



Reaching Out: GFOA's New Member Community

BY TIMOTHY MARTIN

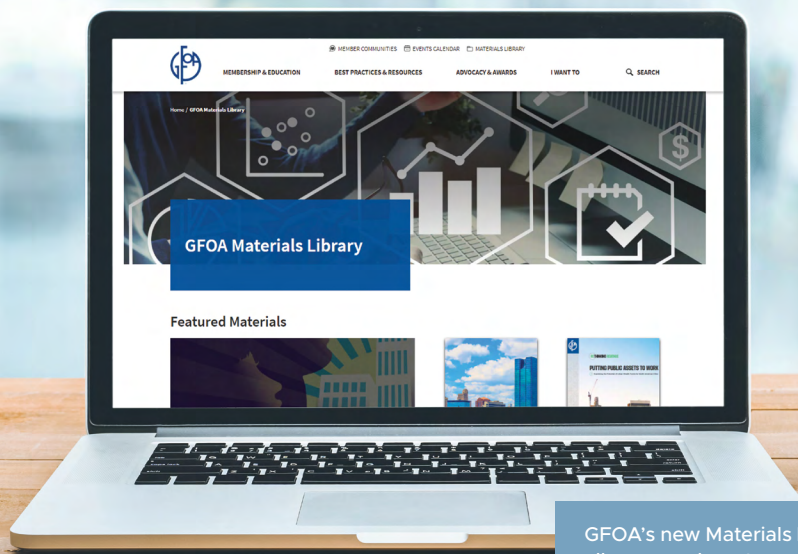
When Mikaela Rhoads, internal auditor for the City of Iowa City, Iowa, had a question about how to handle the city's grants management process, she turned to GFOA's new Member Community. Within a few days, she had responses from members across the country, offering input and sharing their policies. Mikaela is just one of many GFOA members who have joined the new community to network with their peers, and this is exactly the kind of engagement we were hoping for when we launched the platform back in April. I'll talk more about communities in a moment, but first, we need to talk about the beginning of GFOA's new digital journey—which really began more than two years ago, when we decided to overhaul the new GFOA website.

All about the website

By overhaul, I mean building from the ground up, not just throwing in a new template. As the process began, website consultants met with GFOA members face-to-face to get a good understanding of what they thought about our old site, why they visit, and

what they would change. GFOA also dove into the data from the old website to see what the numbers showed. One clear theme emerged. While the old site was filled with important and useful information for members—like best practices and research—important connections were missing, which left visitors sometimes missing out.

From there, GFOA's new Materials Library was born. When the new gfoa.org launched in June 2020, it quickly became a popular feature. The library allows members to browse best practices, publications, research reports, past articles from *Government Finance Review*, and more by topic. We've also added member-only content to the library, with more on the way. Overall, the site gives GFOA new ways to bring you the latest information on public finance. The navigation at the top allows you to easily log into your member account, or browse the Events Calendar or Materials Library, or head to the new Member Community. Our drop-down navigation allows you to find membership information, best practices, advocacy updates, and more with just the click of a mouse. Need quick help? Use the "I Want To"



GFOA's new Materials Library allows members to search best practices, publications and research reports by topic.

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The member communities have provided me with the opportunity to learn how my peers respond to the accounting, managerial, and operating issues at their entities. Although we might work at different types of entities, I read posts which are quite relevant to the needs for my community.”

– NORMAN ECKSTEIN, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER & TAX COLLECTOR
TOWNSHIP OF BOONTON

drop-down menu to join GFOA and view resources such as the GFOA Job Board, register for training, apply to award programs, or ask about GFOA resources. Browse our front page to find GFOA's latest updates in different display options, all designed to get you the information you need faster.

The website's first year has been a success. We've had more than three million page views, and more than 50 percent of visitors scroll all the way down on the homepage. Other popular pages include the Jobs Board, Events Calendar, and awards programs.

GFOA's website was also built with considerations for integration. Members enjoy single sign-on capabilities between GFOA's website, association management system, and Learning Management System

(LMS). GFOA's new LMS hosts GFOA webinars, e-learning courses, and the virtual conference and since its launch last summer has already been used by over 17,000 people.

Member Communities

Now back to communities. GFOA isn't just working to build thriving communities across the country—we're working to do it online as well.

Members were continuously asking for a new way to connect with other members, and in April 2021, after months of planning, GFOA answered the call with the new GFOA Member Communities. This online engagement portal allows members to join forums, ask questions, upload documents, network with other members, and more. Members use the platform to

BY THE NUMBERS

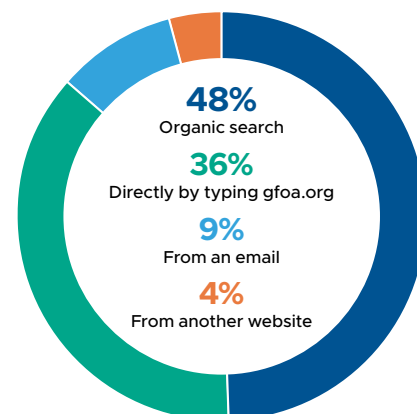


3,331,090
PAGEVIEWS

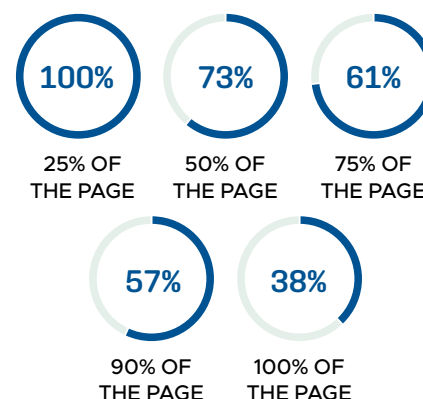


2,420,438
UNIQUE PAGEVIEWS

HOW DO MEMBERS COME TO OUR WEBSITE?



HOW FAR ARE MEMBERS SCROLLING ON THE HOMEPAGE?



TOP 10 PAGES

#1	Home page	352,924 PAGEVIEWS
#2	Jobs	117,797 PAGEVIEWS
#3	Events Calendar	94,311 PAGEVIEWS
#4	Materials Library	71,588 PAGEVIEWS
#5	COA Award	43,221 PAGEVIEWS
#6	Conference	43,033 PAGEVIEWS
#7	CPFO	34,491 PAGEVIEWS
#8	Budget Award	32,137 PAGEVIEWS
#9	Best Practices landing page	26,998 PAGEVIEWS
#10	GFOA Scholarships	23,420 PAGEVIEWS

build a network to help with everyday challenges in the public finance world. Since its launch, more than 2,400 members have logged into the platform. Nearly 1,000 members have joined the General GFOA Forum, a place for members to discuss a wide range of finance topics. The COVID-19 Forum has more than 700 members who talk about the challenges of the pandemic and brainstorm ways to spend new funding from Washington D.C. Communities have also been set up for members of GFOA's affinity groups and for CPFOs.

We're also launching new communities that allow members to take their ideas a step further. In July, we kicked off the GFOA Test Kitchen Community for members who are interested in developing and testing new ideas and practices. While engaging with GFOA staff from the Research and Consulting Center in the community, the idea is to challenge the status quo, breakdown myths, cultivate and refine raw thoughts, and move beyond "this is the way we've always done it" to begin thinking about ways to evolve public finance for the future.

This platform is free—it comes with your GFOA membership. To access it, just visit community.gfoa.org and log in with your GFOA username and password.

On the social front, GFOA continues keeping members up to date every day through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and now Instagram. Combined, our accounts have more than 36,000 followers—that's triple the number of followers we had just four years ago.

Understanding that members consume information at different times and through various mediums, we've also launched GFOA Podcasts. You can subscribe on iTunes or wherever you listen to podcasts. Topics include Week in Washington updates and episodes about leadership, trust, diversity, and inclusion.

With all the new digital enhancements over the last year, we still see this as the beginning of a journey, and we look forward to continuing to improve and enhance the ways in which we provide information and engage with members.

Timothy Martin is GFOA's senior manager for member engagement.

A side-by-side comparison of the gfoa.org home page in 2020 and 2021 during GFOA's Virtual Conference. The home page was transformed for this year's conference, with real time updates, an Attendee Portal, and more.

