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For More Information:
Erin Birmingham | Marketing & Communications Manager
800.AGA.7211, ext. 308 | ebirmingham@agacgfm.org

AGA Recognizes Federal Agencies for Excellence in Fiscal Accountability Reporting

Alexandria, Va. — The Association of Government Accountants (AGA) recognized 28 federal agencies and departments in a virtual ceremony last Thursday night for their efforts to producing high-quality Agency Financial Reports (AFRs) or Performance and Accountability Reports (PARs) for FY2019. AGA’s annual Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) program honors agencies demonstrating significant improvement and progress in their accountability and performance reports.

The CEAR Awards are determined through a rigorous review process where experienced teams of volunteers from the government financial management community examine and prepare written recommendations on submitted AFRs and PARs. The teams then meet with AGA to review a compendium of all the recommendations, reach an agreement, and vote on the awards to agencies for improving their reports and handling challenges mentioned.

“Since its inception, AGA’s CEAR program has played a critical role in the steady improvements in federal agency reporting,” said AGA CEO Ann M. Ebberts. “In addition to providing agencies with detailed recommendations for improving their reports, the CEAR program also recognizes and honors agencies that go above and beyond their reporting efforts. We are proud to recognize and reward the accomplishments of agency leaders and their staff, who work diligently to promote transparency and accountability reporting, helping the taxpayers understand what has been accomplished during the fiscal year.”

The CEAR Program, developed in the late 1990s in collaboration with the Chief Financial Officers Council and the Office of Management and Budget, seeks to help agencies improve accountability and transparency and streamline their reports. CEAR recognizes agency improvements, innovations, and internal collaboration in developing their reports that document accomplishments with taxpayer dollars and provide transparency about efforts to overcome challenges.

The following U.S. agencies and departments received the 2020 (FY 2019) CEAR award:

- Architect of the Capitol
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Housing Finance Agency
- Federal Trade Commission
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Credit Union Administration
- Peace Corps
- Social Security Administration
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission
- U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
- U.S. Department of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Department of State
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Department of the Treasury
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- U.S. General Services Administration
- U.S. Government Accountability Office
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
- U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
- U.S. Small Business Administration

In addition, these 14 federal agencies received “Best in Class” awards for specific points of excellence within their fiscal year 2019 reports:

- **Internet Links to a Data Dashboard:** *U.S. Agency for International Development*
- **Ease of Accessibility to Multi-Media Information:** *Architect of the Capitol*
- **Innovative Use of Technology to Enhance Mission Delivery:** *U.S. General Services Administration*
- **Visual Timeline of Agency’s History:** *National Credit Union Administration*
- **Description of What the Agency Does and How it Operates:** *U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission*
- **Motivating and Inspiring Stories:** *National Aeronautics and Space Administration*
- **Agency Head Message:** *U.S. Government Accountability Office*
- **Presentation of the Agency’s Strategic Framework:** *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*
- **Presentation of Performance Results:** *Social Security Administration*
- **Process for Ensuring Data Quality:** *U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission*
- **Analysis of Financial Statements:** *U.S. Department of Agriculture*
- **Candor and Transparency in Financial Management Issues:** *U.S. Department of Defense*
- **Presentation of Forward-Looking Information:** *U.S. Department of Energy*
- **Proactive Financial Management Support for Mission Continuity and Accountability:** *U.S. Patent and Trademark Office*

For the first time in CEAR history, the 2020 CEAR Awards included a **CEAR with Value-Added Distinction Award**, presented to the Federal Aviation Administration. This award is the “Academy Award” of government reporting to highlight through the AFRs and PARs, how the financial management excellence is adding value to the agency’s management and mission delivery.

The CEAR Awards night of celebration, normally a black-tie event in Washington, D.C., was held virtually on Thursday, August 6. The event was made possible through the generous sponsorship of KPMG and Kearney & Company. To learn more about the CEAR Awards and the CEAR Program, visit AGA’s website (<https://www.agacgfm.org/Standards-Guidance/CEAR.aspx>).

About AGA

AGA is *the* member organization for financial professionals in government. We lead and encourage change to improve our field and positively affect all taxpayers. Our networking events, professional certification, publications, and ongoing education help members increase understanding recent legislation and requirements, raise awareness of issues and challenges, build their skills, and advance their careers. For more information, visit www.agacgfm.org.