



## **Program Overview**

Oregon Government Finance Officers Association  
**Professional Finance Officer  
Certification Program**

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# Introduction

The field of government finance is constantly evolving and changing. Government finance professionals must keep current on new reporting and accounting standards. Methods of increasing productivity and efficiency must also be explored in times of fiscal constraints. A government finance professional must utilize new computer technology and methods to facilitate and increase reporting capabilities and financial records management.

The Oregon Government Finance Officers Association (OGFOA) believes that the Professional Finance Officer Certification Program recognizes and promotes professional development. The program encourages continuing education and active participation in events and activities which improve the skills and abilities of finance professionals. Certification promotes excellence in government finance and is beneficial to finance staff of all Oregon governmental agencies.

In keeping with the mission statement of the OGFOA, this Certification Program exists to support both the professional and personal growth of individuals involved in Oregon governmental finance.

The designation of Certified Professional Finance Officer indicates that the recipient has:

1. met specified formal education and on-the-job experience requirements;
2. satisfactorily completed required amounts of continuing education in specified areas;
3. been involved in professional activities relevant to governmental finance; and
4. demonstrated the determination, skill and training necessary to be a Certified Professional Governmental Finance Officer as judged by other professional finance officers.

## Program Overview

The OGFOA Certification Program operates on three consecutive levels:

1. Admission into the program;
2. Achieving the designation of Certified Professional Finance Officer within four years of admission; and
3. Maintaining Certification by earning required points every two years.

## Reporting

Initial application into the program may be submitted at any time. The applicant will indicate on the application what year they wish to start the four year Certification period. The four year period will begin on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year the applicant chooses.

All other certification and maintenance reports are due by January 31<sup>st</sup> following the end of the calendar year being reported.

# Admission to the Program

To be accepted into the OGFOA Certification Program, the applicant must:

1. be an active or associate member of OGFOA as defined by Article III, Section 1.a.and b., of the OGFOA by-laws; and
2. document 70 points total for the experience and education requirements; and
3. have attended one OGFOA Fall or Spring Conference and be a member of an OGFOA Committee at the time of application; and
4. obtain sponsorship from a supervisor or an elected official within your governing body to provide for local support and recognition; and
5. submit an Application for Admission with supporting detail and application fee of \$50.00.

## *Eligibility Requirements*

A total of 70 points must be documented for admission to the program. Points may be accumulated in the following categories:

1. **Experience:** (maximum of 70 points – minimum of 20 points)

Public Finance:	Full-time	=	10	points per year
	Part-time	=	5	points per year
Other Finance (non-public)	Full-time	=	7	points per year
	Part-time	=	3.5	points per year

2. **Education:** (maximum of 50 points – minimum of 10 points)

Finance, Public Administration or other related field:

Bachelor or Post-baccalaureate	=	50	points
Associate	=	25	points
Other	=	1	point per 30 hours of class time

*Note: Certain core courses or a waiver are required for certification and may be completed prior to application for admission or as part of the certification process. (see page 6)*

3. Attendance at either an OGFOA Fall or Spring Conference and Membership on one OGFOA Committee. (Professional Participation Points generated from these activities will not be used for the application into the Program, but may be used in the first year in the Program if generated in that same year.)

## *Documentation*

Documentation of education, experience and other certifications is required for admission to the OGFOA Certification Program. Copies of diplomas and certifications should be attached to the application.

## ***Review Process***

The OGFOA Certification Committee reviews each Application for Admission. Applications are reviewed for the required points, necessary documentation, sponsorship, and payment of the \$50.00 application fee.

Applicants are admitted to the program after all entry requirements have been met.

Upon admittance into the OGFOA Certification Program, the Program participant has four years to meet the requirements for Certification (see next page).

The applicant will designate on the application for admission into the Program which year they wish to start the four year Certification period. The first year of that four-year period begins on January 1 of either the year of acceptance into the program or the following year, whichever the applicant designates on their application.

While attendance at an OGFOA Fall or Spring Conference and membership on an OGFOA Committee is required for application into the Program, the actual Professional Participation points generated by those activities are not used in the application process, so those points may be applied to the first year in the program as long as they were generated in that year.

Points used for admission into the program cannot be used for certification.

Points earned prior to January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year the applicant is accepted into the program are not eligible for use towards certification.

# Earning Certification

Upon admission into the program, certification may be obtained by acquiring 145 points in the categories of Accounting, Budget, Finance, Management, Technology, Other, and Professional Participation\* over a period of four years or less. The program year is January 1 through December 31. Certification points begin to accrue as of January 1 *of the year of admission*, unless those points have been used for admission into the program.

**Annual point reports are due by January 31<sup>st</sup> following the year that is being reported.**

## *Core Courses*

All 3 core courses or the waiver are required for certification and may be completed prior to application for admission or as part of the certification process. Core courses are defined as:

1. A full sequence of college-level accounting; either three quarters or two semesters which may be attained from attendance at a college or university, a GFOA or OGFOA sponsored course, or any other course sponsored by an organization approved by the Certification Committee. If the accounting course is not college-level, a minimum of twenty-four clock hours must be documented; AND
2. A course in governmental accounting which may be attained from attendance at a college or university, a GFOA or OGFOA sponsored course, or any other course sponsored by an organization approved by the Certification Committee. If the accounting course is not college-level, a minimum of eight clock hours must be documented; AND
3. A course in finance which may be attained from attendance at a college or university, a GFOA or OGFOA sponsored course, or any other course sponsored by an organization approved by the Certification Committee. If the finance course is not college-level, a minimum of eight clock hours must be documented. Finance topics include, but are not limited to, cash management, debt financing, financial mathematics, lease/purchase financing, or arbitrage analysis. OR
4. If an individual has not completed the core course requirements as defined above, but they believe that they are able to demonstrate an equivalent level of knowledge through their work experience, they may request a waiver of any or all of the core courses. An individual must submit a letter to the Certification Chair that specifies which core courses for which a waiver is requested, and should include the following information: the agency where the experience was obtained, the job title of the position the individual worked in at the time, the number of years obtaining the experience, and details of the specific tasks and responsibilities of the position that help identify the equivalent knowledge obtained. The Certification Chair will then submit the request for waiver to the Certification Committee for review and a decision. The request for a waiver must be submitted prior to entering the Certification Program.

*Note: Certification under the GFOA Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO) program may be used in lieu of the core courses required for admission into the program.*

## ***Category Point Requirements for Certification***

Points required in each category to achieve certification are as follows:

<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Minimum</u></b>	<b><u>Maximum</u></b>
Accounting	15	45
Budget	15	45
Finance	15	45
Management	10	45
Technology	10	30
Other	0	20
Professional Participation*	10	
<b>Total Points Required</b>	<b>145</b>	

\* Only OGFOA activities are eligible for Professional Participation points. The purpose of this limitation is to encourage active participation in OGFOA to enhance the experience and value of the organization for all members. The exception is for attendance at the GFOA National Conference and business meeting.

## Point Accumulation

Please review the following information carefully. If you are unsure about the category or point value of an activity, please contact the Certification Committee Chair (contact information for Chair can be found on website at [www.ogfoa.org](http://www.ogfoa.org)).

**Points reported for OGFOA events must be documented by including with the point report a copy of the completed Conference Summary Report that is included in every attendee's Conference packet.**

One point is earned for each hour of attendance at a technical presentation as designated by the course sponsor. This contact time may be divided into a minimum of one-half (.5) hour/point increments, as designated in a course or conference schedule.

Points for college courses or workshops will be based on hours of attendance rather than credit hours earned. For instance, a three-credit quarter class normally involves 30 hours of class time (30 points), while a three-credit semester class involves 45 hours of class time (45 points).

Online or correspondence courses will be valued at the same "credit" value as attended classes based on whether it is a quarter class or a semester class.

### **Professional Participation:**

- The only points allowed for "Professional Participation" are for OGFOA or GFOA participation via attendance at Conferences, participation on OGFOA Committees or the Board, attendance of the annual GFOA Conference, participation on GFOA Committees or the Board, and activities specifically described below. Points will not be accepted for participation in any other organizations.
- Attending an OGFOA Conference is worth one (1) "Professional Participation" point, and attending the business meeting at a Conference is worth one-half (.5) "Professional Participation" point.
- Attending the annual GFOA Conference is worth one (1) "Professional Participation" point, and attending the business meeting at that Conference is worth one-half (.5) point.
- One (1) "Professional Participation" point is allowed per year for participating on an OGFOA or GFOA Committee, or two (2) points if you are the Chair of that Committee. This includes ad hoc committees that may only exist for a short time, but usually work intensively during that time. One-half (.5) point will be allowed for each Committee meeting or Board meeting that you attend during the year. At the discretion of the Committee Chair an email or conference call discussion on an issue of substance and relevance to the Committee's work may be counted as a "meeting"(.5 points) by those committee members that participated. Each Committee Chair will provide to the Certification Committee each year, prior to the annual Certification point report reviews, a list of Committee members who actively participated on that committee during the year, along with a list of meetings and/or email discussions that qualify as meetings for that committee during that year.
- One (1) "Professional Participation" point is allowed for an article written for the OGFOA newsletter, or one point each if the article is co-authored . An Editor of the OGFOA Newsletter earns two (2) points per year, and an Assistant Editor earns one (1) point per year. In addition, an Editor and Assistant Editor earns one-half point for each of the four annual newsletter issues they work on during the year, making it possible for the Editor to earn up to four (4) points per year and an Assistant Editor to earn up to three (3) points per year.

- Two (2) "Professional Participation" points are allowed for each hour of teaching a session at an OGFOA Conference or Regional training. The additional point is accrued for preparation of the presentation that you are presenting/teaching.
- One (1) "Professional Participation" point is allowed for the preparation or coordination of an OGFOA Conference Session. This includes coordinating with the Association Manager for the session, developing a presentation, securing speakers, and serving as a room monitor for the session.
- One quarter (.25) "Professional Participation" point is allowed for verifiable recruitment of a new OGFOA member or verifiable recruitment of a new OGFOA Committee member. OGFOA member recruitment will be verified by the applicant naming the recruiter on their membership application. Committee membership recruitment will be verified by the Committee Chair.

### **Miscellaneous Point Information:**

- Points for lunch speakers will be determined by the length of the lunch period: A one hour lunch with a speaker will earned one-half (.5) point, while a one and a half hour lunch with a speaker will earn one (1) point in whatever category is designated for the speaker's topic.
- One and a half (1.5) points will be allowed for each hour and a half session.
- A review course taken to sit for one of the five GFOA CPFO tests may count towards either Finance, Accounting or Budgeting (1 hour = 1 point).
- Upon successful completion of each of the GFOA CPFO exams, the actual time required to sit that exam (1 hour = 1 point) may be reported as follows:
  - > Exam on governmental accounting, auditing, and financial reporting = Accounting category;
  - > Exam on operating and capital budgeting = Budgeting category;
  - > Exam on debt management = Finance category;
  - > Exam on treasury and investment management = Finance category; and
  - > Exam on retirement and benefits, risk management, and procurement = Management or Other category.
- Two (2) points in the "Management" category are allowed for attendance at the two day annual City/County Insurance Services (CIS) Conference, but no points will be awarded for any sessions there.
- "Technology" points will be allowed for attending CIS trainings on how to use online systems.
- "Technology" points will be allowed for training on new in-house financially-related software systems (inventory, project management, etc.). If the participant was involved in the set up of the new software, that is how it was programmed to perform accounting, etc., then points may be split between "Technology" and another appropriate category. Demonstrations of software products do not qualify as "training."
- "Technology" points will be allowed for training on new in-house Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) phone systems. Installation of other types of phone systems does not qualify.
- Points may be allowed for individual sessions pertaining to Finance Officer functions attended at the OAMR (Oregon Association of Municipal Recorders) Conferences, but not for overall attendance.
- "Budget" points will be allowed for attending the Dept of Revenue's Local Budget Law sessions.

- Points may also be earned by attendance at many other finance, budget, management, etc. courses.
- Home study courses (online or via electronic media) from groups such as the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, American Management Association, or other accredited organizations are acceptable for continuing education requirements. Prior approval is recommended, but not required. Documentation which includes a program description, materials such as tests or a workbook, and a certificate of completion must be submitted.
- Points that were inadvertently left out of an annual report cannot be brought forward into a current report. Points that fell outside the four year time period for certification cannot be included.
- Keeping track of points is the program participant's responsibility. The Association office may be able to assist you by providing OGFOA sponsored event agendas or programs, which you may use to reconstruct your attendance. However, the Association will not research individual attendance.

If, in your opinion, the course title is descriptive of the course content, further documentation does not need to be attached to the annual report. When a question may arise regarding attendance or content, it is advisable to ask the Committee for a determination and to attach the appropriate documentation to your annual report. Participants should retain a copy of all reports and supporting documentation.

### ***Extensions***

An extension of the four year accrual period may be granted in certain circumstances.

If more time is required to accumulate the necessary points for certification, the participant should write a letter to the Certification Committee requesting an extension and providing a specific plan that includes a target date for completion. The Committee will consider the request at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Requests for extensions should be submitted before the end of the normal four year period.

### ***Award of Certification Designation***

Participants must submit their annual point report and a *Request for Award of Certification* form by January 31<sup>st</sup> following the year that they have accumulated the 145 points required to achieve certification (before the end of the four year accrual period). The Certification Committee will review the reports and *Request for Award of Certification* and either notify the participant of any deficiencies or will approve the certification.

Presentations to honor recipients of the OGFOA Certified Professional Finance Officer designation are made at the OGFOA Annual Spring Conference. Participants receiving certification will be notified prior to the conference.

### ***Program Participant Discounts***

All OGFOA Certification Program participants in good standing will receive a **\$25.00 discount** off registration fees to the OGFOA Conferences. "In good standing" is defined as having submitted point reports according to the program requirements.