



# Celebrating 250 Years of Local Democracy and the Leaders Who Fund Its Future

Christopher P. Morrill | Executive Director/CEO

**T**his summer, GFOA held its 119th annual conference in Washington, D.C. The conference is an opportunity to recognize the service, innovations, and achievements of our members and the governments they serve, and to come together as a profession to discuss best practices, new challenges, and strategies for collaboration. The public sector is unique in that leading organizations and practitioners share ideas, work together on improvements, and regularly volunteer to help each other—unlike the private sector, where similar advancements are held confidential and provide competitive advantages.

In that spirit, GFOA is proud to partner with other leading professional associations to share ideas and better support our members who work with peers beyond public finance to build thriving communities. At the 2025 conference, we welcomed representatives from the International City/County Management

Association (ICMA), National Institute of Governmental Procurement (NIGP), Local Government Hispanic Network (LGHN), National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA), American Water Works Association (AWWA), and American Public Works Association (APWA). We also held sessions featuring leaders who represent fire services, housing authorities, transit, education, water services, and more.

GFOA has a long history of collaborating with leading local government associations. In the 1930s, GFOA was headquartered on the campus of the University of Chicago along with ICMA, the American Planning Association (APA), the Council of State Governments (CSG), APWA, the Government Welfare Association, and the National Association of Housing Officials. Today, GFOA still nurtures strong partnerships with other organizations, and we recently took steps to formally organize the Public Finance Network, an association of associations. This group is led by GFOA, and we will advocate for

infrastructure and maintenance of the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds.

As we look to the future, GFOA is continually developing stronger partnerships that facilitate information sharing, best practice development, and innovation—as well as extended member benefits and opportunities that allow finance professionals to build relationships with their peers in other areas of local government disciplines. For example, in August, we are officially launching our new membership structure, which will provide all individuals from a member organization with access to GFOA membership benefits at no additional cost. This is a great opportunity for you to extend an invitation to leaders within various departments and agencies—public works, police, fire, utilities, and the parks and recreation department, for example, or to others who are interested in some aspect of public finance—to officially join GFOA. For more information, please visit [gfoa.org/membership-changes](https://gfoa.org/membership-changes).

---

In 2026, our nation will celebrate the 250th anniversary of its founding—a milestone that calls not only for reflection on the nation's history but also on the role local governments have played in shaping it from the ground up.

---



© 2025 MICHAEL AUSTIN C/O THEISPOT.COM

In 2026, our nation will celebrate the 250th anniversary of its founding—a milestone that calls not only for reflection on the nation's history but also on the role local governments have played in shaping it from the ground up. Local government leaders are united in a challenge to use resources more efficiently, promote transparency, make better decisions, deliver better results, encourage sustainable management of our institutions, and promote trust. Public finance is at the heart of local democracy. From building schools, roads, and water systems to navigating economic downturns and funding public safety, public government finance professionals have guided some of the most important decisions in our communities. Their leadership has helped turn visions into budgets and budgets into lasting impact.

GFOA is proud to join the LocalGov 250 initiative, alongside our partners at the National Association of Counties (NACo), National League of Cities (NLC), ICMA, and others. Together, we will recognize the pivotal role local governments have played in shaping American democracy. As part of LocalGov 250, GFOA will continue to spotlight the people, policies, and historic financial decisions that have made a difference in communities across the country. From balancing budgets during crises to funding generational infrastructure, we'll celebrate the individuals and moments that define the public finance profession.

And as we approach this historic milestone, GFOA is honored to stand with our members, partners, and communities in honoring 250 years of local government and the professionals who keep it strong, accountable, and ready for what's next.

For more information about the LocalGov 250 initiative, including highlights from the past, visit [gfoa.org/gfoa-celebrates-localgov-250](https://gfoa.org/gfoa-celebrates-localgov-250).

Sincerely,

*Chris*