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June 11, 2025 | Griffin Museum of Science and Industry

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Association Forum Announces LAB Program Offerings

Initiatives are Designed to Promote Innovation and Spur Professional Acumen

By Todd McElwee

Following their debut as interactive sessions during Association Forum's Holiday Showcase 2024, the organization has announced LAB (Learn. Apply. Build.) programs have expanded into year-round offerings.

Launching this summer, the Forum said its LAB Programs are innovative, hands-on learning experiences with sessions empowering professionals to explore new ideas and apply them in real time with the guidance of experienced facilitators.

Each LAB session follows a three-part framework:

Learn - Participants are introduced to essential concepts and

tools through expert-led instruction.

Apply - Attendees engage in experiential activities that reinforce learning and simulate real-world application.

Build - The session culminates in the creation of actionable takeaways - whether it's a personal development plan, tech practices glam up, communication strategy, or branded asset participants can implement immediately in their roles.

Upcoming LABs topics include the Canva LAB, where participants will learn to create and manage a brand kit using Canva's tools to ensure consistent and professional design output.

The Microsoft Copilot & AI LAB will employ Microsoft Copilot as a model. Participants will explore

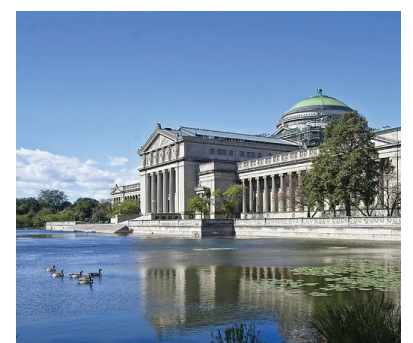
specific association use cases and best practices including security, acceptable use policies and intellectual property considerations.

During the Strengths LAB, professionals will discover how to leverage the CliftonStrengths assessment to identify and activate unique talents in a team-based challenge.

Building confidence and clarity in video communication for meetings, social media, and internal messaging is the goal of the Video LAB.

LAB programs are hosted at Association Forum's Chicago office and are open to professionals across all levels.

Learn more about all LAB programs and all of the Forum's educational opportunities [here](#).



Griffin Museum of Science and Industry
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SPECIAL EDITION

Summer School's in Session at Association Forum

From Staff Reports

Summer's a busy season at Association Forum. Take a look at a handful of the engaging events and learning initiatives being offered over the next few months.

Online Leadership Learning Coming June 24... Field Notes: The Path to Unstoppable Leadership will be staged online June 24. The one-hour conversation will delve into organizational culture, innovation and change management.

Allison K. Summers, CAE, Executive Director of Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (APHON), will engage with Association Forum members Joel Albizo, FASAE, CAE, CEO of American Planning Association; Keri Kramer, CAE, CEO of North American Neuromodulation Society; Jonathan Adams, CAE, VP, Innovation of Water Quality Association; and Molly Anderson, Executive Director of National Association of Neonatal Nurses.

"It takes an extra special human to raise one's hand and choose to lead in the world of associations and non-profits," said Summers.

Register [here](#).

ISAE Summer Retreat Headed to Greater Peoria... Inviting attendees to explore Peoria in an entirely new way, the Illinois Society of Association Executives (ISAE), in collaboration with Association Forum, will hold its Summer Retreat from July 17-18, at the Par-A-Dice Hotel & Casino in East Peoria. A full slate of site visits and networking are on the agenda.

Visits include the Caterpillar Visitors Center, Marriott Pere Marquette, Warehouse District, Peoria Civic Center and more.

ISAE is a chapter of Association Forum.

Find more information [here](#).

Emerging Leaders Program Early Pricing Ends July 2... Register by July 2, to take advantage of early registration fare for the Fall Cohort of the Emerging Leaders Program - developed through a collaboration with the [Center for Creative Leadership](#). Comprised of five modules,

the Fall Cohort runs from July 23 – November 13, with most sessions set for the Forum's offices.

The program was developed via proven research and is tailored specifically for the Forum. It equips new and experienced team and people leaders with the skills and knowledge to thrive, the Forum said.

"Emerging leaders navigate a dynamic and ever-evolving landscape filled with unique obstacles," the association said. "To thrive in a fast-paced environment, investing in your training and development early is essential to developing the critical skills needed to accomplish goals, achieve success, and become a leader of impact."

Members pay \$1,425 before July 2, with non-members paying \$1,825. Both rates jump \$100 following the early pricing deadline.

More on the Emerging Leaders Program can be found [here](#).

Association 101 Ready to Launch June 24... Seeking to educate newcomers to associations on the sector's distinct culture, language, and way of doing business, Association Forum will host Association 101 at its Chicago offices. Find more [here](#).

Association 201 Coming in August... Mid-level association professionals looking to improve their professional playbooks and take a step up within their organizations

and the industry are invited to participate in the virtual Association 201 session on August 5 – 6.

"Are you ready to level up?" organizers said. "The workplace is evolving, and professionals who master essential skills will lead the way. Association 201 is an immersive, high-impact course designed to equip association professionals with the critical skills needed to thrive in today's dynamic environment. Backed by the Essential Skills Study 2024, this course delivers tangible, career-changing takeaways to boost performance, innovation, and leadership across every level of an association."

Course information is available [here](#).

Forty Under 40
Application Period Opening July 1

By Todd McElwee

Enthusiastic, ambitious and committed association professionals under 40, there's an honor available to you.

More importantly, there's a community of likeminded individuals ready to welcome you into one of most exclusive clubs in the sector.

On July 1, Association Forum will once again seek the best and the brightest young professionals in the sector by opening the application period for the Forty Under 40 program.

"Are you a trailblazer, an innovator, a change-maker?" the Forum said. "Have you achieved remarkable success for yourself and your organization before the age of 40? If so, it's time to step into the spotlight, let your achievements shine, and inspire future generations of association management leaders!"

Carla Lochiatto, IOM, CAE, Director, CSO Center | ASIS International; and John Bacon, MBA, Vice President, Sales & Partner Experience, are members of the very first and most recent Forty Under 40 classes - 2013 and 2024, respectively. Both are career and

community oriented and also passionate advocates for the initiative, for which they encourage similar individuals to apply.

On July 1, Association Forum will once again seek the best and the brightest young professionals in the sector by opening the application period for the Forty Under 40 program.

"Applying to the Forum's Forty Under 40 program is more than a personal achievement - it's been an opportunity to gain recognition in the association community, connect with other rising leaders, and will amplify the impact of your work," Lochiatto said. "It not only affirms your contributions and dedication to the association industry, but will open doors to new opportunities, visibility, and thought leadership."

Bacon said: "Being part of the association community means constantly learning, growing, and helping others do the same. That's why I

love the Forty Under 40 program — it highlights the emerging leaders who are moving our profession forward in new and inspiring ways. If you or someone you know is making an impact, I hope you'll apply or nominate them. We need your voice and your leadership in this space."

Asked if being an honoree has helped shape her career, and if so how, Lochiatto replied: "Being named a Forty Under 40 honoree is an award I am still proud of today, even many years later. It has been a highlight of my career as it elevated my credibility, provided recognition of my accomplishments and hard work, and opened doors to new professional opportunities. It also connected me with a strong, inspiring, diverse cohort of peers. The relationships I've built through this recognition are still some of the most valuable in my professional network—offering support, collaboration, and a shared commitment to shaping the future of our industry."

The application period closes August 31.

Find more on the Forty Under 40 program [here](#).

SPECIAL EDITION

Shining Stars: Association Forum's 2025 Honors Awards Recipients

By Todd McElwee

"Shine On."

The theme of June 11's Association Forum's Honors Gala is a tribute to the evening's distinguished awardees and a call to attendees to make lasting impacts in their careers and communities.

Let's shine a light on this year's award recipients.

Mary Lynn Fayoumi, CAE, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, President & CEO, HR Source



Mary Lynn Fayoumi

Samuel B. Shapiro Award for Chief Staff Executive Achievement

USAE: Describe the scene when you were informed on being named as the Samuel B. Shapiro Award for Chief Staff Executive Achievement honoree.

Fayoumi: Artesha Moore, CEO of the Association Forum, called to share the wonderful news that I had been selected as the 2025 Samuel B. Shapiro Award honoree while I was finishing up my workday. After she congratulated me and I dried my tears, we had a lengthy conversation about the amazing community we are so grateful to be part of and how much this honor means to me after 35 years in the industry.

USAE: When did you first become involved with Association Forum, and what has it meant to your career?

Fayoumi: I joined the Association Forum in the mid-1990's several years after starting my first association job. The Forum has been extremely instrumental in my career and success. In addition to providing me with educational and learning

opportunities over the decades, it has offered me a variety of ways to use my skills and strengths as a volunteer leader serving as a facilitator, author, mentor, committee member, and board director. Most importantly, it has expanded my network exponentially and introduced me to the finest, smartest, and most generous group of association professionals and industry partners, many of whom I'm fortunate to count as not only colleagues but lifelong friends.

USAE: How would you sell someone on the idea of a career within associations?

Fayoumi: A career in the association arena is the absolute BEST! Working for mission-based organizations has myriad unique benefits that are not nearly as common in other industries. Whether you work for a trade association or professional society, serving members is incredibly rewarding. From membership to marketing to education to certification to conferences to publications and beyond, there are a plethora of ways to put your talents to work in the association world. Job opportunities are plentiful as are the ways to advance your career either working for an association, an AMC, an industry partner, or a DMO.

USAE: Who would you like to recognize and thank?

Fayoumi: I would like to thank Artesha and the Association Forum Board of Directors and staff, as well as the Awards & Scholarship Committee. I'm also grateful for Bob Moore, Executive Director of the American College of Osteopathic Family Practitioners, who nominated me for the award, and for Debra Zabloudil, Founder & CEO of The Learning Studio, Marla Isaacs, retired Executive Vice President at ANFP, and Julie Belloli, Chief Experience Officer at HR Source, who supported me in the awards application process. In addition, I want to share this award with my team at HR Source who work tirelessly to serve our 1,300 member employers. Finally, I want to dedicate this award to the late Chris Mahaffey, long-serving former CEO of the Association Forum who was my mentor and dear friend.

USAE: What is something about you your colleagues would be surprised to learn?

Fayoumi: There isn't much that people don't know about me since I tend to be an open book. However, people might not know that I was planning to begin my career in Europe after completing my MBA because of how much I enjoyed travel, foreign exchange programs, and internships abroad. Instead, I took a detour through Chicago in 1988 and have never looked back.

George Miller, CAE, MS, Practice Director at McKinley Advisors



George Miller

John C. Thiel Distinguished Service Award

USAE: Describe the scene when you were informed on being named as the John C. Thiel Distinguished Service Award honoree.

Miller: I was shocked. Artesha called me and said I was the honoree, and she started telling me about some of the logistics of the award and the date of the Gala and I was thinking, well I know when and where the Gala is and I'll be there...but did you say I was an award winner?

USAE: When did you first become involved with Association Forum, and what has it meant to your career?

Miller: I first became involved with Forum in 2008, first as an event participant and then as a volunteer and eventual chair of committees, alongside speaking and writing assignments. To me Forum has provided a community of peers. People who I've studied with for the CAE exam, people who I've served on committees alongside, people who have provided me advice about my career--what to pursue, what to

avoid--and I'm forever grateful for this community.

USAE: How would you sell someone on the idea of a career within associations?

Miller: What's fascinating to me about working in associations is that I get insight into all of these careers and professions some of which I knew existed and some of which I had no idea that existed. And if I can be a small part of advancing their mission and making the world a better place, that's a good day for me.

USAE: Who would you like to recognize and thank?

Miller: There are so many people to thank. A few that I'll highlight are my current supervisor Jon Hoffman who also hired me for my first association job in 2002. And Bob Moore who hired me for my first job in Chicago and modeled service with Forum. In addition, I'd like to give a special shout out to Geof Brown with Illinois CPA's and Kate Dockins with the Institute of Food Technologists who supported my nomination and have been good friends and trusted advisors for many years. And, of course, my husband Jerry who has volunteered thousands of hours for his professional associations and gets it.

USAE: What is something about you your colleagues would be surprised to learn?

Miller: I'm a pretty open book so my colleagues know a lot about me, but some may be surprised to learn that in high school I was a member of the state championship team of the Hoosier Spell Bowl.

Nathan Chamberlain, CAE, Director of Membership, American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology Association Professional Achievement Award, powered by Choose Chicago

USAE: Describe the scene when you were informed on being named as the Association Professional Achievement Award honoree

Chamberlain: It was a Monday morning when my phone lit up with Association Forum CEO Artesha Moore's name. I dreaded it immediately. I'd just emailed her on Friday, apologizing for missing the committee volunteer deadline, so I answered trepidatiously. In that

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Nathan Chamberlain

spit-second, I was expecting a gentle finger wag and a polite rejection.

Instead, Artesha said something like, I'm calling to let you know you've been selected as this year's Association Professional Achievement Award honoree. I laughed, genuinely stunned, and blurted out, "You're kidding me. What?" What followed was a rush of kind, humbling words that I could barely process as tears welled up and began to fall. It was emotional whiplash, in the best way. Pride, disbelief, and gratitude all hit me at once.

As she wrapped up the call, I interrupted with another laugh, confessing that I thought this was about the email I sent about missing the deadline. A little confused, she said she hadn't even read it yet but if I still wanted to volunteer, she'd find me a spot.

It was an unforgettable moment; unexpected, affirming, and beautifully human. I'm so glad I answered.

USAE: When did you first become involved with Association Forum, and what has it meant to your career?

Chamberlain: I became an Association Forum member in 2018, wanting to connect directly in the local association community as part of my 10-year career plan. A year or so earlier, I used the ASAE member directory to contact association professionals who appeared to be similar in age but in positions I aspired to. One person who responded and told me that I needed to be a member of Association Forum was this year's Inspiring Leader, Jose Segarra. We had several meaningful conversations where he guided and endorsed my plan to earn a master's degree in business, earn

my CAE credential, and volunteer for Association Forum.

I've made many other meaningful relationships through the CAE Study Group as a participant and facilitator and while serving on various committees. As a presenter and as a participant, I've been inspired by events like Holiday Showcase® and Forum Forward. In fact, the framework underlying my work at AANA that contributed to this award came from a session on how to create a successful certification program. It was just what I needed to organize my thoughts and orient the work in a completely new way.

USAE: How would you sell someone on the idea of a career within associations?

Chamberlain: There is an association for everything. From the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology (AANA) to the Zymurgical Society of North America (ZSNA), if people do it, there's probably a conference about it with a lanyard and a keynote speaker.

That's what makes a career in associations so fascinating and fulfilling. We help drive scientific breakthroughs by supporting research and convening experts. We set industry standards that ensure safety, equity, and innovation. We advocate for public policy changes, elevate professional voices, and equip entire workforces with tools to grow. From credentialing and continuing education to ethics frameworks and emergency response protocols, associations are often the quiet engine behind progress.

Beware, though! One person's noble advocacy group can be another person's evil special interest... or even just someone else's quirky club of beer enthusiasts.

USAE: Who would you like to recognize and thank?

Chamberlain: Association work is never a solo performance. It's always a chorus, with voices of all sorts blending and evolving together.

To Andrea Mitchell, who nominated me for this award (and had insisted I apply to AANA), thank you for your unwavering confidence in me. To Joseph LoSasso, who started as a consultant on a fun little member services project five years ago and became a trusted friend, thank you for being a world-class

sounding board reflecting endless "yes, ands." And a hat tip to Kathy Bell, who introduced us as after she and I sat on the Professional Practice Committee.

I would like to especially thank AANA Chief Innovation Officer Eric O'Connor for believing in me as a change agent. You equipped me with the mandate, tools, resources, and freedom to create something new, and you have been steadfastly supportive of my participation in Association Forum. I would like to also thank AANA Chief Membership Officer Amy Sherwood who has guided me through a second phase of career growth at AANA for nearly two years. I'm happy to report to anyone who will listen that you live up to your reputation as the 2022 Association Forum Inspiring Leader Award honoree. Eric and Amy: your letters of recommendation for this award are true professional keepsakes I will treasure.

To my other AANA colleagues across the organization, and particularly on the Membership Team, I appreciate the trust you put in me, and I thank you for all the big and little ways you make me a better leader. It's an honor to serve your creativity, expertise, and unique personal talents.

To my wife Leslie and my daughter Cecilia, thank you for sharing me with my work (and for sharing your dining room with my desk). Thank you for being the best roadies, the kindest audience, and the best huggers.

USAE: What is something about you your colleagues would be surprised to learn?

Chamberlain: For a brief moment in the early 2010s, my wife and I were minor viral video sensations for singing a Mongolian love duet. Someone had made a copy of a YouTube video from our 2008 Peace Corps swearing-in ceremony performance and posted it on Facebook. We were feverishly messaged and tagged on it for several days as our Mongolian friends recognized us and reposted. There are about 3 million people in the whole country, and I think most of them saw it and messaged us that week. Like a good viral video, it disappeared as quickly as it had appeared.

Jose Segarra, MNA, CAE, Stra-

tegic Director and Senior Account Executive, Bostrom



Jose Segarra

Chris Mahaffey Inspiring Leader Award, powered by Visit Anchorage, Alaska.

USAE: Describe the scene when you were informed on being named as the Chris Mahaffey Inspiring Leader Award honoree

Segarra: When I received the call from Artesha Moore informing me that I had been named the Chris Mahaffey Inspiring Leader Award honoree, it was a moment of profound honor. The fact that my fellow Association Latino cofounders had nominated me added an even deeper sense of appreciation and connection to this recognition. It made me reflect on what we have accomplished and how we have grown as leaders. It is all worth celebrating! It fills me with gratitude. It is a testament to the incredible community we have built together, and I am truly thankful for this honor.

USAE: When did you first become involved with Association Forum, and what has it meant to your career?

Segarra: My involvement with Association Forum goes back to 2007, when I was nominated as a Diversity Scholar by a colleague. At the time I had never heard of Association Forum. I proceeded with the nomination and eventually received the honor to be selected as a scholar that year.

When I am asked what Association Forum means to me, I always have the same answer: It is my professional home. The scholarship allowed me to experience association management, gather new insights,

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advance my career, and give back to the association. Receiving that scholarship changed my career trajectory and I owe a lot to the past leaders of the organization who helped me along the way.

USAE: How would you sell someone on the idea of a career within associations?

Segarra: A career within association management offered me an opportunity to make a meaningful impact while fostering both personal and professional growth. It makes your work meaningful. Working in associations allows individuals to be part of mission-driven organizations that aim to address societal and professional challenges. A career in association management is deeply fulfilling because it allows you to contribute to causes that resonate with people's values. A bonus to that, this work provides a supportive network of leaders who champion and celebrate each other. For those seeking purpose and a chance to have a positive impact in society, associations provide an ideal environment to flourish.

USAE: Who would you like to recognize and thank?

Segarra: Receiving this award has given me the opportunity to think a lot about those who helped me along the way and those I've helped. My career in association management started at the American Hospital Association. The job was simply a job until Barbara Lorschbach, former Senior Vice President for Member Relations, saw something in me that I didn't even know I had. She tapped my shoulder to work on a couple of projects that were very meaningful to the organization. Barb coached me through my first presentation ever to a board of directors, opened up my eyes to inequities happening in our society, and inspired me to want to have an impact and be mission driven, in whatever work I do. To this day, every time I have to create a team to work on a project, I think about the opportunities Barb presented me with and how I can do the same for others.

USAE: What is something about you your colleagues would be surprised to learn?

Segarra: I believe that as individuals, we often hesitate to share our struggles, yet they carry invaluable lessons for ourselves and others.

Understanding the adversities others have faced reveals their tenacity and determination, deepening our appreciation for their unique journeys. I've come to realize that I am guilty of this too so I will share a struggle. While many know that I am from Puerto Rico, I rarely share the deeper story of why I came to Chicago—to explore who I was and redefine my path. With only \$2,000 in my bank account, I spent my first years working in hotels, navigating the challenges of a new city, overcoming communication barriers, and finding my way without knowing anyone. These experiences were difficult, yet they strengthened me and taught me many lessons. Sharing how we overcome adversity reminds us of all of the power of resilience and the importance of understanding the stories behind the people we encounter.

American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Welcoming Environment Honoree, powered by Visit KC Represented by Kathleen S. Creason, MBA, CEO
USAE: Describe the scene when



you were informed the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) was the Welcoming Environment honoree.

Creason: When the AOA learned it had been selected as the Welcoming Environment honoree, the moment was incredibly moving. We felt a deep sense of pride and joy in being recognized for the positive culture we strive to create every day.

Being honored by the association community as a Welcoming Environment honoree is truly humbling. It reflects the AOA's consistent and intentional efforts to foster an inclusive, supportive atmosphere both for the osteopathic profession and for the dedicated staff who serve it.

The AOA is proud to be recognized for our commitment to inclusion and remain dedicated to cultivating a culture where everyone feels valued,

respected, and empowered.

USAE: When did the AOA first become involved with Association Forum, and what has it meant to the organization?

Creason: The AOA has actively engaged with Association Forum for many years. Senior leaders and staff serve on volunteer committees, participate on the board, and contribute to educational sessions. Through Association Forum, the staff team builds valuable connections within the association community and strengthens their professional development, bringing that expertise back to the AOA and the members it serves.

USAE: How would you sell someone on the idea of a career within associations?

Creason: A career in associations allows you to make a meaningful impact every day. You're not just doing a job, you're advancing a mission, supporting a profession, and helping entire communities thrive. There is a variety of work, from governance to advocacy and education to member engagement and event management, which keeps the work dynamic and fulfilling.

There is a strong sense of community and collaboration in the association community. You work with passionate people who care about making a difference, and you see the results of your efforts in real time. Lastly, associations invest in your growth offering opportunities to lead, learn, and evolve throughout your career.

USAE: Who would AOA like to recognize and thank?

Creason: The AOA would like to recognize the leadership of President Teresa A. Hubka, DO, Immediate Past President Ira P. Monka, DO and President-Elect Robert G.G. Piccinini, DO.

These top leaders of the organization have supported the welcoming environment initiatives within the profession and the organization. Their support has provided the platform for creating the guiding principles for the Board of Trustees and the values and principles the staff follow. The AOA would also like to recognize the Chief Engagement and Diversity Officer and the Human Resources team for their leadership and efforts within the organization.

USAE: What is something about AOA the association industry would be surprised to learn?

Creason: The osteopathic profession is one of the fastest growing segments in health care today, with one out of every four medical students enrolled in an osteopathic medical school. Currently there are 197,000 osteopathic physicians and medical students in the United States.

Osteopathic medicine is practiced by Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, or DOs, who bring a whole-person approach to care by focusing on looking beyond your symptoms to understand how lifestyle and environmental factors impact your wellbeing. DOs are fully licensed physicians able to practice in any specialty.

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