



January 2009

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AGA's mission is to serve professionals in the government financial management community by providing quality education, fostering professional development and certification, and supporting standards and research to advance government accountability.

From the President...

January 26, 2009

The Weather Outside is Changing?

Let's see... Today it is 18 degrees and snowing. Last week we had a 71 degree day. I like to tell people that we have four seasons in Denver, and they all make multiple appearances in the winter.

Living in Denver requires that we prepare ourselves for the constant unexpected changes in the weather. If we extend that attitude of acceptance that change is inevitable to our professional and personal lives, we are much better prepared for the changes that will be part of our daily lives.

We are at the beginning of a new national administration that promises change. The changes promised will affect us all to some degree, no matter in which sector of government we work. If we add the changes that are a result of the negative economic climate, we can expect lots of change in the coming years.

The services of government financial people (accountants, auditors, analysts, planners, budgeters...etc.) are more important than ever this year. Budgets will be cut in some areas and increased in others. Money from grants will arrive, grants will be made, tax revenue will change, spending will go up or down in different areas. We could go on and on with this list.

Somebody has to crunch the numbers for the law makers and the administrators. Somebody has to explain the financial effects of new laws and policies. Somebody has to account for the increases and decreases in spending. (Isn't lack of accountability for the distribution of the first 350 billion dollars in TARP funds one of the biggest concerns regarding the federal financial bailout?) Somebody has to audit the internal functions of the spending and someone has to audit the external use of the grants and awards. Somebody has to crunch the numbers and prepare ongoing financial reports to track all the increases and decreases in spending.

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AGA Third Annual National Community Service Project Set for April 27–May 1, 2009

Community service and helping those who are less fortunate than ourselves is an important part of what AGA is about. I am so proud of our Chapter's long-standing commitment to community service, and the great community service opportunities Cheri Frazell has arranged for us this year!

The Third Annual National Community Service project will be in New Orleans, LA, from April 27 -May 1, 2009, again sandwiched between the two weekends of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. We are happy to announce that we have arranged for very inexpensive lodging for this year's Habitat volunteers in the beautiful new University of New Orleans (UNO) dormitory (actually four bedroom furnished suites with two baths) at a rate of only \$26 per night per person. There is also a one-time charge of \$7.50 per person for linens. Each suite must be occupied by the same gender. Couples may obtain one bedroom suites with a full size bed for \$30.00 per night per person. **Deadline: If you are interested in UNO lodging, let Jeff Hart know by February 28th.** (See contact information below.)

With respect to meals during the project, lunch will be furnished by the New Orleans AGA Chapter on workdays, and generally one or two evening meals will be provided.

Due to popular demand, we have created a second opportunity this year to experience what it's like to work with Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans. Since AGA's National PDC is in New Orleans June 21-24, 2009, we will also have a one-day community service event with Habitat on Thursday, June 25 the day after the PDC ends. For this event, we will seek to extend AGA's special hotel rate to include this extra night. I hope you will pencil in these dates on your calendar and join us for some fun!

If you are interested in participating, or have other questions before you decide, please contact Past National President Jeff Hart, CGFM, CFE. Also, see Denver Chapter scholarship offer below.

Jeffrey S. Hart, CGFM, CFE
Acting Comptroller & Director, Fiscal Management & Planning
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
303-312-6169 or hart.jeff@epa.gov

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Scholarships Available for National Community Service Project from Denver AGA Chapter

The Denver AGA Chapter is pleased to announce that it will sponsor two people to participate in the National Community Service Project from April 27-May 1, 2009. The Chapter will reimburse each person for up to \$500 in trip-related expenses including airfare (see the above announcement for details about the project and some of the costs). You must be able to participate for at least three work days. Interested? Please send a brief write-up of 100 words or less on why you want to go to: Cheri Frazell at Cheri_Frazell@fws.gov by **Friday, February 20**.

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Job Opening

Retirement Administrator: El Paso County Retirement Plan

The El Paso County Retirement Plan (<http://www.epc Retirement.org/>), located in Colorado Springs, CO, is seeking a Retirement Administrator to manage a \$200+ million defined benefit plan covering employees of El Paso County and four other participating employers.

The Retirement Administrator functions as the chief executive and chief operating officer of the Plan. Reporting to the 5-member Board of Retirement and supervising an Administrative Assistant, the Retirement Administrator plans, organizes, directs and controls the overall management functions and day-to-day administration of the Plan.

Requirements:

- BA required; advanced degree preferred.
- Strong background and experience in financial management and controls required; experience in public pension plan administration highly preferred.
- Experience working with/reporting to a Board.
- Working knowledge of/experience with retirement plan administration.

For More Information: Call Mary Hobson, Executive Vice President, or Elena McCall, Assistant Vice President, at EFL Associates (303-779-1724).

To Apply: Send your resume, along with a cover letter indicating your interest in this position to:

Elena McCall, Assistant Vice President
EFL Associates
emccall@eflassociates.com

Do you have employment accouncements? If so contact Kari Grimshaw at kari_grimshaw@fws.gov



ANNUAL CGFM RENEWAL TIME

It is time to renew your CGFM designation and/or AGA membership! Below you'll find answers to frequently asked questions about CGFM renewal:

Q: How often do I have to renew my CGFM designation?

A: CGFM certification is renewed on an annual basis. The invoices are going out in February and the payment is due by March 31st. If you do not receive an invoice by the end of February, please call AGA at 1.800.AGA.7211. You can also renew your CGFM now in the "Members only" section of AGA website (<https://members.agacgfm.org/>).

If your address has recently changed, please be sure to update your contact information with AGA and pay your dues in the "Members only" section of AGA website.

If your CGFM is not currently active, please visit www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/maintain/ for more information on reactivation requirements.

Q: What are the requirements for maintaining the CGFM certification in an active status?

A: To maintain the CGFM certification in an active status, CGFMs are required to:

-- Pay the CGFM renewal fee by the due date every year.-- Complete at least 80 hours of continuing professional education (CPE) every two years in government financial management topics or related technical subjects.-- Maintain and, if requested by AGA, provide detailed information on CPE hours completed.

To retain the CGFM certification, all CGFMs must adhere to the AGA's Code of Ethics. By submitting their annual renewal payment, CGFMs affirm that they have and will continue to abide by AGA's Code of Ethics and that they have fulfilled the minimum CPE Requirements.

Q: How do I determine my CPE cycle?

A: Your first two-year CPE cycle starts on January 1st of the year following the one when your CGFM was awarded (for example, if your CGFM was awarded in 2001, your first CPE cycle was 1/1/02-12/31/03). The award date is listed on your CGFM certificate. Your current CPE cycle is listed on your renewal invoice. For a table of all CPE cycles visit www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/maintain/cgfm_calendar.aspx.

Q: My two-year CPE cycle just ended on December 31, 2008, but I did not complete 80 CPEs in 2007-2008. Can I make up the deficiency?

A: Yes. CGFMs who have not completed the 80 CPE hours in 2007-2008 cycle have until March 31, 2009 to make up the deficiency. Any CPE hours completed toward a deficiency in one period must be documented in the CPE records and may not be counted toward the requirements for the next two-year period. More information on CGFM CPE requirements can be found on www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/maintain/cpe_requirements.aspx.

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Do You Really Need That Working Paper, *continued*.....

Then I asked the managers to provide comments on the working paper packages. Only one comment was repeated a number of times: “I don’t know why these working papers are included.” When we looked at the examples, they often reflected the same situation. An auditor had copied a large number of documents from the auditee, and had included them all in the working paper package — *even though they were unnecessary for the final product.*

For example, assume that you are auditing the costs claimed on a grant for fiscal year 20XX. You want to ensure that the amount claimed agrees with the entity’s accounting records. For that reason, you request the auditee to provide you with a copy of all of the fiscal year’s accounting records. (Or the auditee representative made copies of more records than you asked for.)

You got the records, but did you look at them all? Of course not. You reviewed just those records related to the grant. But you were loathe to throw away the unnecessary records (say 65 pages of the 70 pages you received). So you just included them all in the working paper package, figuring it wouldn’t do any harm, and someone may find something useful in the records.

Unfortunately, this practice rarely does any good, but it can do serious harm. The main problem is that you have initialed the papers, or otherwise indicated that you have reviewed them. But you haven’t reviewed them.

Is it possible that a close review of the files could identify a significant problem in the organization? Perhaps even fraud? It is indeed possible. If the problem comes to light after you have issued your audit report, both you and your supervisors may have a difficult time explaining how you had the information in your files, but did not notice it — *even though you had all signed off on the working papers.*

You may argue that the problem, or the fraud, was unrelated to your audit objectives and scope. That argument may convince your colleagues, but is not likely to convince the media or oversight agencies. Further, they may ask you, “If the material was unrelated to your audit, why did you have it in your files?” That would be a very difficult question for you to answer under the circumstances.

In addition, for your supervisors and managers, the unneeded records are “white noise.” They require extra work without providing any benefit. The extra pages can distract them from more closely reviewing the real information. After all, if those items remain in the working paper file, the supervisors and managers must also indicate that they have reviewed them. But, of course, no one closely examines those files.

In short, extra working papers, at best, just clog up the review process. At worst, extra working papers can place the audit agency at risk because no one identified a problem could have been found in the files.

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.Do You Really Need That Working Paper, *continued*....

I recommend that as you near the end of the audit, you review your working papers to determine which ones were actually used during the audit process and support your findings and conclusions. You should obviously retain them. You should carefully consider whether to retain any working paper that doesn't meet that standard. You may still want to keep some of them, but make sure you can explain why you kept them. You should probably discard the rest.

Of course, as in all processes, you should discuss this matter with your supervisors to be sure that you will act in accordance with their wishes. The fact that I think it's a good idea may not carry much weight with them. Good luck in reducing the size of those working paper packages.

Sefton Boyars was the Regional Inspector General for Audit for the U.S. Department of Education. He retired in 1996 after a 35-year career as a government auditor and audit manager. In his retirement, he presents continuing education courses for a variety of organizations, including federal, state and local governmental organizations, AGA, Management Concepts and the USDA Graduate School.



AGA Denver Chapter Officers and Directors for 2008-2009

<u>Elected Officer Positions</u>	Name	Office	email	phone
PRESIDENT	Doug Griffin	DOL	dgriffin@ix.netcom.com	720-264-3235
PRES-ELECT	Eric Johnson	CO State Auditor's Office	eric.johnson@state.co.us	303-869-2854
VP-PDC	Debra Clark		debraclark73@hotmail.com	303-437-9199
VP-COMMUNICATIONS	Sally Symanski	CO State Auditor's Office	Sally.Symanski@state.co.us	303-869-2800
VP-PROGRAMS	Gwenna Zacchini	DOI-MMS	Gwenna.Zacchini@mms.gov	303-231-3513
SECRETARY	Gail Bruce	WAPA	gbruce@wapa.gov	720-962-7481
TREASURER	Jeremy Cockrum	GAO	cockrumj@gao.gov	303-572-7342
Appointed Board Positions				
DIR- AWARDS	Jennifer Leone	GAO	leonej@gao.gov	303-572-7346
DIR- CGFM PROGRAMS	David O'Farrell	Boulder	ofarrelld@bouldercolorado.gov	303-441-3871
DIR- COMMUNITY SERVICE	Cheri Frazell	DOI-FWS	Cheri_Frazell@fws.gov	303-984-6845
DIR- EARLY CAREERS	Jeremy Cockrum	GAO	cockrumj@gao.gov	303-572-7342
DIR- EDUCATION	Vacant			
DIR- EMERGING ISSUES	James Herbic	DoD OIG	james.herbic@dodig.mil	303- 676-3280
DIR- MEMBERSHIP	Michelle Dimodica		michelledimodica@yahoo.com	303-241-3522
DIR-PUBLICITY	Laverle Kepler	NBC	laverle_e_kepler@nbc.gov	303-969-5327
DIR-RECOGNITION	Vacant			
DIR-SCHOLARSHIPS	Debra Haynes	City/County of Denver	Debra.Haynes@ci.denver.co.us	720-913-6336
DIR-EMPLOYMENT	Kari Grimshaw	DOI-FWS	kari.grimshaw@fws.gov	303-984-6807
DIR-AGENCY COORDINATION	Jennifer Leone	GAO	leonej@gao.gov	303-572-7346
DIR-INTERGOV. RELATIONS	Brad Gunther	City/County of Denver	Brad.Gunther@Denvergov.org	303-446-3493
Webmaster	Karl Greve	Colorado PERA	kgreve@copera.org	303-837-6218
Other Leadership Members				
Regional Vice President	Karla Gomez-Meyer	City/County of Denver	Karla.Gomez-Meyer@ci.denver.co.us	720-913-1544
Regional Vice President Elect	Glen Struempf	DFAS	Glennon.Struempf@dfas.mil	303-676-7264
Past National President	Jeff Hart	EPA	Hart.Jeff@epamail.epa.gov	303-312-6169