



Illinois
Credit Union Foundation

Giving Back

Official Newsletter of the Illinois Credit Union Foundation

March 2026

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[2026 ICUF Exploring Why Workshop – March 25, 2026 – Last Chance to Register!](#)

The ICU Foundation will hold an Exploring Why Workshop on March 25, 2026 (the day prior to the ICUL Peer Networking Event). [Registration is open with a fee of \\$100 per person.](#)

[ICUF Board Election Results – Thank You Board Chair, Welcome New Officers](#)

Thank you to Michelle Balog, NuMark CU, who completed two years as Board Chair for the Illinois Credit Union Foundation. Congratulations retraining board members who were elected for three year positions during the ICU Foundation's Annual Meeting: **Janel Cabadas**, Earthmover CU, **Dr. Joronda Crawford**, Israel Methcomm FCU, **Amber Scott**, 1st MidAmerica CU. In addition, welcome to new board officers: Chair - **Kerriann Mills**, BCU, Vice-Chair - **Susan Toalson McGinty**, University of Illinois Community CU, and Secretary/Treasurer – **Amber Scott**.

[Bids Farewell to Longest Serving Director, John Fiore](#)

The ICU Foundation bids a fond farewell to its longest serving board member, **John Fiore**. We are grateful you for his unprecedented years of service to the Illinois Credit Union Foundation which began in 1987 when the first separate board was established (from 1978-1987 the ICUL Executive Committee served as the Foundation Board). John held the office of board chair twice, 1989-1991 and 2020-2022. His dedication and commitment to the ICU Foundation have shaped our philanthropic impact. For example, to this day, we received quarterly donations from the National Credit Union Foundation's Community Investment Fund (CIF), a unique investment vehicle that you helped create. Over the years, the CIF has generated more than \$340,000 for the ICU Foundation. Thank you, John, you are a legend!

[CU FinHealth – September 22-23 – Registration Open](#)

Registration is open for [CU FinHealth](#), co-hosted by the ICU Foundation, is set for September 22-23, 2026 in Denver, CO. This hands-on conference is designed to help you take actionable steps on your financial health journey—whether you're just starting or looking to build on existing efforts. It focuses on how credit unions are driving financial health across their organizations, measuring success, addressing key issues, and taking impactful actions to improve financial well-being for employees, members, and communities.

[Credit Union Youth Month Begins April 1](#)

April is Credit Union Youth Month, the perfect time to show the next generation the importance of financial literacy. To help you engage young members and their families, a variety of industry resources and promotional toolkits are now available for your use. As you launch your celebrations, we encourage all credit unions to use the hashtag #CUYouthMonth on social media. By sharing your events and success stories, we can highlight the powerful collective impact of our movement's outreach across the state. [Click here to learn more and download the resources!](#)

[2026 CUFEN Conference – July 26-29](#)

The [Credit Union Financial Education Network \(CUFEN\)](#) will host its annual conference July 26-29, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas. CUFEN, formerly known as the National Youth Involvement Board, expanded its mission and purpose from youth financial education to reaching all ages with financial education. In addition to their annual conference, the group also collects data regarding the number of financial education presentations conducted by credit unions.

REMINDERS

[ICUF Enhanced FiCEP 2026](#)

Registration for the ICU Foundation's Enhanced FiCEP Program main cohort ended on February 27. Individuals who want to participate in the program during the remainder of the year can still sign up by selecting "other" for the start date. **Need to recertify?** We've got you covered with a discounted registration fee. [FiCEP 2026 Information & Registration online](#)

ICUF Scholarships & Grants

The ICU Foundation offers Grants of up to \$10,000 to cover a wide variety of projects to help credit unions grow and expand their services. ICU Foundation Scholarships can be used for a wide variety of education programs. All ICUL-affiliated CUs are eligible, and applications are accepted year-round. We encourage you to apply early in the year since funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. [Check out the scholarship & grant details online.](#)

Reality Fair Programs

Teen Reality Fairs teach students how to manage money and the importance of a budget or spending plan. The Bite of Reality program and resources, offered by the ICU Foundation at no cost to credit unions, is available in a variety of formats (app-based, computer-accessible, and paper packets) The App and merchant/booth sheets are available in Spanish. **Retirement Reality Fairs** are similar to Teen Fairs except the participants can use their real-life situations instead of pretend scenarios when planning for the future. The Retire on Track program and resources are provided by the ICU Foundation at no cost to credit unions. [Learn about Reality Fairs & Access FREE Resources](#)

Interact With Peers

- **ICUL Financial Education Peer Group** – The Illinois Credit Union League offers a Communities feature on its website which enables peer group members to ask questions and share information with one another. [Check it out today!](#)
- **Credit Union Foundations Network** – A networking group for credit union leaders that are managing, leading, or looking to launch a grant-making foundation in association with their credit union. CUs from throughout the country gather for monthly virtual meetings to discuss their work. [Join their LinkedIn Group here.](#)
- **Financial Well-Being Connection** – A networking group for financial well-being practitioners, especially coaches, counselors, and trainers. CUs from throughout the country gather for monthly virtual meetings to discuss their work. Register for their meetings. [Join their LinkedIn Group here.](#)

ICUF Commemorative Awards

The ICU Foundation's Commemorative Program is a moving way to acknowledge a special person or credit union, while also supporting the credit union movement. Honor an individual's memory, recognize a colleague's professional accomplishments or celebrate your credit union's milestones. [Learn more and check out the video highlighting 2025 awards.](#)

2026 Events & Important Dates

March 25	ICUF Exploring Why Workshop (Naperville) <i>Calling all Credit Union Enthusiasts – join us for a fantastic 1-Day Workshop to dig into principles and philosophy!</i>
September 2	Golf Outing – Bliss Creek Golf Course (Sugar Grove) <i>Get together with us for a fun-filled golf scramble!</i>
September 22-23	CU FinHealth Conference (Denver) <i>Join us for the premier conference for credit union financial health practitioners</i>
October 23	Annual Raffle Drawing – Hilton Chicago & Towers <i>Live drawing is held in the Exhibit Hall</i>
November 17	ICUF Reality Fair Workshop (Springfield) <i>Learn how to incorporate experiential learning into your financial education programs</i>
January 1 to December 31	Foundation's Annual Support Campaign <i>Our most important fundraiser which provides unrestricted support to the Foundation – donations accepted year-round</i>

ICUF Foundation Board of Directors

Chair – **Kerriann Mills**, BCU
Vice-Chair – **Susan Toalson McGinty**, U of I Community CU
Secretary/Treasurer – **Amber Scott**, 1st MidAmerica CU
Michelle Balog, NuMark CU
Lou Bicanic, Midwest Members CU
Janel Cabadas, Earthmover CU
Dr. Joronda Crawford, Israel Methcomm FCU
Mark Dietrich, Revity CU
Hope Garrett, Education Personnel FCU
Tom Pierce, Access CU

Ex Officio Directors:

Libby Calderone, ICUL President/CEO
Joe Kregul, ICUL Board Chair
Michael Abraham, ICUL Board Vice-Chair
Jose Garcia, ICUL Board Treasurer
Pete Fauth, ICUL Board Secretary

Foundation Staff

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