

Apply now to participate in Valparaiso's Spring 2021 City Government Academy!

Valparaiso residents who are interested in learning more about how their local government works can now apply for the City Government Academy (CGA) spring 2021 program!



"Tremendous idea, well organized, remarkably informative, made me an even more proud and loyal citizen."

By participating in this program, you will gain a deeper understanding of how local government works, meet government leaders and department heads, understand how citizens can become more engaged in public decision-making and serve as role models for other community residents. The City is hopeful that this program will engage residents in a unique way and help cultivate future leaders to serve on boards and commissions.

The CGA will meet for seven consecutive weeks on Wednesday evenings at various locations throughout the city.

- April 14 – City Administration and the Budget
- April 21 – Valparaiso Police Department
- April 28 – City Services - Public Works and Utilities
- May 5 – Development Services (Engineering, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement)
- May 12 – Valparaiso Fire Department
- May 19 – Community Engagement and Redevelopment/Economic Development
- May 26 – Valpo Parks, Project Management and Wrap-up

Apply now! This is a free program for residents within the City of Valparaiso 18 years and older. Class size will be limited to 30 residents and we hope to have representation from each city council district. The application period will run until April 1 or until the class is full. Participants will be notified during the week of April 1 if they have a space in the class.

"I'm impressed by how much the city accomplishes on a small budget and how much heart exists in those getting things accomplished."

Visit <http://www.ci.valparaiso.in.us/1635/City-Government-Academy> to learn more!

Contact Maggie Clifton, Community Engagement Director, at mclifton@valpo.us or give her a call at 219-462-1161 for any questions.

Valparaiso City Government Academy

Spring 2021 Class Schedule

April 14 – May 26

April 14 6:00 – 8:00pm

City Administration and the Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Matt Murphy • City Administrator Mike Jessen • Clerk-Treasurer Holly Taylor • Councilman George Douglas 	City Hall Council Chambers 166 W Lincolnway
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April 21 6:00 – 8:00pm

Valparaiso Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Jeff Balon 	Valparaiso Police Station 355 South Washington St
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April 28 6:00 – 8:00pm

Valparaiso City Services - Public Works and Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Services Director Steve Poulos • Assistant Director Brent Dickson 	Forest Park Welter Room 1155 Sheffield Dr
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May 5 6:00 – 8:00pm

Development Services and Code Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Planner Beth Shrader • City Engineer Michael Jabo • Building Commissioner Vicki Thrasher 	City Hall Council Chambers 166 W Lincolnway
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May 12 6:00 – 8:00pm

Valparaiso Fire Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Chad Dutz 	Located at Fire Station #2 2605 Cumberland Dr
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May 19 6:00 – 8:00pm

Community Engagement and Redevelopment / Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement Director Maggie Clifton • Redevelopment Director Brandon Dickinson • City Attorney Patrick Lyp 	TBD
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May 26 6:00 – 8:00pm

Parks, Project Management and CGA Wrap-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks Director John Seibert • Project and Facility Management Director Don McGinley 	Butterfield Pavilion 600 Evans Ave
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June 14 at 6:00pm class recognition at City Council meeting (City Hall).

Valparaiso City Government Academy

Class Guidelines / FAQs

1. What is the purpose of the City Government Academy (CGA)?

The CGA was created to educate residents about their local government. The goal of the CGA is to get more citizens involved as department heads share the behind-the-scenes details of how decisions are made, how dollars are allocated and how services are delivered each day. Many cities and towns across the country are successfully engaging residents through this program model. CGAs are an excellent way to educate residents, build positive relationships and increase communication between city government officials and citizens, as well as inspire future municipal leaders.

The purpose of the CGA is to be educational. While we welcome your thoughts and input, the CGA is not meant to be a platform to advocate or lobby city department heads. However, this course will outline the details of when it is the appropriate time to weigh-in and advocate on certain municipal policies. We want the sessions to have an environment that is accepting to all viewpoints.

2. What is the format of each session?

This program consists of seven consecutive sessions on Wednesday evenings from 5:30pm or 6:00pm – 8:00pm beginning April 1 and ending May 13. The sessions will be held “classroom style” where participants can hear from some of the city’s department heads about their day to day roles. The CGA will meet in multiple locations around the city to help participants learn more about their local government.

When you arrive, be sure to sign in and pick up your evaluation form and other materials. You will be asked to turn in an evaluation form at the end of each session. Participants are encouraged to dress comfortably and bring their own refreshments if necessary. Very light refreshments may be provided depending on the meeting location.

3. What if we don’t have time for my questions?

While our goal is to accommodate all questions, we know that there are tight time constraints for each session. If we are unable to get to your question, please write it on the evaluation form that night and the appropriate department head will get an answer to you in a timely manner. If you think of questions after the session you may send an email to mclifton@valpo.us.

4. What if I need to miss a session?

Please let us know if you are unable to make it to a session in advance. Email mclifton@valpo.us or call 219-462-1161 and ask for Maggie Clifton. Materials can be provided at the next session. If you know you will miss more than one session, please consider participating when you can be more available.

5. May I bring a guest or relative to these activities?

Because of space limitations and the cap of thirty participants at a time, you may not bring any guests to the classes. However, guests and/or relatives are welcome to join you at the June 8 City Council meeting where participants will be recognized.