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Education to Serve Every Member

The No. 1 challenge I hear about when I speak to members is attracting and retaining talent. I've even heard it described as a crisis for government finance. While the solutions to the talent problem are multi-faceted, we believe that education and professional development are critical.

GFOA's recent research report, "Meeting Demand for State and Local Public Finance Jobs" (available at gfoa.org/meeting-demand-public-finance), offers insights that can help governments think differently about finding talent. GFOA is committed to developing best practices and strategies for finding talent outside of the public sector. We also want to partner with you in helping to develop existing employees, which is a strategy shown to help with retention.

Approximately 43 percent of all GFOA members engaged with us in at least one training session last year, and we hope to improve on that in 2023. More of our members should not only have the opportunity to learn best practices, identify strategies for solving common problems, and develop critical

skills, but also to meet with each other, share their experiences, and engage with the best membership network in the public sector. As you navigate the challenges your government faces or plan for the next steps in your career, I encourage you to look at GFOA's educational offerings throughout the year, especially the new initiatives we'll debut in the coming weeks.

Technical training remains the core of GFOA's educational curriculum. In 2023, we will offer more than 45 recurring courses covering fundamental topics in public finance. And to make our training more accessible, we will offer both virtual and in-person versions of most of the classes in our training catalog. Virtual learning makes training more convenient and, for some of our members, it makes training possible where it wasn't before. At the same time, group discussions, mentoring, and networking can be difficult over Zoom, so we will make greater use of our enhanced training facility at the GFOA offices in Chicago for our in-person events.

Over the past year we've invested in new technology that greatly improves the audio, video, and video conference capabilities in our Chicago training

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room. We also plan to return to our pre-pandemic approach to bringing training to a other locations around the United States. We kicked off 2023 by hosting classes in Garden Grove, California. Please look at GFOA's events calendar (at gfoa.org/events) for a complete listing of offerings, featuring popular classes such as the Accounting Academy, Intermediate or Advanced Governmental Accounting Budget Academy, the Role



of the Finance Officer in the Budget Process, Treasury Management Best Practices, Debt Management Best Practices, and ERP Readiness and System Selection.

We won't just be covering core topics, though. Last year's training sessions focusing on current events, recent research, and how to better prepare for and respond to federal government programs were very popular, and we'll be building on that in 2023. Last year's most popular individual classes (other than the GAAP Update, which will return in November) were related to grant and American Rescue Plan Act compliance. You can also expect timely information related to our federal advocacy efforts, "Rethinking" research initiatives, and developments from our public finance workforce initiative.

Another unique opportunity is GFOA's virtual forum, which will return in 2023 to provide five days of carefully curated sessions aimed at providing comprehensive sessions on core public finance topics. The virtual forum provides an excellent opportunity for entry or mid-level staff,

who may not have the budgeted funds to attend a full conference for a week, to experience multiple sessions and engagement opportunities.

GFOA also recognizes that finance officers need to improve leadership skills as well technical skills. Our Financial Foundations Framework provides leadership strategies and principles that help our members get those best practices implemented. We're also working to incorporate these lessons into existing training sessions, and if you attend the GFOA annual conference in Portland, Oregon, this summer, you'll notice our new emphasis on leadership sessions. In addition, our Leadership Academy will be offered at least twice this year, and we'll have a virtual training series specifically for leadership and DEI competencies. Stay tuned for announcements about our first leadership offering this spring.

We are confident that all our GFOA members will find useful training and opportunities that will allow them to engage with GFOA and get value from their membership. To help you

find your training best fit, or to help your staff develop the skills they need to take the next steps in their careers, we are developing a new approach based on "learning pathways." We'll roll out these resources later this year to highlight critical skills and competencies required for different roles within public finance.

GFOA takes pride in being able to provide training that is practical, relevant, and high-quality, an effort that depends on assistance from many volunteers who help us develop and deliver these sessions. If you have an interest in volunteering to assist with GFOA training, please reach out at gfoa.org/volunteer.

Sincerely,

Chris

 **Register Now**

View GFOA's upcoming virtual and in-person educational opportunities.

 gfoa.org/events