



Chapter News

Spring 2021

**Association of
Government
Accountants
Mission:**

AGA fosters learning, certification, leadership and collaboration for professionals and stakeholders committed to advancing government accountability

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Message from the President

AGA Members and Friends:

I am writing this in April with a growing sense of optimism knowing that summer is just around the corner (somewhat hard to believe because it is snowing as I write this!). Looking back over the past several months I realize how great of a job our Board has done this year, especially given the extenuating circumstances forced upon us all by COVID.



This past Tuesday we had a webinar with the top 10 excel tricks used by financial managers as the topic, and it was one of the best attended webinars provided by our Chapter (of course it helps to have a dynamic speaker who happens to be on our Board!). Several of the attendees were from out-of-state, including one from the Bahamas! The Board also led a virtual Early Career Night this past March 23 and the students who attended voiced their appreciation all the way through the end of their college semester. We also saw an increase in our members who have earned the prestigious CGFM designation in March, which happens to be CGFM month. These are just a few of our Chapter's most recent accomplishments.

I feel very fortunate to serve with this group comprised of talented individuals who so very effectively support the careers and professional development of those who are currently government finance professionals, as well as effectively recruiting college students in the hopes that they too will choose to pursue a career serving the public. We are approaching the end of the program year, and the beginning of summer, but sometimes it is important to take a moment and reflect on the accomplishments of the group. Certainly makes me eager to serve again as a Board member going into a new year with optimism for bigger and better accomplishments in the years to come!

Joe Verlin, CPA, CGFM



On March 23, 2021 AGA West Michigan held a virtual forum geared towards recruiting college students into the governmental accounting field. Topics discussed included the unique aspects of working for local governments - including working for the public vs. private for-profit employers, the government audit process, the governmental finance career path, structure of various governmental finance offices, and much more! The panel consisted of the following governmental accounting professionals:



- Jill Thompson, Accounting Manager - network180
- Lorna Nenciarini, Executive Director of Finance - Allegan County
- Stephen Blann, Director of Governmental Audit Quality - Rehmann

A huge thank you to all of our panelists and AGA West Michigan Early Career Coordinator Kyle Nixon for coordinating the event.

Did you know?

West Michigan AGA invites local college students to attend Chapter events free of charge. Two "student scholarships" are offered for each local event on a first-come, first-served basis.

Student Board Member Scholarship

Each year, AGA West Michigan awards a \$1,000 scholarship to the selected student board member. Participation is for a one year term, from September through May.

For a description of duties and an application form, please visit our membership page at:

<https://www.agacgfm.org/Chapters/WestMichigan/Membership/Early-Career-and-Student-Members.aspx>



Like us on Facebook to learn about chapter events, links to helpful sites and job opportunities



Local Training Opportunities

Planned Future Events by AGA West Michigan

The Association of Government Accountants is a 14,000+ member professional organization devoted to meeting the professional development, education, networking, and certification needs of its members.

AGA represents government financial managers working in local, state and federal governments as well as the private sector and academia.

- **July 20, 2021: Webinar—2021 Single Audit Update
2:00—3:40 p.m. (2 CPE)**

Each year, AGA West Michigan provides an update on the significant changes to the single audit guidance, including what auditees should be doing to prepare for a smooth audit. Hear the latest from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and more!

Attend AGA West Michigan’s quarterly webinar to learn about these significant changes. Topics include:

- The Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200)
- Governmental Auditing Standards (the Yellow Book)
- Get the latest information on the OMB’s 2021 Compliance Supplement
- Learn practical tips to avoid common single audit findings

- **October 19, 2021: Webinar—Topic TBD
2:00—3:40 p.m. (2 CPE)**

Registration Coming Soon!

- **December 9, 2021: AGA GFOA Double Feature
9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. (8 CPE)**

AGA’s Professional Development Training Presented by Stephen W. Blann, CPA, CGFM, CGMA

- 1 hour of Professional Ethics
- Other topics TBD

GFOA’s Annual GAAP Update Presented by GFOA Staff

- New and upcoming GASB statements
- Implementation guidance
- Audit update





Collaborating to keep you informed!

AGA West Michigan and the Michigan Government Finance Officers Association (MGFOA) are partnering to inform memberships of both organizations on upcoming conferences, seminars, and webinars offered.



Planned Future Events by MGFOA

- May 25, 2021: MGFOA Back to Basics 2021—Session II
- June 8, 2021: Year End Financial Statements and Closing Adjustments
- July 28, 2021: West Michigan Front Porch Forum
- October 3-6, 2021: MGFOA Fall Institute 2021—Mission Point
- October 19, 2021: MGFOA Back to Basics 2021—Session III
- October 27, 2021: West Michigan Front Porch Forum

View MGFOA Event Calendar: <https://www.migfoa.org/?p=calendar>

National Training Opportunities (Webinars)



To register and see other offerings, visit:

<https://www.agacgfm.org/webinars.aspx>

The Association seeks to advance government accountability at all levels of government through its Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) Program, which has recognized more than 13,000 individuals for their unique skills and experience.

To learn more about the Association, its many programs, or any of its 96 chapters, visit us online at www.agacgfm.org.

Updating Excel versions is rarely at the top of any government’s budget priorities. If you haven’t updated your version of Excel in a while, now might be a good time to consider it. One feature in particular has been added that could make your life easier. Power Query first showed up in Excel 2016 (introduced as “Get & Transform”), though you can download it as an add-in from Microsoft for free (yep, that’s one of my favorite words too!). In a nutshell, Power Query is a business intelligence tool that allows you to clean and organize your data into a useable form.

Much of what we do depends on data, and for most of us, data that comes over “dirty” is a constant irritation. You could build a macro to automate the cleaning process, but VBA is far from intuitive. Excel has Power Query, and it’s a lot easier to use and offers the same benefit of multi-use that VBA does. Space prevents us from offering a demonstration here, but we can discuss how it works in general and the benefits it provides.

Manipulating data in Excel generally requires all the data from a record on one line, but reports that print into Excel often have data on more than one line like the table to the right.

Date	Description	Amount
2/3/2020	Deposit	500.00
	Jane Doe	
2/3/2020	Remote Deposit	15,000.00
	Mary Jones	
2/4/2020	CK 81588	(400.00)
	Acme Supply	
2/5/2020	CK 81589	(200.00)
	Staples	

Date	Description	Amount	Name
2/3/2020	Deposit	500.00	Jane Doe
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2/5/2020	CK 81589	(200.00)	Staples

It takes some practice to build the query, but Power Query allows you to get the data in a usable form. If you’ve used pivot tables, you know that the revised data layout to the left is ready to be put into a pivot table.

The key to note here, though, is that now that the query has been developed, you can use it again and again – just update the original table data.

Unlike VBA or certain data extraction tools, establishing a query does not require programming knowledge or rely on fussy syntax. It’s much more intuitive and structured more closely to existing functions like conditional formatting and if statements (only simpler in Power Query)!

Some of the functionality includes using data from several sources including text files, SQL and Access; the ability to add and remove columns and rows in data; filter data; and combine two tables together.

So give it a try! A good resource for help is <https://www.myonlinetraininghub.com/category/power-query>

Do you have an excel tip you would like to share?

Please email us at newsletter@agawestmichigan.org

April 1, 2021—June 30, 2021: Holland Rescue Mission



Website: <https://hollandrescue.org/>

Holland Rescue Mission is a shelter that seeks to meet the needs of homeless men, women, and children in the West Michigan area. They offer a wide range of Christ-driven services that address the root issues of homelessness to help restore and transform lives.

Mission: To declare and demonstrate the love of Christ by providing housing and programs for the homeless and less fortunate

The Chapter sets aside \$1 from each event registration as a cash gift to the charity and makes a chapter cash donation of \$100 per quarter.



2020/21 CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Joe Verlin, CPA, CGFM
President
Gabridge & Company, PLC
jverlin@gabridgeco.com

Angela Gasiewski, CPA
President Elect
Muskegon County
gasiewskian@co.muskegon.mi.us

Stephen W. Blann, CPA, CGFM, CGMA
**Education, Training, and Certification Chair,
Communications Chair**
Rehmann Robson
president@agawestmichigan.org

Gregory Sanial, CGFM
Secretary
Grand Valley State University
gregorysanial@hotmail.com

Paul Matz, CPA, CGFM
Membership Chair
Rehmann Robson
membership@agawestmichigan.org

William G. Love, CPA, CGFM
Treasurer & Community Service Chair
Rehmann Robson
treasurer@agawestmichigan.org

Scarlett Shirley, CPA
Newsletter Editor
Gabridge & Company, PLC
sshirley@gabridgeco.com

Kyle Nixon
Early Career Coordinator
Porter Hills/United Methodist Retirement Community
earlycareer@agawestmichigan.org

Vacant
Student Representative