

In Brief

GFOA AT 120 | GFOA GROUPS



GFOA AT 120

Honoring Our Evolution, Shaping the Future

In 2026, GFOA marks an extraordinary milestone: 120 years of service to public finance professionals and the communities they support. This anniversary is more than a celebration of longevity. It is a moment to reflect on how GFOA has continually evolved to meet the changing needs of governments, professionals, and the public, while remaining grounded in its core mission of advancing excellence in government finance.

From the beginning: a profession takes shape

GFOA's story began in 1906, at a time when cities across the United States were grappling with rapid growth and increasing financial complexity.

Samuel B. Williams, city comptroller for the City of Rochester, New York, delivered the association's first presidential address at the inaugural conference in Chicago, Illinois. That gathering marked the founding of what was then known as the National Association of Comptrollers and Accounting Officers.

From the start, the organization was built on a shared belief that strong financial management is essential to effective government and public trust. Those early leaders came together not simply to exchange technical knowledge, but to elevate the profession itself and establish standards that would benefit communities nationwide.

An organization that evolves

As government itself changed, so did the association. In 1932, reflecting a broader and more complex scope of responsibilities, the organization changed its name first to the International Association of Municipal Finance Officers and then later to the Municipal Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. Its first headquarters was located on the campus of the University of Chicago, reinforcing the association's deep ties to research, education, and professional development.

More than five decades later, on April 17, 1984, the association again renamed itself, becoming the Government

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Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. This change acknowledged the evolving nature of public finance and a membership that increasingly represented the full spectrum of government finance professionals, beyond traditional municipal roles.

Today, that evolution continues. GFOA's expanded membership model now encompasses anyone working in public finance and related disciplines, reflecting the interconnected nature of modern public service. While the names have changed over 120 years, the purpose has remained constant: supporting professionals who safeguard public resources and help communities thrive.

Coming full circle in Chicago

This year, we return to Chicago for our 120th annual conference, June 28

through July 1, bringing the celebration back to the city where it all began. With GFOA President Lunda Asmani leading the association, this year's conference serves as both a homecoming and a forward-looking moment.

The annual conference has long been a cornerstone of the GFOA community, a place where professionals connect, learn, and exchange ideas. Hosting the 120th annual conference in Chicago offers a powerful reminder of how far the organization has come and how strong the foundation remains.

A year of reflection and looking ahead

There are countless stories to tell from the last 120 years, and we look forward to sharing them throughout the year ahead. From historic milestones and evolving logos to member stories and

modern innovations, this anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate the people, ideas, and values that have shaped GFOA.

Just as importantly, it is a chance to look forward. The challenges facing governments today are complex, but so are the tools, insights, and communities available to address them. GFOA enters its 120th year committed to continuing its evolution, supporting the next generation of public finance professionals, expanding partnerships, and helping governments build stronger, more resilient communities.

Thank you for being part of this journey. We invite you to celebrate with us throughout the year as we honor 120 years of progress and look ahead to what comes next. 🎉

We want to hear from you! Share how GFOA has affected your career at gfoa.org/120.



“Reaching 120 years is not just a milestone; it’s a testament to GFOA’s willingness to adapt, innovate, and lead.

As governments face new challenges and opportunities, GFOA will continue to evolve, providing the research, advocacy, education, and community our members need to serve the public with confidence and help communities thrive.

As someone who is honored to help lead this organization at such a pivotal moment, I am inspired by our legacy and deeply committed to ensuring that GFOA remains strong, relevant, and impactful for generations to come.”

– GFOA PRESIDENT LUNDA ASMANI



Above, GFOA President Lunda Asmani speaks at the GFOA 2025 Annual Conference, which was held June 29 through July 2, 2025, in Washington, D.C. Below, the National Association of Comptrollers and Accounting Officers gathered in the City of Rochester, New York, in July 1925.

