

Coming Back Stronger



Christopher P. Morrill
Executive Director/CEO

As the percentage of people who have been vaccinated grows, we're all hoping for a return to normalcy in the near future. But for many governments, and for GFOA, returning to "normal" won't be a reset to March 2020. We've used this last year as an opportunity to challenge the status quo, make improvements, and adopt new ways of doing business that will make us stronger in the future.

Many governments have had to rethink policies on public engagement, procurement, and cash handling during the pandemic. In any number of ways—holding public meetings online, allowing for electronic submission of bids and RFPs, utilizing electronic signatures, accepting online credit card payments and more—governments have not only mitigated risks from the pandemic but also modernized operations, improved transparency and access, and streamlined operations.

What's more, last year many governments were forced into making budget decisions about programs and services that were difficult at the time but will lead to more sustainable organizations. GFOA's Fiscal First Aid model (at gfoa.org/ffa), including the 12 steps of Recovering from Financial Distress, provided a path to help organizations use fiscal crisis as an opportunity to emerge in a better position and transform the way they deliver services. I'm proud of the work that many of you did to build more sustainable organizations that are now in a position to tackle today's challenges and seize future opportunities to work toward a thriving community.

We've used this last year as an opportunity to challenge the status quo, make improvements, and adopt new ways of doing business that will make us stronger in the future.

GFOA also used the past year as an opportunity to improve the way we serve you. We haven't been able to provide in-person training or hold our annual conferences, scheduled for New Orleans in 2020 and Chicago in 2021, but we have invested heavily in e-learning opportunities. We expanded these offerings to include more webinars and multi-day core courses to provide in-depth training on accounting, budgeting, debt management, treasury management, and more. All of this training is now available in one place on GFOA's new learning management system (at learn.gfoa.org).

In July, GFOA will hold its second virtual conference, providing more than 50 concurrent sessions and the potential for 38 CPE credits.

We're also working to obtain certification to provide CPE credits for on-demand training and expect to begin offering additional classes soon.

We understand that personal connection is critical to getting the most from your GFOA membership, and we recently launched member communities (at community.gfoa.org) to help you connect with your colleagues. We encourage you to use this portal to engage with your peers on topics of interest, make new connections, expand your network, and support each other.

Looking to the future, we plan to return to in-person activities by 2022. We're already planning our in-person conference in Austin, Texas, as well as a return to national training and meetings for GFOA committees. We will also maintain a strong lineup of online resources for members who are unable to travel or who find the remote offerings more convenient. Not only will we offer expanded training, but also ongoing discussion and network sessions related to guidance on the American Rescue Plan Act and other federal programs, as well as expanded offerings from GFOA's member groups like the Black Caucus, Women's Public Finance Network, Urban Forum and Small Government Forum.

The past year has taught us lot, and we plan to take advantage of that in the future to come back stronger than ever in our support for you and the governments you serve.

Sincerely,

Chris



[Register at gfoa.org/conference](https://gfoa.org/conference)

2021 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE | Register now for our virtual conference, July 12–23, 2021. Choose from more than 50 concurrent sessions and earn up to 38 CPE credits.

SAVE THE DATE FOR 2022 | Join us in-person for GFOA's 116th Annual Conference, June 5–8, 2022, at the Neal Kocurek Memorial Austin Convention Center in Austin, Texas.

