

# GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION Of The United States and Canada

## *Alberta Chapter - Policies*

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## CRITERIA FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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**NUMBER: 006**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: January 14, 2005**

**AMENDED DATE: April 12, 2017**

**REVIEWED DATE: January 11, 2017**

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### GENERAL POLICY

The Alberta GFOA hosts an annual conference to provide its members with valuable opportunities for professional development and networking within our industry.

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.

The Executive Director is responsible to select conference hosts, to facilitate conference planning the Executive Director will determine the conference hosts using a 5-year timeline.

### Criteria for Annual Conference

- 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) **Regional Hosting Opportunities:** It is strongly recommended to take advantage of regional support in hosting the conference.
- 3) **Sufficiency of Meeting Facility:** The meeting facilities must have the capacity for up to 400+ delegates, sponsors, trade show participants and special guests.
- 4) **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.
- 5) **Hotel Accommodations:** Reasonably priced hotel(s) must be in close proximity to the meeting facility and have accommodation for 400+ delegates, sponsors, trade show participants and special guests.

- 6) **Availability of Golf Venue:** Since the conference has traditionally included a golf tournament, an appropriate golf venue is required.
- 7) **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.
- 8) **Enthusiasm:** The host municipality must be keen to organize the conference. It is important to have the commitment and support of an organizational team.
- 9) **Resource Capacity:** The hosting municipality should have access to the resources required to coordinate the conference.
- 10) **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.

#### **Conference Committee**

- 11) **Conference Committee:** The hosting municipality should establish a local committee to plan for the conference. This committee should include a designate from the Professional Development Task Force, the Executive Director, and the Executive Administrator .
- 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.

Each year as part of the budget process the Board will identify the budget for speakers for the upcoming conference.

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 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 Suggested Conference Guidelines**

### **BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

Board assigns the Executive Director to determine conference hosts and timelines 5 years in advance

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Ensure 5 years of conference locations are confirmed, venues booked, contracts signed and deposits paid.

Book additional hotel rooms and golf courses 5 years in advance.

Communicate with WGFOA on locations of Conference.

Communication with and work in conjunction with BCGFOA as to location and dates of Annual Conference. As this will have an impact on participation of delegates and sponsorship of both events.

Review dates of GFOA International.

Form a Conference Committee facilitate and meet with host municipality one year in advance of event.

### **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.

Create a preliminary conference budget for Board approval.

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)

The Professional Development task force determines the conference theme, inform the Board and the Conference Committee (refer to prior year's conference materials for past themes used). The theme should be relevant to current events that affect our members.

Professional Development Task Force to determine key note speaker based on the theme; provide deposit and sign contract, the Professional Development Task Force will target to have a high profile key note speaker in place the September prior to the Conference.

Six months prior to conference

Executive Administrator to prepare Conference Registration Package (include as much information as possible but this can be sent out with 'TBA' sections if necessary)

Ensure that sufficient space and traffic flow patterns are set up for the trade show. This item to be handled by someone on the Conference Committee.

Executive Administrator to update GFOA website to include all information available and update with new information as it comes available (to include conference registration forms, Sponsor updates).

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

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

Explore entertainment options and confirm the entertainment is appropriate for our conference setting.

Five months prior to conference

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

Executive Director to 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).

Executive Director to create a sponsorship package (levels of sponsorship, benefits for each sponsor, etc.) A separate Exhibitor package is created by the Executive Administrator to include details for the Trade Show.

Using the sponsorship list from past year as a starting point, the Executive Director will solicit annual sponsors (Some of the funds will go toward financing the conference.)

Executive Director to prepare sponsorship letters or make phone calls for sponsors/exhibitors. Letters for Exhibitors will be handled by someone 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.

Meal plans for the conference to be determined by Executive Director and Executive Administrator (including First Night Wine & Cheese (maybe only continental and for pre-conference delegates and Board) First Day lunch, Second/Third Days breakfast and lunch, as well), to also include the Gala Dinner on Day 3., Day 4 breakfast and lunch and all coffee breaks

Determine alternative-to-golf activity (for the non-golfers) for First day and make arrangements, if necessary

Four months prior to the conference

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]

Executive Director or Executive Administrator to 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).

Executive Administrator to coordinate with the Professional Development Task Force to determine facility requirements for all conference sessions and arrange for the proper room requirements and configuration. Executive Administrator to obtain conference session and speaker information for the conference registration package and delegate program.

Consolidate projected expenses for all conference activities into a draft budget for presentation to the Board. Conference fees are based on the previous year and the preliminary budget. Registration fees for the conference are set by the Board.

Three months prior to conference

Executive Administrator to email conference registration package information to all GFOA contacts (ie: members, non-members, out-of-province contacts, sponsors, exhibitors, etc.) Executive Administrator to collect registration forms and fees, as well as deposit fees. Executive Administrator will use a spreadsheet/database to maintain delegate registration information. This will be used to create the delegate lists for the delegate programs, to create delegate nametags and a registration listing for the registration desk to use when checking delegates in.

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.

Professional Development Task Force to confirm speakers and their requirements.

Two months prior to conference

Executive Administrator to 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.

Executive Administrator to invoice Sponsors/Exhibitors.

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

*Three weeks prior to conference*

Executive Administrator to prepare a conference evaluation form (refer to prior year template) customized to the current conference with the assistance of the Communication Task Force.

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

Executive Administrator to 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.

Executive Administrator to arrange set-up of registration table at conference facility and/or golf course.

Executive Administrator to 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 (evening registration first day, plus mornings of second and third day).

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

Executive Director and Executive Administrator to communicate with the Master of Ceremonies as the conference progresses, ensure conference stays on schedule.

Executive Administrator to assist with coordination of the conference speakers.

Executive Director or Executive Administrator to 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.

Executive Administrator to collect all completed conference evaluation forms.

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

Post-conference (within six months)

Executive Administrator to wrap-up financial obligations for speakers and special guests. Executive Administrator to ensure all sponsor/exhibitor funds and delegate registration fees are collected and deal with any refund situations. Executive Administrator to calculate surplus funds, along with final actual vs. budget financial report by September each year.

Executive Administrator to compile conference evaluations and summarize in a report to the Board.

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

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE RESPONSIBILITIES**

To ensure that the conference provides our members with excellent value for the investment of resources, and time to attend, the board charges the Professional Development Task Force with the responsibility to recruit high quality speakers who provide timely and informative presentations that compliment the conference theme. The Professional Development Task Force is responsible to determine the conference theme.

The Board wishes to have the Alberta GFOA conference continue to grow and build a reputation of excellence. To accomplish this goal, the Task Force, in the selection of keynote speakers, will strive to build a slate of speakers with as much high profile as the budget will allow.

The Task Force will establish a balance between technical and "soft skill" topics, and attempt to address areas of discussion identified "of interest" by the membership.

The Task Force will establish a balance between paid and volunteer speakers.

To protect the integrity and perception of the conference particular caution will be paid to vendors who will be reminded when selected to speak that presentations must remain on topic and not focus on selling products or services.

The Executive Director will inform the Task Force, which sponsors have requested speaking slots as part of the sponsorship package. The Task Force will follow up with the Sponsor to make arrangements.

Once the conference theme is identified, the Task Force will establish the speaker slate as quickly as possible (October is ideal) to allow promotional materials to be distributed, with the first Keynote speaker in place by September, if possible.

Determine the number of conference session time slots (including any keynote speaker(s),

Determine what conference topics will be presented.

Recruit speakers for the selected topics to be presented.

Develop conference schedule for speaking spots.

Inform the Executive Administrator 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 Executive Administrator of these needs.

Review and approve speaker presentations and content prior to the session, effort should be made to ensure that speakers stay on topic.

Determine required rooms and coordinate with the Executive Administrator to have the proper room configuration available included in the rooms blocked at the hotel(s).

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

### **SAMPLE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

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

The Professional Development Task Force will begin filling the speaker slate using the prior year Conference schedule as a guideline.

Breakfast should start at 7:30 am, with the conference sessions starting at 8:30 am.

Dead space areas should be avoided in the conference schedule, concurrent sessions should provide a balance of topics; sessions should be limited to 45 minutes if possible. Though the conference would like to have as many concurrent sessions as possible to serve the members diverse needs, judgment should be taken not to make the sessions too busy or dilute the attendance.

Ideally concurrent sessions should average two sessions and depending on need should not exceed three sessions.

### **Day 1**

Noon – 1:00pm – lunch for those attending Pre-conference session and Board/Task Force meetings; 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

7:00pm - 9 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] There may be two social events, one as a dinner for the golf participants, and the other as a Wine & Cheese welcome reception type of event.



6:00pm – 9 pm – Trade Show (depending on type of event and location, exhibitors may be able to set up)

## **Day 2**

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

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

8:30am – Noon – Keynote Speaker and 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) – 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)

## **Day 3**

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

8:30am – Noon – Keynote Speaker and 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) – 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

6:30pm - 11 pm – Gala Dinner social event – a little more formal meal (served) with red and white wine on the tables [past conference events have been dinner theatre, 'outdoor' BBQ, hypnotist]

## **Day 4**

8:30am – 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 gift cards from eg. Tim Hortons) – 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).