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Looking at Member Engagement

A Recap of 2022 and Preview of 2023

GFOA has more than 22,500 individual members. The strength of our network is not in quantity, however, but in quality. Quality of members, certainly, but also quality of ideas, quality of interactions, and quality of relationships—all of which allow us to support each other as we support our diverse communities. And membership engagement is what drives everything.

Our strategic framework identifies member engagement as one of two primary themes. (Attracting and retaining talent in government finance is the other.) It permeates everything we do as an organization. Looking back at 2022, I'm proud of what we've all accomplished together.

Looking back on an exceptional year

Our online member communities have been up and running for their first full year, and so far, more than 2,000 of our members have signed up for our general forum. The forum provides access to a diverse group of finance officers, giving all our members the opportunity to exchange ideas, get feedback, and take part in substantive discussions. You can get an email summary of key conversations by subscribing to the daily digest for any of our online communities.

Our in-person annual conference was back in 2022 after two years of the pandemic. Representatives from nine countries, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, five U.S. territories, and seven Canadian provinces came to the City of Austin, Texas, in June to learn, network, and reconnect. In all, more than 5,400 people representing more than 2,500 organizations attended.

We also started offering in-person training again this year, while continuing to expand our catalog of virtual offerings. In fact, nearly half of all GFOA members attended at least one educational or networking event in 2022. GFOA now offers:

- An extensive list of immersion courses.
- Recurring training courses that touch on best practices across all areas of public finance.
- Webinars on current events or trends.
- Regular networking events with our affinity groups.

We also offered more free events than ever before.

More than 50 percent of our member organizations participated in our Certificate of Achievement award program in 2022, and more than 20 percent of our member organizations participated in the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

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This issue of *GFR* also highlights the achievements of our 2022 Awards for Excellence winners. Each organization featured developed a creative solution to a common problem, implemented a GFOA best practice in exemplary fashion, and was willing to share their experiences with peers from across the United States and Canada, allowing other communities to replicate their successes. Please take a look at the case studies summarizing the work of each award-winning jurisdiction, starting on page 16.



And looking forward to an even better 2023

Over the last year, GFOA has made great strides in promoting member engagement, but we have room to do much more. To that end, we've identified roles for GFOA in how we serve our members—as a resource, an educator, an advocate, and a facilitator. We are becoming more intentional about the role that we can play in bringing our members together to help solve challenges, both mundane and generational, that face our profession. As we celebrate 2022, we also look forward to 2023.

- **Education.** We plan to reach more of our members with a full schedule of both in-person and virtual learning. We're investing in our Chicago headquarters to improve the training space, and we have plans to offer additional classes there throughout next year. We're also excited about introducing asynchronous learning opportunities.
- **Certification.** Our revised Certified Public Finance Officer program was launched this year, and our goal now is to drastically increase participation. All seven tests will soon be ready, and we look forward to welcoming and celebrating all our CPFOs. Not only will certification help members advance in their careers, but it will also be used to recruit and train new finance officers.

- **Membership.** GFOA is working on technological improvements, including business intelligence tools. We'll also be introducing our first director of member strategy. These investments will allow us to expand offerings for our affinity groups, relaunch student initiatives, and be more strategic about building our member network.
- **Research.** We continue to rethink revenue and budgeting. And, fresh off our rethinking public engagement summit, we'll soon be turning that content and format into new opportunities for our members. We've also heard that in addition to rethinking revenue, budgeting, and public engagement, our members would like to see research on how we can rethink financial reporting—engaging a new audience in our work to transform government.

GFOA also offers many more opportunities to engage and volunteer. For example, our members regularly write articles for *GFR*, submit topic ideas for conference sessions, provide materials (sample policies, examples, and case studies) for use in our advocacy campaigns, and volunteer their time to review with award program submissions.

And if you're looking for a rewarding and unique engagement experience, I would recommend that you consider serving on GFOA's executive board. In my time as a member, I served on three standing committees, the executive board, as a budget reviewer, and as a volunteer trainer. These volunteer opportunities provided me with new ideas for the communities I served, help build my professional skills, and connected me with lifelong colleagues and friends.

Sincerely,

Chris

Get Involved!

Explore opportunities for volunteering and engaging with GFOA.

 gfoa.org/volunteer

Applications to fill the five at-large positions on GFOA's executive board will be accepted on the GFOA website until February 3, 2023.

 gfoa.org/executive-board-application