor Sponsor: \$500–\$999**

**Community Sponsor: \$250–\$499**

**Supporter Sponsor: \$10–\$249**

Scan or click the QR code below to make your donation today.



**Support our Silent Auctions & Raffles!**  
**Explore our Amazon Wishlist and contribute today.**



[Amazon Wishlist](#)

*All proceeds go to the Heroes Family Fund.*

---

**UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS:**  
**Heroes Family Fund Topgolf Charity Event**  
*September 29th, 2026*



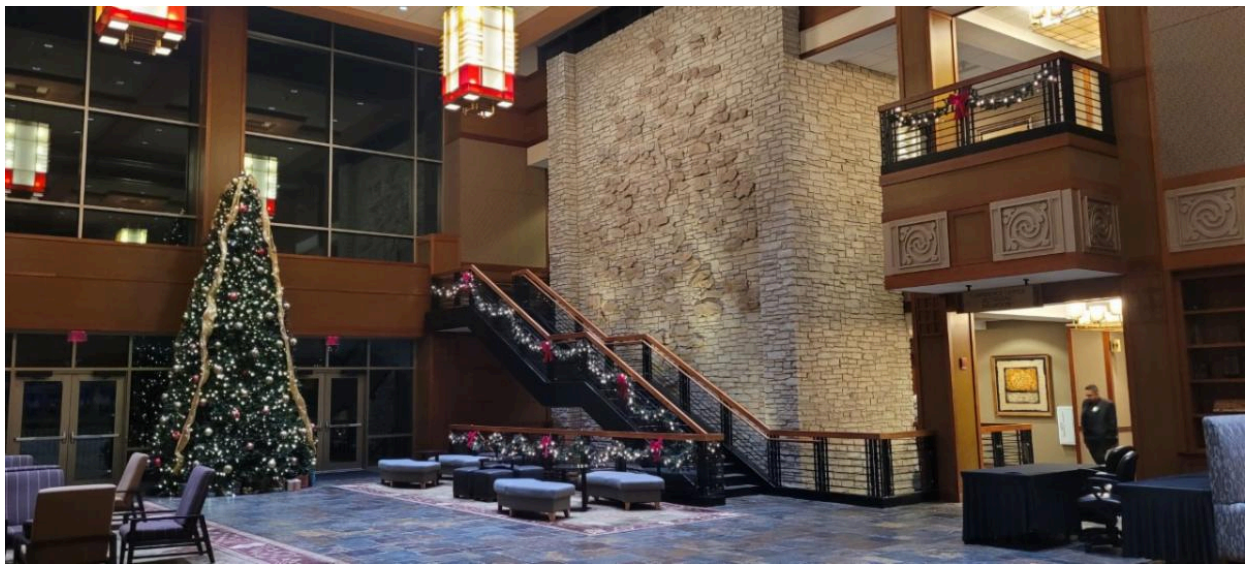
**Topgolf**

2050 Progress Pkwy  
Schaumburg, IL 60196

[REGISTER NOW](#)

---

**UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS:**  
**Heroes Holiday Gala: A Season of Giving**  
*December 12th, 2026*



## Eaglewood Resort

1401 Nordic Road  
Itasca, IL 60143

[More Information](#)

## EXPERT INSIGHTS

Each month in *Expert Insights*, IPPFA features timely tools, commentary, and resources from our trusted network of corporate members, attorneys, and subject-matter experts. These contributions reflect their deep commitment to strengthening Illinois' public pension community.

### **Are you a corporate member or legal professional with insights to share?**

Share your expertise in a future Expert Insights feature and connect with the IPPFA community.

[Contribute Now](#)

## ORDER THE IPPFA RETIREMENT GUIDE!

### **The IPPFA Retirement Guide – 3rd Edition**

The best source of information on the newly expanded Social Security benefits is the **3rd Edition of the IPPFA Retirement Guide**.

The Social Security chapter has been **totally rewritten**. In addition, the book has been updated with the latest information on:

- Article 3 police pensions
- Article 4 fire pensions

- Public employee deferred compensation
- Retirement healthcare funding

## Order Your Copy Today!

The **IPPFA Retirement Guide – 3rd Edition** is now available:

- On **Amazon**: \$9.99
- From the **IPPFA Office**: \$7.50 per book for bulk sales of 10 books or more

When the books are sold in bulk from our office, **IPPFA avoids the Amazon royalty charge and passes the savings on to you.**

For the earlier editions, IPPFA sold thousands of copies via bulk sale to police and fire pension funds, cities and fire districts and foreign fire insurance tax boards. Some entities bought 10 books and distributed them to the pension board, fire stations, police station libraries and alike. Other pension funds bought hundreds of books and supplied one to each active member.

[Order on Amazon \(Under 10 Books\)](#)

[Bulk Order from IPPFA \(10+ Books\)](#)

## Get the Word Out!

Whatever the method, let's get the word out to our active and retired members on their new Social Security benefits.

[Download PDF](#)

### *Stay Connected with Us!*

*Download the IPPFA app for updates and follow us on social media for more news and insights*

[Apple App Store](#)

[Google Play Store](#)



[IPPFA](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

IPPFA | 2587 Millennium Drive, Unit C | Elgin, IL 60124 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!