

10 Steps to Creating a Good PAFR

Governments create popular annual financial reports (PAFRs) to better communicate financial information to their citizens and to help build trust through transparency. There is no comprehensive playbook that provides all the guidance necessary to produce an excellent report. Use this checklist to help your government refine its existing PAFR or get started on producing one.

For information about GFOA's Popular Annual Financial Report Award Program, go to gfoa.org/pafr.

1

Make your theme compelling.

2

Lead with a letter that lists the highlights of the year and explains why the report is important.

3

Use clear prose and avoid long words, technical language, and jargon.

4

Make the layout open and inviting.

5

Make good use of charts and graphs. Include multi-year GAAP data to help identify trends that will be useful in the interpretation of financial data.

6

Use photos that reflect your community—avoid stock photos.

7

Include only the most relevant and meaningful information.

8

Adopt an educational and informative tone that aims to fully inform readers.

9

Avoid feel-good posturing. If there's a problem, tackle it directly, and be forthright in the face of adversity.

10

Understand the value of producing a PAFR. It can help your staff understand the jurisdiction better in addition to increasing awareness of what your government has to say.

