

# FY18 CEAR Program Preparer Training

August 29, 2018 | 2-4 p.m. ET | 2 CPEs | FOS: PD



## Wi-Fi

Username: guestaugust

Password: HCIDtNrd

\*Third letter is lowercase "L", not "I"



## Today's Agenda

- 2 p.m. Welcome/CEAR Program Overview– Kia Lor
- 2:15 p.m. AGA CEAR Guidelines – Diane Dudley  
- Overview of Guidelines  
- Notable changes to FY18 CEAR Guidelines
- 2:45 p.m. Commendable Practices - Hal Steinberg  
- Special Awards  
- CEAR with Value Added Distinction
- 3:30 p.m. Tips from Award Winning Report Preparers  
- Gail Matthews, Dept. of Education  
- Bob Smalskas, GSA
- 4 p.m. Evaluation, CPE Certificate – Kia Lor



## Speakers:

- **Kia Lor, PMP, CMP**, Meetings and CEAR Program Manager
- **Diane Dudley, CGFM, CPA**, CEAR Board Chair
- **Hal Steinberg, CGFM, CPA**, CEAR Technical Consultant, AGA



# Welcome & CEAR Program Overview

**Speaker: Kia Lor, PMP, CMP, Meetings & CEAR Program Mgr.**

- Benefits of the CEAR Program
- CEAR Awards



## Why agency participated:

- We participate in the CEAR program because we believe it is important to present the most informative, interesting, useful, and readable financial and performance information possible. And we believe in continuous improvement.
- The CEAR program provides our team with inspiration and motivation to prepare the very best document that they can. Otherwise, the summary of best practices is very beneficial. Also very beneficial are the summaries of special Best-in-Class awards across all winning agencies.
- We participate to demonstrate our commitment to excellence and to challenge ourselves to continuously improve our AFR. The review comments are helpful (suggestions for improvement) and encouraging (highlighting what is done well). It is also a pleasure to celebrate excellence during the Awards Dinner.
- To get an unbiased and quality review of our report, with recommendations on how to improve.



## AGA CEAR Guidelines

**Speaker: Diane Dudley, CGFM, CPA, CEAR Board Chair**

- Overview of the guidelines
- Notable changes for FY 2018



## Award Winning Practices & Pitfalls

**Speaker: Hal Steinberg, CGFM, CPA, CEAR Technical Consultant, AGA**

- Commendable Practices – Summary of Results
- Special Awards
- CEAR with Value Added Distinction



# Tips for Award Winning Report

- **Gail Matthews**, Supervisor, Accountant, Dept. of Education
- **Robert (Bob) Smalskas**, Director, Accounting & Financial Reporting Division, Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), GSA



## Gail Matthews

Supervisor, Accountant, Dept. of Education



# AFR Best Practices

Department of Education



## Department of Education

- We begin planning in January
- Pick three AFR sections to benchmark
- Review Treasury and OMB guidance
- AFR Core team meets monthly
- Develop detailed timeline



## Department of Education

- Review AGA CEAR comments (April/May)
- Team members present to the AFR Core group enhancement/suggestions based on benchmarking exercise/CEAR comments
- Review new requirements (OMB, Treasury, GAO) for AFR (July/August)
- Prepare draft AFR based on June financial data (reviewed by senior management)
- Checklist based on OMB-A-136 requirements
- We use SharePoint for AFR drafts (version control)
- The Sept. draft we deliver to the auditors is also the version we send for Department clearance (version control)



## Robert (Bob) Smalskas

Director, Accounting & Financial Reporting Division, Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), GSA



# AFR Preparer Notes

## from Robert Smalskas



## General Comments

- Get started early
- NFR review and CAP development begins immediately after the end of FISCAL YEAR Reporting
- AFR plan development begins at about the same time of the audit entrance conference (~April)
  - Solicit, identify and secure key stakeholders
  - Get early engagement
- If you are a participant in AGA's CEAR Program, leverage CEAR Reviewer comments (~May)
- Review (and thoroughly understand) all authoritative guidance (draft and final) as soon as possible (A-11, A-123, A-136, Payment Integrity Act, Statements of Assurance, Internal Control, ERM, TFM, new FASAB requirements, et al)
- Where/when possible, prepare a draft AFR for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (great preparation tool for year-end submission)





## Specific Comments

- **AFR preparation, compilation and submission is a team effort**
- Use the best people and tools available (the last thing you want to do is spend more time on managing/using your tools than on the preparation of the content)
- Get the right people with the right authority engaged to disposition questions only they (or someone in leadership) can disposition
- There is considerable material to review
  - Ensure it is aligned throughout the document
  - Use a single/unified voice; not 13 voices of people with different writing styles
- Engage early and often with your auditors
- Communicate, communicate, communicate



## Questions?



## CEAR Program Application Criteria

- Follow the FY 2018 CEAR Program Guidelines
- Reference commendable practices – summary of results
- Completed CEAR application
- Original letter signed by your agency's CFO/equivalent-level official requesting that your report be reviewed
- 6 printed copies of:
  - PAR/AFR report - **Requirement**
  - Response to last year's recommendations – Strongly encouraged



## Address to mail complete application packet:

### **AGA**

ATTN: CEAR Program  
2208 Mount Vernon ave.  
Alexandria, VA 22301

Visit CEAR's application criteria website -  
<https://www.agacgfm.org/Standards-Guidance/CEAR/Apply.aspx>



## Become a Reviewer

- Another way to learn is from each other!
- Learn more at <https://www.agacgfm.org/Standards-Guidance/CEAR/Reviewers.aspx>
- Application to apply: Nov. 30, 2018



## FY18 CEAR Awards Ceremony

Location:  
JW Marriott Washington, DC

Date:  
Tuesday, May 21, 2019

Attire:  
Black tie preferred



# Thank You for Participating!



Contact:  
[cear@agacgfm.org](mailto:cear@agacgfm.org)

