

In Brief



CAUCUSES

GFOA Introduces LGBTQIA+ Caucus

GFOA's LGBTQIA+ Caucus officially launched in May 2023. Through networking and education, the group will advocate for LGBTQIA+ members within the government finance profession and work to increase the visibility of LGBTQIA+ people within GFOA and the profession as a whole.

More than 100 people attended the first meeting of the LGBTQIA+ Caucus at the GFOA conference in Portland on May 22, 2023, where the group's bylaws were adopted and the first leaders were elected.

"I think that establishing this type of group is vital for advancing LGBTQIA+ people and letting them know that they are not alone and have a resource to lean on," a GFOA LGBTQIA+ Caucus inaugural meeting attendee said.

The caucus was begun by a group of GFOA members and staff as part of GFOA's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. A task force was formed in January 2023 to establish interest, and that interest quickly developed a plan to draft bylaws and a mission statement, and to organize for the group's first meeting.

"We didn't know how many people were going to show up for this first meeting," Caucus Chair Andrew Kramer said. "We were blown away by a completely full

room. It was amazing to meet so many people at the conference who were so passionate about this. It underscored for us how vital the need for this group is. I am personally grateful for the support of the GFOA Executive Board and especially the GFOA staff who have been critical in getting this set up."

As the group gets established, they have set goals of reaching 200 members, finalizing a mission statement, setting up a series of networking events, and looking for opportunities to support students and early-career professionals. "We will also be working with GFOA's Executive Board and staff to make sure that future meetings and conferences are safe and inclusive for everyone," Kramer said.

"I'm looking forward to setting up networking events to help build and support this community within GFOA," Caucus Vice Chair Jennifer Davis said. Other LGBTQIA+ groups, like Muni Pride, have already reached out to find ways to collaborate and network. "We want to find ways to get people together for fun, but also to build our network of support. We heard so many amazing stories, but also some difficult ones. As much as anything, people told us that just knowing that they weren't alone was really powerful," she explained.

"Over the next year, we'll be working to find ways to raise the visibility of the group and highlight the issues we face, but also the opportunities. We want everyone to know that LGBTQIA+ representation in finance offices is critical to advancing any DEI initiatives in our governments," Caucus Secretary Matthew Lentz said. "We are excited to be able to launch this caucus and see where our members take us."

"It's about visibility and action. We want people to know that they can bring their full selves to their jobs, that they have incredibly important perspectives and value, and that they have the support of hundreds of other finance professionals across the globe. This year, we are focusing on increasing that visibility and growing an active and engaged membership," Kramer said.

To learn more about the LGBTQIA+ Caucus and become a member, visit the affinity group page on GFOA's website. From there you will have access to resources and a community forum to post questions, share insights, and just say, "Hi, I'm here, and I'm glad you are, too!" 🏳️‍🌈

Get involved

Learn more about the LGBTQIA+ Caucus and how to become a member.

➡️ gfoa.org/lgbtqia-caucus