



## LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

# Elevate Your Career and Community

BY NATALIE LAUDADIO

GFOA is committed to promoting excellence in public finance, supporting public finance professionals, and leading efforts to build thriving communities. We believe that strong leadership is essential to achieving these goals. That's why we offer a range of leadership opportunities designed to help you enhance your skills, advance your career, and support fellow GFOA members.

## Affinity Groups

*Drive initiatives and provide member support within specific interest areas in one of GFOA's nine affinity groups: Alliance for Smarter School Spending, Black Caucus, Community for Canadian Issues, LGBTQIA+ Caucus, Small Government Forum, Urban Forum, Utility Finance Forum, Women's Public Finance Network, and Young Professionals Network.*

"GFOA is a great resource for learning and connecting with other finance professionals. As the former vice president and now the president-elect of GFOA's Women's Public Finance Network (WPFN), I encourage others to network, use the community forums, and take the trainings in any form you can. I got involved simply by filling out an application and sharing my passion for this association and specifically why I wanted to help empower women through WPFN. If you don't know where to start, just reach out to me, the GFOA team, or any other members of the GFOA committees and affinity groups."

**MOLLY TALKINGTON**, finance director, City of Rolling Meadows, Illinois

“The Alliance provided us with invaluable resources as we worked to realign our student-based budgets.”



**LUNDA ASMANI**  
Norwalk Public  
Schools, Connecticut

“My first step upon becoming the CFO of Norwalk Public Schools in Connecticut was to seek out GFOA resources. I connected with the GFOA Alliance for Smarter School Spending and promptly enrolled our district. The alliance provided us with invaluable resources as we worked to realign our student-based budgets, ensuring that funding was directly tied to enrollment and student needs. By implementing best practices, we successfully enhanced our student-based budget processes.”

**LUNDA ASMANI**, CPFO, GFOA president elect and chief financial officer, Norwalk Public Schools, Connecticut

### Annual Conference Session Speaker

*Share your experiences, insights, and expertise at our premier event.*

“GFOA has a multitude of resources available for members to learn, lead, and advance their careers. I have experienced this through GFOA by being given the opportunity to speak at the “Why I’m a

“Becoming a CPFO has been transformative for my career.”



**ROB VOSHELL**  
City of Sartell, Minnesota

Finance Officer” session at the annual conference this past year. This gave me the opportunity to improve my leadership and public speaking skills, and it was a great way for me to advance my career through sharing my story.”

**ABBEY CHAPMAN**, financial analyst-finance, City of Rock Hill, South Carolina

### Awards Program Reviewer

*Play a critical role in recognizing excellence in public finance.*

“My work with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award program exposes me to municipal, district, and state budgets from all over the United States and Canada, giving me the opportunity to help define the gold standard for budget documents, and I’ve been able to apply the insights that I’ve gained over the years to make my own jurisdiction’s documents more transparent, approachable and informative.”

**ARI J. SKY**, assistant city manager for finance, City of Watertown, Massachusetts

### Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO)

*Enhance your credentials and demonstrate your proficiency.*

“Becoming a Certified Public Finance Officer [CPFO] has been transformative for my career. The training not only honed my leadership skills but also emphasized the importance of continual learning. This certification has advanced my professional growth, opening doors to new opportunities in public finance.”

**ROB VOSHELL**, finance director, City of Sartell, Minnesota

### Executive Board Service

*Lead GFOA’s strategic vision.*

“When I started my career in government finance back in 2000, I joined GFOA not knowing what to expect. I started out attending GFOA’s regional trainings and conferences, then became involved in the GFOA standing committees. The

“Getting involved in GFOA was one of the best choices to help build my confidence and advance my career.”



**SONIA ANDREWS**  
City of Scottsdale, Arizona

opportunities with GFOA over the years increased my knowledge, my confidence, my connections and groomed my presentation and leadership skills along the way. I serve on the GFOA Executive Board, the Board’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and the GFOA Scholarship Committee to continue my professional development and give back. I also participate as a mentor with GFOA’s WPFN Mentorship Program. I didn’t know it back then, but getting involved in GFOA was one of the best choices I made to help build my confidence and advance my career.”

**SONIA ANDREWS**, CPA, city treasurer/chief financial officer, City of Scottsdale, Arizona

### Honors and Awards

*Whether it’s GFOA’s Recognition for Outstanding Public Service, Awards for Excellence, or other award program recognitions [Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, Distinguished Budget Presentation, Popular Annual Financial Reporting Awards, Canadian Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting], GFOA honors members for their service and achievements. Apply for awards or nominate your colleagues when applications open.*

“My first goal at Linn County was to prepare a budget document that would earn the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. This was accomplished within the first few months, followed by the Popular Annual

Financial Report. Linn County has been a recipient of the COA, budget, and PAFR awards for more than 25 years and has continued to participate in these GFOA award programs, even when dealing with challenges including natural disasters, COVID-19, and ARPA administration. This would not have been possible without the learning opportunities and resources provided by GFOA.”

**DAWN JINDRICH**, CPA, finance director, Linn County, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

“GFOA recognizes the efforts of communities of all sizes by providing a platform and programs that contribute to the growth and professionalism of government accountants. They provide educational opportunities at all levels of government through conferences, seminars, and online resources to improve the profession’s integrity. Small communities can be recognized nationally and participate in programs to improve financial accountability and standardization within governmental reporting. The opportunities available through membership and participation with GFOA are invaluable to our organization.”

**CHARLES LINO**, CPA, CGFM, city manager, Town of Pecos City, Pecos, Texas

“GFOA offers exceptional training that will help all leaders constantly grow their own skills while also equipping their teams to grow into positions of more responsibility.”



**RON HOLIFIELD**  
City of Keller, Texas

“It’s one of the greatest honors to become part of another person’s life.”



**MARY BETH STRINGENT**  
City of Harrisburg,  
Pennsylvania

### Leadership Academy

*Attend one of our academies to bolster your leadership and management skills to better serve your community.*

“As a public finance officer, my goal is to serve the people of my community through a servant leader approach. In addition to keeping up with technical training, it was equally important to look at the broader issues facing governments and to find opportunities to enhance my leadership skills. GFOA’s Leadership Academy did just that and so much more. The academy reinforced that although my work might be behind spreadsheets and meetings, it is truly in the way that we do our work that has the most impact. Having a humble approach, learning from others, and being loyal to public service were a few key themes during my time at the academy. Not only that, but through my time in Charleston, I met some of the most incredible people in government finance, and I am fortunate enough to stay connected with them today. GFOA’s Leadership Academy was a highlight in my professional development, and its impact will be positively felt throughout my career. I highly recommend the program!”

**RAE BOWMAN**, deputy administrative services director, City of Monrovia, Monrovia, California

### Mentorship

*Guide and support emerging finance professionals.*

“As the years go by, it’s sometimes easy to take some things for granted. Being a mentor in GFOA’s Women’s Public Finance Network’s (WPFN) Mentorship

Program has given me the opportunity to not only encourage others but also better appreciate and reflect on my own accomplishments. In addition, our regular meetings keep us both accountable to moving forward and always working toward advancing in our goals. But, most importantly it’s one of the greatest honors to become part of another person’s life.”

**MARY BETH STRINGENT**, PMP, deputy secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Banking and Securities, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

### Scholarship Recipients

*Pursue further education with GFOA support.*

“I have been working for the Town of Davie since 1996, dedicating more than 28 years to the town since I began as a college intern in the Budget and Finance department. In 2018, I became a GFOA member and was awarded the Government Finance Professional Development scholarship to aid me in completing my master’s degree in accounting, all while maintaining my full-time responsibilities and role as an accountant II. Shortly after, I was promoted to accounting manager and subsequently, controller, the position I currently hold. With the town’s culture of fostering growth and potential, along with my eagerness to enhance and empower my professional development, I recently achieved the CPFO certification, which gave me confidence to perform my work, network with my peers, and mentor my staff. I recently joined two committees at the state level, aiming to provide valuable insights on conference programming and certification.”

**CHELSIE WILSON**, MBA, CGFO, CPFO, controller, Town of Davie, Davie, Florida

### Standing Committee Membership

*Discuss and develop GFOA’s best practice statements.*

“Being a member of GFOA’s Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting Committee has allowed me to engage in technical conversations surrounding governmental finance. The collaboration between committee members and seeing their dedication and knowledge assist



in the development of best practices is evident that there is passion for the work. I continue to feel encouraged about the state of governmental finance.”

**DR. OMAR GUTIERREZ**, vice president of administrative services, Fresno City College, Fresno, California

### Task Force Participation

*Collaborate with peers on focused projects and initiatives.*

“Being involved with GFOA has been invaluable to my career and professional growth. The GFOA network helped to connect me with the opportunity to serve as the budget manager for the City of Madison. While in that role, I served on a special GFOA task force focused on employee engagement, which was my first chance to connect with colleagues to work on challenges that all public finance officers face. I’m wrapping up my role with the GFOA Budget Committee, where I have been fortunate to develop close friendships with other budget leaders from across the country.”

**LAURA LARSEN**, budget director, City of Baltimore, Maryland

“GFOA has not only been a guide in navigating the complexities of government finance but has also been a catalyst for my professional growth, opening doors to impactful initiatives such as my participation in the “Rethinking Budgeting” initiative, and opportunities for knowledge exchange and leadership. This exposure has not only enriched my professional network but has also contributed significantly to my growth as a public finance professional. It has opened leadership opportunities, and my recent election to the GFOA Executive Board is a testament to that. Members who are looking to get more involved can join task forces, attend events, and connect with peers to drive impactful change in government finance.”

**HARPREET HORA**, CPA, CGA, executive director–budget services, Atlanta Public Schools, Georgia

“GFOA’s Leadership Academy was a highlight in my professional development, and its impact will be positively felt throughout my career.”



**RAE BOWMAN**  
City of Monrovia,  
California

### Training Presenter

*Educate and inspire your peers with your knowledge.*

“The world is changing at an unprecedented pace, and so are the skills required of leaders to thrive amid such disruptive change. The first job of every leader is their own constant growth and improvement. And the second job of every leader is to raise up the next generation of leaders. GFOA is doing amazing work on both fronts and offers exceptional training that will help all leaders constantly grow their own skills while also equipping their teams to grow into positions of more responsibility. Failure to invest in growing

yourself as well as your team will doom your organization to a future of mediocrity.”

**RON HOLIFIELD**, chief executive officer, Strategic Government Resources, and interim executive director, Alliance for Innovation, Keller, Texas

“GFOA has many great opportunities for local government financial professionals to become involved in policy innovation and thought leadership. As part of GFOA’s Rethinking Budgeting initiative, I was able to work with peers from across two countries and build relationships with such knowledgeable and inspiring people; it really was an honor and a pleasure. We need municipal finance to stay relevant and impactful to our changing environments and getting involved with the GFOA creates that opportunity for continuous learning.”

**TARA BAKER**, CPA, CA, treasurer, GM Finance, City of Guelph, Ontario

By getting involved, you can give back to the profession while networking and building connections with like-minded professionals. These opportunities not only help you grow personally and professionally but also contribute to the success and vitality of your community. Join us in our commitment to excellence and contribute to a brighter future for public finance! 📢

*Natalie Laudadio is GFOA’s senior manager of member programs.*

## Why Get Involved?

- ➡ **Enhance your leadership skills.** Develop and refine your ability to lead within and outside your organization.
- ➡ **Advance your career.** Gain valuable experience and visibility within the public finance community.
- ➡ **Network with peers.** Build lasting connections with other finance professionals.
- ➡ **Give back to your community.** Use your skills to make a meaningful impact.

Read about ways to get involved with GFOA at [gfoa.org/volunteer](https://gfoa.org/volunteer)

Not yet a GFOA member? Learn more and join today at [gfoa.org/membership](https://gfoa.org/membership)