



# GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION Of The United States and Canada

## *Alberta Chapter - Policies*

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### CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF CONFERENCE HOST(S)

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**NUMBER: 006**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: January 14, 2005**

**AMENDED DATE: September 18, 2009**

**REVIEWED DATE: September 18, 2009**

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#### **GENERAL POLICY**

The main objective of this policy is to ensure the location of the annual conference varies from year to year and that responsibility for organizing the conference is shared by municipalities throughout the province. Annual provincial GFOA conference host(s) will be selected on the basis of the following criteria.

#### **Criteria for Selection of Conference Host(s)**

- 1) **Geographic Location** – The preference would be for the conference location to alternate from northern Alberta to southern Alberta locations each year to allow all members the opportunity to attend as often as possible.
- 2) **Size of host Municipality:** The hosting municipality may alternate between smaller and larger centres to provide all municipalities with the opportunity to host.
- 3) **Regional Hosting Opportunities:** It is strongly recommended to take advantage of regional support in hosting the conference.
- 4) **Availability of Golf Venue:** Since the conference has traditionally included a golf tournament, an appropriate golf venue is required.
- 5) **Sufficiency of Meeting Facility:** The meeting facilities must have the capacity for 200+ delegates, sponsors and trade show participants.
- 6) **Logistics of a Trade Show Venue:** The trade show is an important part of the conference, providing delegates with important product and service information and contacts. In addition, significant conference revenue is generated by the trade show. Therefore, it is important to ensure the meeting facility will accommodate a trade show with plenty of delegate traffic during break times, etc.
- 7) **Hotel Accommodations:** Reasonably priced hotel(s) must be in close proximity to the meeting facility and have accommodation for 200+ delegates, sponsors and trade show participants.

- 8) **Accessibility:** The location of the hosting Municipality should be in close proximity to primary highways and an airport to provide easy access for the delegates.
- 9) **Enthusiasm:** The host municipality must be keen to organize the conference. It is important to have the commitment and support of an organizational team.
- 10) **Resource Capacity:** The hosting municipality should have access to the resources required to coordinate the conference.
- 11) **Reasonable overall costs:** The overall costs of the conference should be kept reasonable. While quality should not be compromised, keeping the costs reasonable will ensure delegate participation.
- 12) **Links to the GFOA Board:** The hosting Municipality should establish a link through the Board via the conference chair and Executive Administrator. This will enable the Board to keep informed of conference planning progress as well as provide the hosting municipality with resources from previous conference planners. The Conference committee will provide recommendations to the Board regarding changes to this policy for future conferences.

### 13) Conference Budget:

The Board and the Professional Development Task Force provide support to the conference host community.

The Board will continue to retain formal responsibility for approving conference host(s) in conjunction with taking the above noted criteria into account.

The Board is ultimately responsible for the conference budget. The Board approves the conference budget and receives monthly updates on the conference progress.. The Board is responsible for the ultimate surplus or deficit created as a result of the conference

### Conference Host Information Form

The Nominating Committee may request nominated individuals to complete a Potential Conference Host Form (attached as Appendix A).

Conference Action Items (attached as Appendix C).

### Review and Amendment Procedures

The Alberta GFOA's Criteria for Selection of Conference Location Policy shall be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors who may approve any changes as required.

## Alberta GFOA Potential Conference Host Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Population of municipality(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been a member of the GFOA? \_\_\_\_\_

In which year would your municipality(s) like to host the GFOA conference? \_\_\_\_\_

Location of your municipality(s)?

Northern Alberta  Southern Alberta

Golf Venue available?

Meeting Facility (capacity for 200+) ?

Can accommodate a Trade show?

Hotel Accommodation for 200+ ?

Please provide a brief explanation why your municipality would like to host the GFOA conference and your experience with conferences:

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## **Alberta GFOA Suggested Conference Guidelines**

### **BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### One year prior to conference

Determine date of the conference.

Determine location of the conference (host municipality).

Contact host municipality and invite Conference Chairperson to the Board meeting.

### **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### General – nine months prior to conference

Obtain past year's conference materials from prior year Conference Committee. Utilize this information to assist with the development of the conference program, conference registration package, delegate conference binder/package, etc. This is a great resource for the Conference Committee rather than 're-inventing the wheel'.

If possible, meet with the prior year Conference Chairperson to discuss general conference planning.

Review prior year(s) conference evaluation summary(ies) to determine what areas were successful and troublesome to assist with planning for this year and avoiding past pitfalls.

The Board is always available to assist with planning or answer questions arising while the Conference host municipality is planning the conference.

The GFOA Executive Administrator is available to assist the Conference Committee so be sure to utilize this resource as well.

Recruit your conference committee members keeping in mind that other surrounding municipalities may also be included. Contact the GFOA President or Executive Administrator for more information)

#### Six months prior to conference

Request seed funds from the GFOA Board if required.

Determine and book conference facilities (hotel/conference centre, golf course, etc.). Book off a block of rooms for 200+ delegates and sponsors.

Ensure that sufficient space and traffic flow patterns are set up for the trade show.

Determine conference theme (refer to prior year's conference materials for past themes used).

Determine key note speaker; provide deposit and sign contract.

Contact Executive Administrator to have Alberta GFOA website updated to include all information available and update with new information as it comes available.

Present a report to the Board which outlines proposed conference themes, key note speaker and session topics (if available from the Task Force).

Provide initial conference information to Executive Administrator for inclusion in the newsletter (dates, hotel location, hotel phone number, conference committee contact information).

*Five months prior to conference*

Email to all GFOA members the introductory information about the conference (ie: dates, hotel location, hotel phone number, conference committee contact information)

Send invitation letters to Saskatchewan, Manitoba, BC and Yukon and Northwest Territories Government Finance officials to attend Alberta Conference.

Send invitation letters to government officials (these should include but are not limited to the Premier, Deputy Premier, Alberta Finance Minister, Alberta Minister of Municipal Affairs, Alberta Minister of Economic Development, local MP's and local MLA's for the conference host community).

Create a sponsorship and exhibitor package (levels of sponsorship, benefits for each sponsor/exhibitor, etc.)

Using the sponsorship list from past conferences as a starting point, the Board will assist the Conference Committee with soliciting sponsors for financing the conference.

Circulate a sponsorship listing to all of the Board Members via email requesting each Board Member to identify those sponsors they wish to contact personally.

Once sponsorship listing contacts are completed by the Board, provide the Board Members with an information package to assist them with their request for sponsorship.

Prepare sponsorship/exhibitor letters or make phone calls for any sponsors/exhibitors which the Board will not be contacting personally.

Follow-up on any sponsor/exhibitor contact the Board has made initially but require more information or a formal (written) request from the Conference Committee.

Determine if any sponsors wish to donate prizes for the golf tournament or other door prizes to be presented during the conference or items to be included in the delegate registration package. Coordinate receipt of these prizes/materials.

Determine meal plans for the conference (including Wednesday breakfast (maybe only continental and for pre-conference delegates and Board) Wednesday lunch, Wednesday evening meal, Thursday breakfast, Thursday lunch, Thursday evening dinner, Friday breakfast, Friday lunch and all coffee breaks).

Determine Wednesday evening social activity and book entertainment/facility if necessary.

Determine Thursday evening social activity and book entertainment/facility if necessary.

Determine alternative-to-golf activity for Wednesday morning and make arrangements.

Determine spouse program and make arrangements.

Four months prior to the conference

Create a preliminary conference budget for Board approval. Determine if separate bank account or separate municipal GL are to be used for tracking revenues/expenses.

Decide on a delegate 'gift' to be given to each delegate with their registration package [past conferences have included golf shirts, neckerchiefs, canvas handbags, folio folder, fleece vests]

Determine and confirm Conference Master of Ceremonies (has previously been Conference Chairman, GFOA president, or another Board Member but does not necessarily have to be).

Coordinate with the Professional Development Task Force to determine facility requirements for all other conference sessions (other than key note speaker) and arrange for the proper room requirements and configuration. Obtain conference session and speaker information for the conference registration package and delegate binder.

Consolidate projected expenses for all conference activities into a draft budget for presentation to the Board. Recommend conference fees based on preliminary budget and obtain approval of registration fee from the Board.

Three months prior to conference

Finalize budget and communicate to Conference Committee.

Prepare Conference Registration Package (include as much information as possible but this can be sent out with 'TBA' sections if necessary).

Email conference registration package to all GFOA contacts (ie: members, non-members, out-of-province contacts, sponsors, exhibitors, etc.) Forward the conference registration package to Executive Administrator, who will coordinate the emailout.

Collect registration forms and fees. Deposit fees (either in separate bank account or utilizing a separate GL account of the host municipality, in the host municipality's bank account). Use a spreadsheet or database to maintain delegate registration information. This will be used to create the delegate lists for the delegate binders later and to create delegate name tags.

Obtain a GFOA membership list from the Executive Administrator to determine whether registering delegates are members (and entitled to lower registration rate) or not.

Order delegate gifts based on maximum number of delegates anticipated.

Two months prior to conference

Email reminder to all GFOA contacts (if necessary).

Coordinate the details of the golf tournament with the golf course tournament coordinator.

Determine what additional prizes will be required for the golf tournament or other door prizes. Obtain these prizes.

Invoice Sponsors/Exhibitors.

Send registration confirmations out to delegates with updated conference program information or direct delegates to the conference website to obtain up-to-date information about the program, etc.

One month prior to conference

Confirm speakers and their requirements.

Three weeks prior to conference

Prepare a conference evaluation form (refer to prior year template) customized to the current conference.

Obtain sponsor/exhibitor signage or make arrangements for this to be available at the conference.

Prepare exhibitor/sponsor advertising items (ie: table cards, signage to be displayed throughout conference or at golf course, etc.). Make arrangement for whatever other benefits were promised in the Sponsor/Exhibitor package.

Two weeks prior to conference

Finalize details for golf tournament, meals, etc.

Arrange for speaker gifts.

One week prior to conference

Compile delegate binders.

Arrange set-up of registration table at conference facility and/or golf course.

Arrange for internet connections, equipment, etc. required by exhibitors and speakers.

During conference

Coordinate with exhibitors and hotel to have set-up time and equipment requirements available.

Staff the registration table (Wednesday, Thursday mornings).

Collect unpaid registrations and/or sponsor/exhibitor fees.

Have conference committee members visible (ie: similar coloured shirts/vests) so delegates can identify members for assistance, etc.

Communicate with the Master of Ceremonies as the conference progresses, ensure conference stays on schedule.

Assist with coordination of the conference speakers.

Communicate/coordinate with hotel staff for conference equipment/facility needs, meals, etc.

Keep abreast of any changes in the program due to last minute speaker emergencies, etc.; prepare for this if necessary.

Collect all conference evaluation forms.

Coordinate 'clean-up' after the conference (returning any sponsor/exhibitor signage, other equipment, etc.).

Post-conference (within six months)

Wrap-up financial obligations and ensure all sponsor/exhibitor funds and delegate registration fees are collected. Deal with any refund situations. Once final financial affairs are taken care of, forward surplus funds along with final actual vs. budget financial report to the Executive Administrator by September each year.

Compile conference evaluations and summarize in a report to the Board.

Gather all conference planning materials together in a binder to be passed on to the next host municipality along with the prior year's materials.

Attend a post-conference meeting with the Board to report on the results of the conference and provide recommendations for future conferences.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Determine the number of conference session time slots (besides the key note speaker), including the pre-conference session on Wednesday morning.

Determine what conference topics will be presented.

Contact and arrange for speakers for the selected topics to be presented.

Make travel arrangements, if necessary, and inform the conference committee of any speaker expenses to be incurred so they may be added to the conference budget.

Determine speaker requirements (ie: overhead projector, microphone, etc.) and make arrangements for these or inform conference committee of these needs.

Determine required rooms and coordinate with the Conference Committee to have the proper room configuration available.

Once finalized, forward the information on the conference sessions and speaker profiles to the Conference Committee for inclusion in the registration package and program binder.

**SAMPLE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

(approximate times - not firm; final schedule will be determined by the Conference Committee with the following as a guideline to what delegates are expecting)

**Wednesday**

7:30am – 1:00pm – Delegate Registration

8:00 am – Noon – Pre-conference Session

8:00 am – Noon – Board/Task Force meeting (concurrent)

Noon – 1:00pm – lunch for those attending Pre-conference session and Board/Task Force meeting; alternatively all conference delegates given a box lunch to take along golfing or to alternative-to-golf event.

1:00pm – 5:00pm – golf tournament or alternative-to-golf event  
[golf is usually an 18-hole 4-person scramble event; alternative-to-golf can be chosen by the Conference Committee]

5:00pm – 6:00pm – free time for delegates to return to hotel; check in if needed, and get changed for evening event

6:00pm - ? pm – social event [past conferences have included a light wine and cheese, buffet meals, BBQ's, usually less formal and this is where the golf prizes (and, if applicable, alternative-to-golf prizes) are presented]

6:00pm – ? pm – Trade Show (depending on type of event and location, exhibitors may be set up)

### **Thursday**

7:30am – 8:00am – Delegate Registration

7:30am – 5:30pm – Trade Show (exhibitors do not necessarily have to stick around during the sessions)

8:00am – Noon – Key Note Speaker

At some point during the morning session, there should be a coffee break (usually ½ hour to promote delegate visiting at Trade Show)

Noon – 1:00pm – lunch (buffet or served) – can have a lunch speaker

1:00pm – 4:00pm – Conference Sessions

At some point during the afternoon session, there should be a coffee break (usually ½ hour to promote delegate visiting at Trade Show)

4:00pm – 4:30pm – AGM (a large prize is usually used as 'bait' to keep the delegates at the AGM; winner chosen at the end of the meeting and winner must be present to collect)

4:30pm – 6:00pm – delegate free time

6:00pm - ? pm – social event – a little more formal [past conference events have been dinner theatre, 'outdoor' BBQ, hypnotist]

### **Friday**

8:00am – Noon – Conference Sessions

At some point during the morning session, there should be a coffee break (usually ½ hour to promote delegate visiting at Trade Show)

Noon – 1:00pm – lunch (buffet or served) – can have a lunch speaker

1:00pm conference ends

Transportation to/from social events can be provided or left up to the delegates (discretion of Conference Committee).