

AGA 2003–2004: Taking Accountability to the Next Level

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2003–2004 AGA National President

As your new National President, I have chosen a theme that I hope will energize the membership to refocus on AGA's core mission and highest priorities. The theme for the 2003-2004 program year is "AGA—Taking Accountability to the Next Level," and my central goal is for our Association to expand its influence in making government at all levels more accountable to the people it serves.

AGA's mission has not changed much over its 53-year history: The Association has always existed to serve its members' needs by providing top-quality education programs and other professional development activities while supporting government financial management standards and research. In recent years, the mission has expanded to include the CGFM Program, which recognizes the unique knowledge and skills of our certificate holders and has become the mark of excellence in government financial management.

I am committed to strengthening the foundation that was set in 1950. While the mission has been refined over the years, AGA will always strive to advance government accountability. I am proud that AGA will launch an important initiative to further that goal under my tenure—the Certificate of Excellence in Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) Reporting Program.

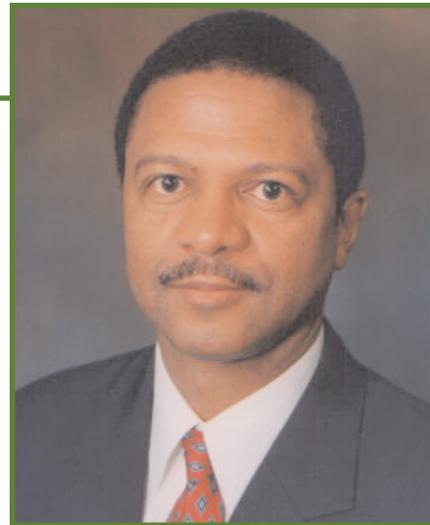
The Sloan Foundation has approved a grant that supports AGA's establishment of the program, which is designed to encourage state and local governments to issue high-quality service efforts and accomplishments reports. These SEA Reports help provide a comprehensive picture of government accountability and are becoming an increasingly important element in a government's performance management program. During the pilot year of the program, a tremendous amount of work will be needed to develop the checklist used to evaluate the reports, train reviewers and conform to all other program components under the Sloan grant. The evaluation will provide information on the report's content and structure so that participating

governments can improve their reports, and then AGA will recognize agencies that produce excellent reports by presenting a Certificate of Excellence in SEA Reporting.

AGA is in a good position to institute a program like this because the Association has already taken a strong role in improving the quality of accountability reports at the federal level. In 1997, AGA successfully developed and implemented the Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) Program, in a partnership with the federal Chief Financial Officers Council, and last year awarded eight Certificates of Excellence in Accountability Reporting, more than any other year. I'd like to see AGA strengthen the CEAR Program even more, by developing a marketing plan and incorporating performance management components into the review cycle to help agencies implement the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA). Under GPRA, agencies must combine their performance report with their accountability report. This is a critical and important new component of the review and a hot issue for the government. AGA is taking the program to the next level by pulling in a new wave of high-level, high-profile reviewers. This speaks volumes to the value and reputation this program is building.

Working to strengthen government accountability underscores everything AGA does, but I also recognize that we must work on several different fronts to carry out AGA's mission. To make our Association even stronger, we must promote the CGFM Program, improve our education program, increase our membership and expand member services.

In fact, I believe that the Association's success is directly tied to the success of the CGFM Program. The CGFM credential has come a long way in a short time. Just in the past year, the Professional Certification Board, the National Office staff and our AGA member volunteers have achieved real advancements at the state and federal levels.



The states of Tennessee, Idaho, Washington, Missouri and most recently, Maine, have recognized the CGFM credential. In addition, three federal government agencies have developed formal professional certification reimbursement policies—the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and the General Accounting Office (GAO).

I hope that the Association can build on these efforts by aggressively marketing the CGFM Program at the grassroots level, building further support for certification in the employment market and by constantly working to help candidates prepare for the three-part CGFM Examination through our CGFM Training Series, online course and self-study guides.

To improve our education program, AGA will continue its innovative work in offering members a range of online options that make earning continuing professional education (CPE) hours convenient and flexible. I also hope AGA can deliver new government financial management courses to keep our members at the top of their field.

AGA already offers CPE Online, which offers 8 CPE hours annually for passing four quizzes based on the Journal of Government Financial Management. In a partnership with IBM Business Consulting Services and NetCertification, members can earn free CPE by listening to a radio broadcast from the Business of Government hour radio program. Members can access a four-part series discussing "Conversations about Management" and earn 1 CPE hour for each part of the series. We must work to make sure our members are aware of the many other options available to them. For example, through individual course purchases or through two

annual subscriptions, members can take any number of online courses by leading professionals in accounting and auditing, taxation, management, personal development and more.

I will work to ensure AGA maintains its excellent reputation in providing top-quality conferences to government financial managers and private-sector professionals and academicians. This year's conferences include the upcoming 52nd Annual Professional Development Conference & Exposition, "Managing Smarter for The Future," set for June 29 – July 2, 2003 at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers, and the National Leadership Conference, set for February 19–20, 2004, in Washington, D.C.

To increase our membership, it takes everyone working together, especially at the chapter level, to recruit new members and retain the current members. We must widen our scope and aim to reach all accountability professionals. I believe one of our best marketing tools is the positive experience of other members, and our CGFM Program is another big draw, but to retain those members, we must ensure we are meeting their needs.

That's why I would also like to focus on member services during my term. We need to remember that we must communicate effectively not only with the members, but also with our Corporate Partners, sponsors and exhibitors.

Our website has been a great vehicle to help members stay involved in a convenient way, and it's become our most important communication tool for prospective members as well. Members can perform a number of tasks online: renew their memberships, search for colleagues, review other chapter newsletters, look for a job, access free online CPE and so much more.

AGA's Leadership Handbook is another way to provide our volunteers with an easy way to be effective. The handbook provides all the information needed for chapter leaders to perform their duties while providing sample documents, such as chapter bylaws templates, that will make their jobs easier and keep chapters running smoothly.

I'm also a big believer in community service and want to encourage members to get involved in their communities and make a difference.

Other goals for my term involve the future—I will work to strengthen AGA's financial foundation and complete the update of the Long-Range Strategic Plan, to ensure AGA's vision is always focused on what's ahead. Some specific areas for my emphasis are as follows:

- Ensure a strong education program;
- Promote advancement and awareness of AGA's CGFM, CEAR and SEA Programs;
- Develop recruitment strategies and promote membership;
- Organize strong support committees;
- Strengthen ties with other professional organizations; and
- Expand outreach to government financial managers at all levels of government.

To ensure a stronger financial foundation, I will always be watching to make sure AGA is accomplishing its mission as efficiently as possible. We will continue to implement recommendations from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) peer review report. At the end of my term, I hope to produce an accountability report on AGA's results based on established performance measures. This will give the National Board of Directors, National Executive Committee and the general membership a way to analyze the results of the CGFM, education and member programs every year.

I thank you for the privilege of serving as your National President, and I encourage every member to get actively involved in accomplishing AGA's mission. AGA's future depends on the dedication and hard work of our members. Thank you. █

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