

Returning to Next



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Executive Director/CEO

On February 2, the groundhog emerges from his burrow to predict whether we will experience an early

spring or six more weeks of winter. In much the same way, the Omicron variant arrived in December to prolong our COVID winter. After months of tentative normalcy, the shadow of Omicron brought with it a new round of challenges for local governments, which are facing both a public health pandemic and new difficulties with maintaining adequate staffing levels. But winter passes eventually, and we're hopeful that 2022 will be the year when we put the pandemic behind us and spring forward to new opportunities. At GFOA, we have been preparing our "return to next" with expanded services and new opportunities to engage with our members as you pursue important initiatives to improve the financial sustainability of your organizations.

Many of you have shared plans for 2022 that include implementing new GASB standards, upgrading ERP systems, making new investments in infrastructure, addressing pension shortfalls, and overcoming the Great Resignation. We're excited about providing the best practices, professional development, research and consulting, networking opportunities, and ongoing advocacy efforts that will help you to meet these challenges and thrive.

Of course, we've already gotten started. In January, GFOA's standing

committees met in person for the first time in two years in Washington, D.C. The meetings included discussion around best practices, updates from federal agencies, and opportunities to engage with leading practitioners.

And we're looking forward to GFOA's annual conference, which will be back in 2022. Planned for Austin, Texas, June 5 to 8, the conference will include over 65 sessions, more than 250 speakers, one of the largest exhibit halls we've had yet, and many opportunities to engage with peers. Registration is now open at gfoa.org/conference.

In-person training will also be returning this year. Classes focused on accounting, budgeting, treasury management, debt management, and more—including GFOA's popular Budget Academy and Accounting Academy—will be back. We're planning for events starting in April in Chicago, and continuing in multiple locations throughout the year. For more information on GFOA training, please visit gfoa.org/events.

We're also providing new offerings this year, including GFOA's Leadership Academy, more online communities, on-demand learning opportunities, expanded services in GFOA's networking groups—the Women's Public Finance Network, Small Government Forum, Urban Forum, Utility Finance Forum, and Black Caucus—and a complete roll out of the revised Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO) program (gfoa.org/cpfo).

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As we grow, we recognize the vital role our members play. None of our programs would be possible without the many hours members volunteer to teach, review budget documents and annual comprehensive financial reports, mentor peers, provide case studies and sample policies, write for *GFR*, and share best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations at our conference.

To make it easier for you to engage with GFOA, we’ve developed a listing of the opportunities we provide. To learn more about what we have to offer and the variety of ways in which you can volunteer to serve the profession, please visit gfoa.org/volunteer.

As we get back to “normal” in 2022, I look forward to traveling, seeing you at conferences, reuniting with old colleagues, and meeting a new class of GFOA volunteers.

Sincerely,

Chris

