



Together We Thrive

Building on the strength of GFOA's member network

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GFOA's membership network contains more than 38,000 individuals, 7,200 government organizations, and 50 affiliate organizations representing GFOA's mission and interest at a state, provincial, or regional level. We made one of our most important strategic moves to strengthen this network in August 2025, when we implemented an organization-wide membership structure. Our goal: make our resources, education, and research available to more public servants so they can better serve their communities.

By eliminating additional fees for extra members, we've made GFOA membership available for entry-level staff, mid-level managers, program staff outside of the finance department, and other key stakeholders who are part of the finance function but don't sit at the top of the org chart. All these individuals now have access to GFOA online communities, training programs, certification, affinity groups, and more. I am thrilled that GFOA membership is now more representative of the diversity of the public finance profession.

GFOA also adjusted membership fees to create incentives for small governments—including rural counties and school districts—and special districts to join. Our aim is to bring membership levels in these types of governments closer to the numbers seen in mid-sized and large city and county governments. We are also investing resources to better serve the unique needs of these new members. By relaunching the Alliance for Smarter School Spending, developing a new financial sustainability award in partnership with the American Water Works Association, creating more remote training opportunities, and expanding resources relevant to small governments, GFOA will have specific offerings to meet the needs of our new members.

This fall, GFOA plans to take the next critical step in strengthening our membership network by creating a formal connection to the more than 50 state, provincial, or regional GFOA "affiliate" organizations. Currently, these important partners—for example, the Government Finance Officers Association

of Arizona, California Society of Municipal Finance Officers, Great Plains Government Finance Officers Association, Illinois Government Finance Officers Association, Maryland GFOA, Washington Finance Officers Association, and GFOA Alberta—share similar missions, names, and members with the GFOA of the United States and Canada, but no formal connection.

When I became GFOA's chief executive officer in 2017, I saw great potential in better meeting our mission by forging stronger partnerships with these groups. At the time, though, there was a sense that GFOA was more competitor than partner, chasing the same members for training opportunities, conference attendance, and membership. I made it a priority to attend as many state/provincial GFOA conferences as I could. I listened to their members, including the volunteers who led the organizations. What I learned was that the communities we both serve would benefit from government finance professionals belonging to both a larger international GFOA and their regional GFOA.



Each organization provides valuable resources, connections, and opportunities. Our team at the GFOA of the United States and Canada has leaned into a strategy of better supporting state, provincial, and regional government finance organizations with resources, speakers, and scholarships. GFOA staff now participate in more than 30 of these events each year, sharing information and better connecting members with resources.

This fall, GFOA will create a formal network of affiliate organizations, providing expanded benefits to all GFOA finance professionals through both GFOA of the United States and Canada and the state, provincial, and regional GFOAs. Each organization will remain a separate non-profit organization run by members in its target geographic area, but with an expanded set of benefits and an improved and coordinated membership experience.

GFOA has developed a memorandum of understanding to document benefits of a more formal partnership. We are excited to roll out initiatives

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over the next year for branding alignment, assistance with resources for speaking at annual conferences and other events, coordinated support for GFOA best practices, scholarships for the Certified Public Finance Officer program, new networking opportunities at GFOA's annual conference, and much more. We envision a streamlined membership experience where GFOA of the United States and Canada and each state/provincial GFOA can work together to provide more consistency for joint training, share major

technology platforms, develop resource materials, and create enhanced efficiencies in administrative processes such as membership renewals.

We all realize the state and local governments across the United States and Canada face growing pressure for resources. Revenues are constrained and the costs of providing services continue to grow, making it more important than ever that we provide the best value for government finance professionals at both the international and regional levels, through collaboration and partnerships.

GFOA will reach out to leaders from each affiliate GFOA to discuss program details and expectations for 2027. We are excited to roll out the next phase in our efforts to strengthen this membership network, and we look forward to building a more connected GFOA. I believe that building stronger partnerships with state, provincial, and regional GFOAs will help us to achieve our mission of advancing excellence and innovation in government finance to build thriving communities.

Chris