

New (and Old) Opportunities for Connecting with Your Peers



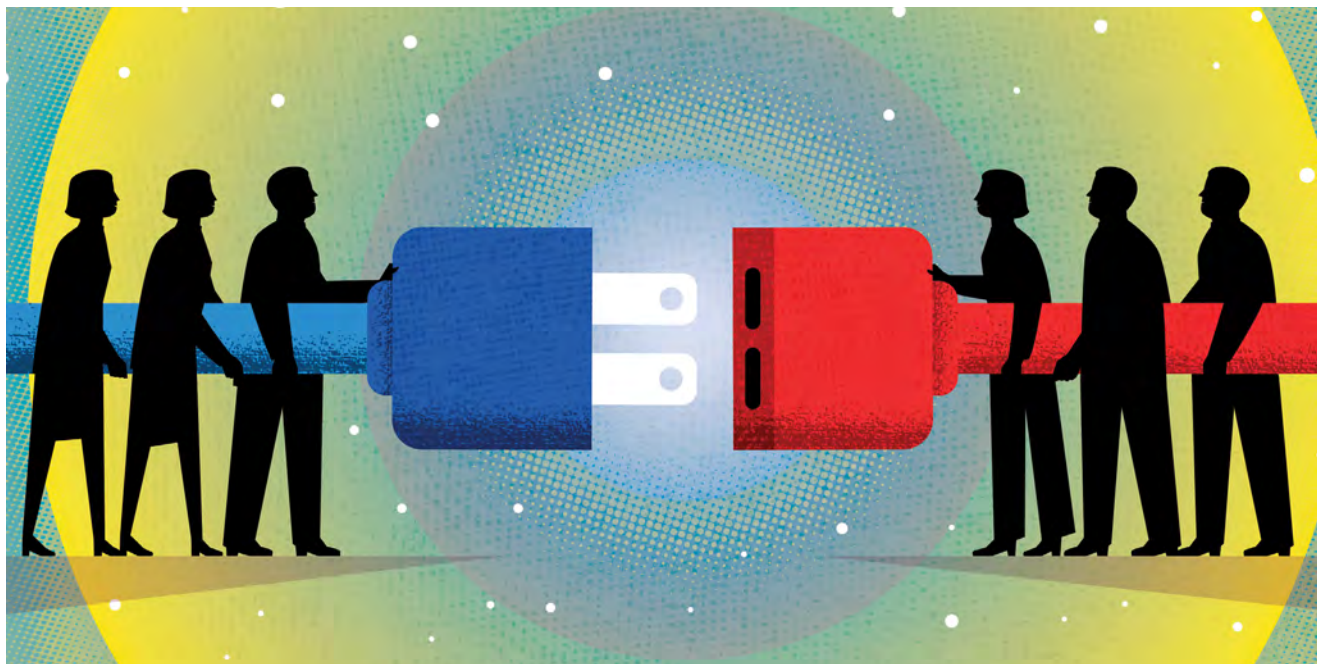
Christopher P. Morrill
Executive Director/CEO

Over the past few years, GFOA has taken a good, hard look at what our members want and need from our organization, and this focus has led us to make some exciting changes in member engagement. Our more than 21,000 GFOA members across the United States and Canada represent an invaluable resource for discussing best practices, sharing lessons learned, trading templates and examples, and encouraging innovation and growth in the field of public finance. Our role is to connect you to your peers, both formally and informally, and we encourage all finance officers to get involved. Many of our networking opportunities are free or heavily discounted for GFOA members.

- **Participate in GFOA training.** We've had to cancel in-person training and conferences through at least early 2022 because of the pandemic, but you'll find that we've transformed our learning curriculum to provide you with numerous opportunities for both webinars and multi-day e-learning courses. Many courses also offer discussion groups and interactive exercises so you can meet your fellow finance officers.

And don't miss GFOA's 26th annual GAAP Update this November (with encore offerings in December and January). This is GFOA's most popular training class, and with good reason—it's a great opportunity to learn about new GASB pronouncements and ongoing projects, and there's a special segment on implementation of GASB 87 (Leases).

- **Join a GFOA affinity group.** Finding other members who share similar challenges at similar organizations can seem difficult, but we can help! GFOA has dramatically enhanced programming for all its affinity groups. We offer networking and career development through the Women's Public Finance Network and Black Caucus, along with regular programming on specific issues facing small governments, large governments, and utilities through our Small Government Forum, Urban Forum, and Utility Finance Forum. All GFOA networking groups are free to members.
- **Share your work.** GFOA research regularly features examples from GFOA members to help communicate innovative ideas, best practices, and case studies. As you read through this issue of *GFR*, for example, think about what you can contribute and consider submitting an article.
- **Be part of the online member community.** Post a question, share an example, or simply check in to view other conversations as part of our online member communities. We have several member communities so you can stay connected with topics or areas of most interest. Many networking groups also have dedicated online communities.
- **Enroll in the Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO) program.** We've been hard at work revising our certification program, and a large part of this was a drive to increase member engagement.



We offer regular training, online communities, and discounts to GFOA events for all candidates, and for current CPFOs we've modified compliance requirements to focus more on professional engagement. We're also recognizing our CPFOs for their roles in leadership, instruction, mentoring, and advocacy. And coming soon, we will roll out a mentorship program for new CPFOs.

- **Help us plan our next conference.** Did you know that each GFOA conference (including the virtual conferences of the past two years) has featured more than 150 practitioners who have volunteered to share their expertise? Our process for choosing sessions starts with a call for topics (which you can find now on the GFOA website at gfoa.org/call-for-topics). We invite you to provide speaker recommendations, innovative topics, or requests for the type of information you'd like to see. Our

staff works to make the sessions as relevant as possible for members and to address your questions. June 2022 will be here soon, and we look forward to welcoming you to our live conference event in Austin, Texas! Stay tuned for registration information in early 2022.

- **Apply for a GFOA leadership position.** GFOA's standing committees just welcomed a new class of finance professionals who began their three-year term in September. GFOA committees provide a great opportunity for you to engage with leaders from all types of organizations and to help develop GFOA best practices. Also consider applying to become a member of GFOA's Executive Board, which provides another excellent way to develop lasting relationships with other GFOA members and staff, while providing direction and vision to the organization. Applications for

GFOA's five Executive Board slots for 2022 will be accepted in December 2021 and January 2022. If you're interested in joining a committee, we'll be accepting applications after the GFOA Conference in June 2022.

Throughout my 30-plus-year career in local government and public finance, I've benefited immensely from the ongoing relationships and connections I've made along the way through GFOA. Some of the best advice I received early on was to get involved, and many of my most memorable moments and friendships have grown from my time as a GFOA instructor, committee member, board member, president, and now CEO. I encourage all of you to get involved, even if it means starting small. We've worked hard to develop opportunities for you, and we look forward to showing you all that GFOA has to offer.

Sincerely,

Chris