



The Washington Connection



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Spring/Summer Events

Thank you!

March 2021 Virtual Luncheon: Thank you to the Women's Leadership Panel for the discussion on *"Breaking Down Barriers to Leadership"* hosted by our exciting & experienced keynote speakers. This event was co-hosted by *AGA National Council for the Advancement of Women*.



April 2021 Virtual Luncheon: Thank you to guest speaker Alaleh Jenkins, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management and Comptroller), Department of Defense, United States Navy, for the *"Navy's Financial Management Transformation"* discussion, on April 21st.



Up Next!

***New Date* May 2021 Virtual Luncheon**, with keynote speaker Monica Valentine, Executive Director, Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board, on Tuesday, May 25th.



SAVE THE DATE

Annual Awards Gala sponsored by AGA DC Chapter, June 9th, 12pm - 1pm, EDT.

President's Message

During my term as DC Chapter President, I have developed a better understanding of how much effort our volunteers put into providing services to our members. I already had a sense of this as President-Elect while working to ensure that our chapter committees were fully staffed, but now that I've been more involved in chapter operations it has taken on new meaning. We have 21 committees and 85+ volunteers, who balance their volunteer work with their day jobs and family responsibilities.

The shift to running all of our chapter events virtually (and adding some new ones) has been an especially time consuming challenge for our volunteers. It's a hard deadline when you know that anywhere from 50 to 350 people will be showing up expecting your webinar to go smoothly. Besides our monthly 'luncheons' we offer members our two day Annual Training, Corporate Sponsor Trainings, an Awards Gala (scaled down this year), Member Services networking events, and we host AGA National webinars. I'm proud of the fact that our team has been able to offer so many events in spite of the pandemic!

So please join me in a shout out to all of our volunteers on the following pages - thank you for all that you do! If you know or cross paths with any of these team members please be sure to acknowledge their efforts.

In late April we held our 19th Annual AGA DC Training Event in a virtual format for the first time, and it was a great success. We had 14 sessions over two days along with ethics training from the Virginia Society of CPAs, with over 320 attendees each day, which is a lot of NASBA CPEs!

Last month we also had our first virtual cooking class for members. I was personally very disappointed in this event - because I had to miss it! I heard it went well, and I'm looking forward to the next one. Our Member Services team is planning more virtual events that will extend into the summer, including another Bingo Night and a wine tasting.



We are down to our last virtual monthly event for the year. On Tuesday the 25th we welcome back **Monica Valentine, FASAB Executive Director** for an update on FASAB at 30. Our featured Community Service organization will be the *Youth Leadership Foundation*, which serves over 350 third through twelfth-grade students in our Nation's Capital with quality mentoring programs in seven schools across the city. Their program features one-on-one mentoring, formative talks about character, intentional engagement of parents, and dedicated time to give back to the community. Donations will ensure each student receives access to 250 hours of mentorship throughout the school year and summer, and AGA National will be matching our donations. Please see our Community Service page for information on how to donate.

Thanks as always to our Corporate Sponsors, speakers and volunteers for their support, and thanks to all our members for your participation!

Paul Lionikis
President
AGA Washington DC Chapter

AGA DC Volunteers - Thank You!

Awards Gala

Diane Rudnick*
Heather Moreland*
Leslie Phillips
Mandana Tajoddin
Orinda Basha

Corporate Sponsors

Paul Marshall*
Cherry Ung
Evan Mount
Ryan Crowther

Education

Caitlin McGurn*
Drew Pottle
Brittany Hopwood
Kelly Salter
Mona Amatie
Tonya Baker

Meetings

Veronica Baird*
Alexis Alfaro-Trejo
Areeba Rizvi
Morgan Buchanan
Wendy Schiffman

Programs

Bo Shevchik*
Frank Petersen
Peter Moore

Member Services

Crystal Wolf*
David Baskin*
Anthony Richards
Manoj Mirchandani

Membership

Matt Gorman*
Beverly O'Neill
Johnny Amin
Kate Valentine

Young Professionals

Daniel Lange*
James Gregg*

Newsletter

Ashley Sims-Martin*
Thomas Chin
Erin Cooper
Monique Llanos
Rob Garcia
Gary Wong

Social Media

Heidi Williams*
Kevin Katindig
Matt Marsh
Tharana Karzai

Webmaster

Alex Yow*
Leigha Kiger
Marie Butler
Toni Dyson

* Committee Directors and Co-Directors



AGA DC Volunteers Continued

Accountability Outreach

Ricky Perry*
Joe Peter
Keegan Maguigan

Administration

Swamy Arokiaswam*
Heather Moreland*
Paterne Koukpeso

Awards

Julia Duquette*
Catherine Gao
Jing Williams
Rick Webster

CGFM

Shawn Syed*
Chi Okonkwo
Sara Specht
Sky Rodriguez

Community Service

Wendy Cheung*
Jesse Carpenter*

Historian

Eileen Parlow*
Joe Peter

Strategic Directions

Wendy Allen*
Jake Weber
Lal Harter
Lance Rees
Myriam Galvan-Zambrana
Salim Mawani
Swamy Arokiaswamy

Mentorship

Sharnell Montgomery*
Elena Yearly*
Amanda Chait
Cherry Ung

Publications

Simcha Kuritzky

* Committee Directors and Co-Directors

Vision

AGA is the premier association for advancing government accountability. AGA defines government accountability as a government's obligation to the people for its actions and use of resources.

Mission Statement

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

AGA DC Chapter Community Service

The Chapter offers members the opportunity to “pay it forward” by sharing their gifts and talents with the DC Community through volunteer opportunities in areas such as:

- **Social Safety** - Hunger, homelessness, and unemployment
- **Education** - Literacy and college prep
- **Health** - Awareness for mental, emotional, and physical illnesses
- **Veterans** - Support for service personnel and their families
- **Equal Opportunity** - Diversity and inclusion
- **Capital Causes** - Other local causes



Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) | Capital Causes

The Community Service Committee **collected \$200.00 during the January 2021 luncheon to support Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).**

CFSA is the public child welfare agency in the District of Columbia responsible for protecting child victims and those at risk of abuse and neglect. CFSA works to improve the safety, permanence, and well-being of abused and neglected children while strengthening their families.

We're raising funds on behalf of the CFSA Recruitment Program. Our donation will support events like resource parent recruitment sessions and meetings that build the District's capacity to place children in safe

and loving homes until they can reunify with their birth families. Additionally, our donation will also benefit activities that help children with the goal of adoption to meet and connect with their potential forever families.

Visit cfsa.dc.gov/services to learn more about how CFSA serves children and families in the District of Columbia and fosterdckids.org to learn how to become a foster parent for children in foster care.

Community Service Cont'd.

Capital Area Food Bank | Capital Causes

The Community Service Committee will highlight 'Capital Area Food Bank' during the AGA Chapter April 2021 luncheon.

Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) is the anchor of the hunger relief infrastructure in our region, providing more than 45 million meals in communities across D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. CAFB believes that long-term solution to hunger requires more than meals; it requires education, training, and opportunity. In addition to providing food for today, CAFB addresses the root cause of hunger by partnering with organizations that provide critical services like job training programs and health care.

You can make an impact today, for every \$1.00 donated, it provides 2.5 meals to your community.

There are several ways to give:

1. Directly to the organization their website; then email screenshot to wecheung@deloitte.com or text to 571-289-2428.
 - a. Monetary donations
 - b. Amazon Wish List Donations
2. Venmo to @Wendy-Cheung-5 (code:3330) with the description 'AGA DC-CAFB'

Also, please visit

<https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/impact/> to learn about volunteer opportunities and read ongoing updates about CAFB community support and crisis response.



We hope you will join us in participating in all or some future community service opportunities.

We invite you to share photos on the impacts you are making and thoughts on how we can support your cause by connecting with the **Community Service Committee**.

As always, thank you, for everything you do to make an impact in our community. Be well and stay safe!

Wendy Cheung and Jesse Carpenter

Co-Directors

AGA DC Chapter

Community Service Committee

AGA DC Chapter March & April Virtual Luncheons



“Breaking Down Barriers to Leadership”

As co-hosted with the AGA National Council for the Advancement of Women, our Chapter held a Virtual Luncheon *“Women’s History Month Panel - Breaking Down Barriers to Leadership”* on March 31, 2021. Our Immediate Past President, Malena Brookshire, Chief Financial Officer, AmeriCorps, moderated this panel with the following panelists:

- **Wilmer Graham**, Senior Adviser for Financial Strategies and Policies, US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Thalia Melendez**, Assistant Comptroller for Diversity Management Office of New York State Comptroller
- **Mary Peterman**, Deputy Chief, Finance and Procurement Office Administrative Office of the US Courts



The panelists discussed challenges they have been facing as women professionals and how they overcome barriers. The panelists also answered questions submitted by virtual luncheon attendees.

“Department of the Navy's Financial Management Transformation”

Our Chapter held a Virtual Luncheon “Department of the Navy's Financial Management Transformation” on April 21, 2021. We welcome **Ms. Alaleh Jenkins**, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management and Comptroller), Department of Defense, who discussed the Navy's efforts and commitment to achieve financial excellence.



Thank You

March Virtual Luncheon

The AGA DC Chapter extends a special thank you to our Corporate Sponsor, **CGI**, and to **Alisa Bearfield**, Vice President Consulting Services, for her introductory remarks. Thank you to **more than 230 attendee** who joined our March 2021 Virtual Luncheon, and again to **Malena Brookshire, Wilmer Graham, Thalia Melendez, and Mary Peterman**, as our speakers for their thoughts and insights!



Alisa Bearfield



Andrew Wright

April Virtual Luncheon

The AGA DC Chapter extends a special thank you to our Corporate Sponsor and Gold Sponsor, **Cotton & Company**, and to **Mr. Andrew Wright**, Director of Cotton & Company, for his introductory remarks. Thank you to our **159 attendees** who joined our April 2021 Virtual Luncheon, and again to **Ms. Alaleh Jenkins**, as our speaker for her thoughts and insights!



NEW Benefits to our DC Chapter Members!

A DC Chapter member-only portal has been established on the AGA Washington DC Chapter website where you can find archived copies of luncheon speaker presentations from this program year-to-date. *Please note that CPE will only be provided for attendees of the live event; members who watch the downloaded recording will not receive CPE at this time.*

To access past recordings of our luncheon speaker presentations, please visit our chapter website and select the menu section **“Members Luncheon Videos”** or visit this direct link at:

<https://www.agacgfm.org/Chapters/Washington-DC-Chapter/Sign-in.aspx?RET=/Chapters/Washington-DC-Chapter/Members>

Please Note: Login and password are the same as your access to the AGA National website.

Meetings Committee Members:

- Veronica Baird (Director)
- Alexis Alfaro
- Jarrod Lesso Areeba Rizvi
- Wendy Schiffman

Programs Committee Members:

- Frank Petersen (Co-Director)
- Bo Shevchik (Co-Director)
- Peter Moore



CGFM Committee Updates

Voted Top 4 Sought-After Accounting Certification

While several accounting credentials can be helpful in propelling a career, the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) was voted Top 4 Sought-After Accounting Certifications by Discover Accounting. CGFMs demonstrate competency in governmental accounting, auditing, financial reporting, internal controls and budgeting at the federal, state and local levels. CGFM is a respected credential that recognizes the specialized knowledge and experience needed to be an effective government financial manager. Learn more about the CGFM by clicking this link.

For this certificate you will need:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited United States college or university
- At least two years of experience in government financial management
- A passing score of 500 on each of the three CGFM exams

You Study, We Pay

The AGA DC chapter CGFM Committee continues to support our members by providing the following:

- Training Modules, Study Guides, and Practice Exams – AGA DC is reimbursing members for training modules, study guides, and practice exams. AGA DC will reimburse the cost of each item. We only have a limited

amount of rebates available so it is first come, first served. Please submit the following to Sara Specht at sspecht@cricpa.com if you are interested:

- Proof of scheduled exam
- Proof of payment
- Mailing address
- AGA member number
- Exam Rebate Initiative – Take the exam, pass it, and we will reimburse you the cost. Cost of each exam is \$125. Please submit the following information to Sara Specht at sspecht@cricpa.com to qualify: Copy of passing certification, Proof of payment, Mailing address & AGA member number.

NEW CGFMs

Congratulations to the following members obtained their CGFM January through February 2021!

Buyankhishig Yadamsuren, CGFM

Christopher S. Caspar, CGFM

Ms. Daphne Cheeks, CGFM

Dr. David Harris, III, CGFM

Evan A. Mount, CGFM

You should be very proud of your accomplishment!

Have questions? Check out our CGFM chapter web-page at this link.

Training & Conferences

AGA DC Virtual Luncheon Schedule

The AGA DC Chapter hosts a series of monthly luncheons featuring a prominent speaker to address current events, issues and initiatives that impact the Federal community. Attendees earn 1 hour of CPE credit.

Please consider attending our remaining virtual luncheons. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining each webinar.

The Chapter will host the following luncheons throughout the 2020-2021 program year.

When:

NEW TUESDAY DATE

05/25/21 — May 2021 Virtual Luncheon, with keynote speaker Monica Valentine, Executive Director, Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB).

- Earn one NASBA CPE credit.

For more information please contact: Veronica Baird | vbaird@kpmg.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

06/09/21 — Annual Awards Gala, sponsored by AGA DC Chapter. Event held from 12-1pm, EDT.

**** SAVE THE DATE****



AGA DC Audio Training Schedule

The AGA DC Chapter will host the following AGA National audio training sessions throughout the 2020-2021 program year.

AGA DC is continuing to take precautions to protect our members in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. All audio conferences will continue to be offered in a virtual format. **However, you must pre-register quickly to receive your access links as availability is limited.**

NOTE: Pre-registering is NOT your ticket to access the webinar. You will receive further instructions to obtain access links once pre-registration closes.

Cost:

There is no charge for AGA members in good standing for these events and attendees will earn two (2) CPE credit hours.

When:

05/12/21 — Fraud/Data Analytics

06/09/21 — Leadership

For more information on this audio conference and the full schedule of AGA National's audio conferences please visit the AGA National website at: AGA DC Webinars

For more information please contact:

Mona Amatie | mamatie@aoc.gov

**** SAVE THE DATE ****

Member Spotlight -

Jing Williams, CGFM, CISM, PMP, MBA

**Division Director, for Systems Policy and Compliance,
Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources, Department
of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

AGA-DC: HHS is a decentralized organization as it has 11 operating divisions (OpDivs), and some of the OpDivs have their own financial systems. What are your challenges and priorities when it comes to financial systems policy and compliance?

Jing: HHS is one of the largest cabinet agencies, with over \$2.4 trillion budgetary resources in FY2020. Our financial systems are the backbone for over 300 programs supporting HHS's overall mission, from budget planning, acquisitions, disbursing grants to processing medical claims, etc. HHS's top priority is to provide a secure and reliable financial systems control environment for accountability and transparency of taxpayers' funds, and most importantly, and enabling management to focus on missions, especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

To meet the challenge, we continue to keep our feet grounded and eyes forward by protecting our systems with a better understanding of system health and risks, and maturing the systems controls to prepare future needs. Rather than managing policy and compliance in a traditional reactive way, we design our program to increase governance and oversight through standardized guidance, improve integration of risk and controls with automation and data analytics, and continuously monitor emerging areas such as RPA and AI.

AGA-DC: Your leadership and technical work has made positive impact to the HHS, including downgrade of the Department's long-standing IT material weakness and as part of a group receiving the Secretary Award for HHS financial system modernization. Can you tell us more about this success?

Jing: Resolving the long-standing IT material weakness in the financial systems began with HHS leadership's tone at the top. As a result, in FY2015 a new division for systems policy and compliance was created, which I'm now leading. We developed a forward looking strategy aimed at maturing the



financial systems control environment and reducing risks for the long term. To successfully execute the strategy, we established a working group that has brought OpDiv CFO, CIO, and CISO communities together to analyze deficiencies, implement cross cutting solutions and assess overall risk. Finally for the first time in 23 years, the HHS IT material weakness was downgraded by the auditor in FY 2018. We have sustained this determination since then, and have continued maturing the control environment over time.

The Secretary's Award was a departmental wide effort for the successful upgrade of our financial management systems in 2016. My team and I assessed the risks of controls introduced by the cloud service, addressed the security and controls gaps, and obtained the final authorization to operate. I still remember that the "countdown clock" for the final system release used to be located next to my office. It was a memorable and proud moment for me as the clock clicks, we worked together to reach every milestone until the finish line.

AGA-DC: You used to work in the private sector on various system modernization and IT governance. What brought you to the decision to work for Federal government? And any lessons learned from your private sector career that are applied to what you're doing now?

Member Spotlight Cont'd.

Jing: Throughout my career, I have worked in private and public sectors in e-business development, billing systems consolidation, IT portfolio management, and policy making on IT governance at OMB. Working for the federal government is truly my honor and privilege to serve the public and make positive impacts. In HHS, our work touches one in four Americans' lives. I am proud to be part of the HHS team to support the mission of improving the health and well-being of American people.

I think public sector and private sector share the common challenges. Sound solutions need to be based on a good understanding of the business environment, with anticipation of the risks to achieve the end state; there is no one-size-fits-all solution. My experience in public and private sectors, from UK to US, allows me to expose to diverse groups of people and appreciate the values they contribute to our work. While leading a department wide working group at HHS now, I'm always inspired by the talented team members, coming from different OpDivs, or functional areas in security, IT, accounting, etc., to share challenges and best practices, to learn and grow together to make a difference every day.

AGA-DC: Leaders are often being asked "what keeps you awake at night?" However, I'm sure any positivity we can hear and learn is certainly welcome these days. With that, what keeps you motivated each day?

Jing: Well, as an HHS employee, I would recommend not to be kept awake at night, as following a healthy routine is critical to everyone's health. Like our healthy habits in daily life, discipline helps us free our minds and focus on the critical business needs.

I think the curiosity to explore the beautiful things we can create in life and at work that make positive impacts to ourselves and the people around us. I'm currently learning watercolor painting and there is always joy in seeing the result of the painting created by the magic of water and colors.

At work, I have a great team managing our financial systems' external audits, internal controls, and policies. These topics do not sound exciting, but we can make the ordinary extraordinary with our passion and dedication; by connecting the dots for

risk understanding, creating cross-cutting solutions to resolve problems, or changing the mindset by challenging the status quo. As our team motto says, "Make our work place delightful and our work meaningful."

AGA-DC: Thank you for your time and insights, Jing!

The contents of this interview had been condensed and edited for length and clarity.

Jing Williams, CGFM, CISM, PMP, MBA

Division Director, for Systems Policy and Compliance, Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources, Department of Health and Human Services

Education: MBA, College of William and Mary

Hometown: Born and Raised in China

Fun Fact: I developed a hobby during pandemic to travel with my watercolor pen brushes on the watercolor paper. Wish to paint while travelling when our life is back to normal.

Professional Experience:

- As the Division Director, Jing manages HHS financial systems policy and compliance program that provides governance and oversight of HHS financial systems on systems policy and compliance management; security and internal controls assessment and improvement; and audit readiness and response in financial statements audit and DATA Act audits.
- Since 2015, Jing has been leading a Departmental working group comprised of CFO, CIO, and CISO communities to mature the HHS financial systems controls and reduce risk(s).
- Received the Secretary's Award for HHS Financial System Modernization (2016).
- Prior to HHS, Jing served at OMB, SBA, DHS, DOI, and DOC to support IT investment portfolio management, emerging technologies, and systems modernization. Her work in the private sector included the first e-business portal Verizon.com and financial systems consolidation for MCI in the United Kingdom.
- Best in Class Award for HHS Financial Systems Strategy (2017 - as part of the HHS team)

AGA History:

- Assistant Director, Awards Committee, DC Chapter (2020 - present)

Member Spotlight -

Eveka Rodriguez, CPA, MBA

Partner, Government & Public Sector Practice, Ernst & Young LLP (EY)

AGA-DC: Can you tell us about your current role as a Partner in the Government & Public Sector (GPS) Practice at EY, and your current projects?

Eveka: I joined EY in July 2019 as a direct admit audit partner in the Government and Public Sector Practice. I currently serve as the lead audit partner for the financial statement audits of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and as an engagement partner on the Department of the Navy financial statement audit.

AGA-DC: How do you deliver extra values to financial statement audit engagements when some people think such audits are simply compliance exercises?

Eveka: Financial statement audits have never been simply a compliance exercise. It's an opportunity for the organization to identify the need for improvements not only of their financial management practices but also of their operations. For government entities, the financial statement audit allows stakeholders (including congress and the public) with reassurances regarding the stewardship of tax dollars. In the past 5-10 years, the benefits of the audit process to an organization's financial management and operations have significantly increased - through the auditor's use of data analytics, robotics, artificial intelligence and similar tools designed - to move from time consuming sampling procedures to a more holistic evaluation of an organization's processes and transactions. These processes have not only enabled auditors to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their test procedures but have allowed us to identify areas of inefficiencies within the organization's operations.

AGA-DC: As the pandemic impacts the audit community, what are the biggest challenges you experience and how do you lead your team to overcome the difficulties, so that your team can deliver results on time and maintain audit quality?



Eveka: I have been amazed at how well auditors and auditees have adapted to remote work by being agile. However, part of a successful audit is having strong relationships with both your auditee and audit team members and this, initially, became a challenge since some traditional methods of building relationships abruptly ceased to exist (e.g., in person meetings, team lunches, in person conferences). Similarly, to how well we have adapted in executing procedures remotely, I believe we have now fully adapted to alternative methods of building relationships. Having one-on-one discussions and group meetings through video, attending virtual conferences and happy hour, as well as dedicating time to just check in on each other are becoming the new norm in building relationships. I never get tired of seeing kids and pets during video calls!

AGA-DC: Since you are serving on the Bowie State University's Board of Advisors and was recognized for the Outstanding Alumna Award in 2016, can you share your insights on effective ways to attract college students, especially for minority students, in pursuing government financial management as their career choice?

Eveka: I have found that students are interested in first year expectations (especially during this remote work environment), and how organizations are responding to social and environmental changes. Minority students want to know if diversity and inclusion commitments are intrinsic



Member Spotlight Cont'd.

to the organization as opposed to temporary initiatives.

AGA-DC: Leaders are often being asked "what keeps you awake at night?" However, I'm sure any positivity we can hear and learn is certainly welcome these days. With that, what keeps you motivated each day?

Eveka: The people I worked with have always been my biggest motivation. I have the honor of leading several teams made up of incredibly smart young people. My main responsibilities are to coach and help them grow as strong professionals through a diverse number of experiences by growing the business.

AGA-DC: Thank you for your time and insights, Eveka!

The contents of this interview had been condensed and edited for length and clarity.

EY is a Diamond Sponsor of our AGA-DC Chapter.

Eveka Rodriguez, CPA, MBA

Partner, Government & Public Sector Practice, EY

Education: MBA, Concentration in Management Information Systems, Johns Hopkins University

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (double concentration in Accounting and Banking and Finance), Bowie State University in Maryland

Hometown: Born and Raised in Panama City, Panama

Fun Fact: I'm a certified scuba diver; I can ride a motorcycle; and I had 3 children in 4 years!

Professional Experience:

Before joining EY in 2019, served as the Grant Thornton's Public Sector Audit Practice Audit Practice Leader and leadership roles within PwC.

AGA History:

- Director, Corporate Sponsorship, DC Chapter (2018-2020)
- Director, Awards Committee, DC Chapter (2016-2018)
- Assistant Director, Education Committee, DC Chapter (2014-2016)
- Past Speaker and Moderator at numerous AGA PDT and NLT Conferences

Inside the Black Box

by Simcha Kuritzky, CGFM CPA

Update on Reimbursement Reporting

Introduction

The Government-wide Treasury Account Symbol Adjusted Trial Balance System (GTAS) has always included a flag to indicate whether a balance is from Reimbursable or Direct authority. However, in FY2020, its use was expanded to all 193 (now 210) budgetary accounts. Originally, several accounts were listed as allowing a flag value of either **D** (direct) or **R** (reimbursable) but were changed for FY2021 to only allow one of those values.

Reimbursable vs. Proceeds

There are basically two models for how an agency can use offsetting collections. The first model is based on proceeds from the sale of goods or services financed with appropriations. Examples include the sale of tax forms by the IRS and the sale of retired equipment. In these cases,



Congress has given permission for the agency to use the proceeds subject to various constraints. In the proceeds model, the collection always occurs prior to any spending, and the parties involved are generally unrelated. In the second model, reimbursements, authority is earned by spending it on behalf of a third party. For federal clients, an agency can generally start spending once an agreement is signed, and collects money only after the goods and services have been delivered and accepted. If there is a significant time lapse between the disbursing and collecting of funds, it is possible the agency could have a temporary negative Fund Balance with Treasury, though, for practical purposes, this almost never happens. For non-federal clients, the agency generally collects money up front, but it is treated as an advance in both the proprietary and budgetary accounts.

Reimbursable General Ledger Accounts

There are only nine accounts in the reimbursement funding cycle. These are the accounts with normal debit balances. Reimbursements can be anticipated in 421000 (transaction A702), then actualized with an agreement in 422100 (A706). If an advance is collected, the balance is moved to 422200 (C182). This advance is either earned in 425200 (A711 for another federal agency) or 425400 (A710 for the public) or refunded (F110) at the end of the year or in a subsequent year using 425300 (B610). The agreement without an advance can be earned and a receivable established in 425100 (A714 or A715), which is then moved to 425200 when collected (C185 or C186). Lastly, and the least common, is that the agreement without advance can be transferred using 423000 to offset 422100 (A544 out, A546

in), or with advance using 423100 to offset 422200 (A552 out, A554 in). The transfer accounts are closed into the main agreement account respectively with F380 and F382. All these accounts except for 422100 can only have a flag of **R** (reimbursable). I can't find any transactions where the balance of 422100 is moved to an account that is allowed a flag of **D** (direct), so I suspect that 422100 really shouldn't use **D** either.

The credit side of the reimbursement transactions are the standard funding available, obligated, and expended accounts 442000 through 498200. Because these can represent the status of either direct or reimbursable funds, they are allowed flag values of **D** or **R**. Originally the transfer and downward adjustment accounts (483100, 483200, 487100, 487200, 493100, 497100, and 497200) did not have any Reimbursable Flag value, but since all these accounts close into accounts that requires a flag, it made sense for them to include the flag as well, which was added in FY20.

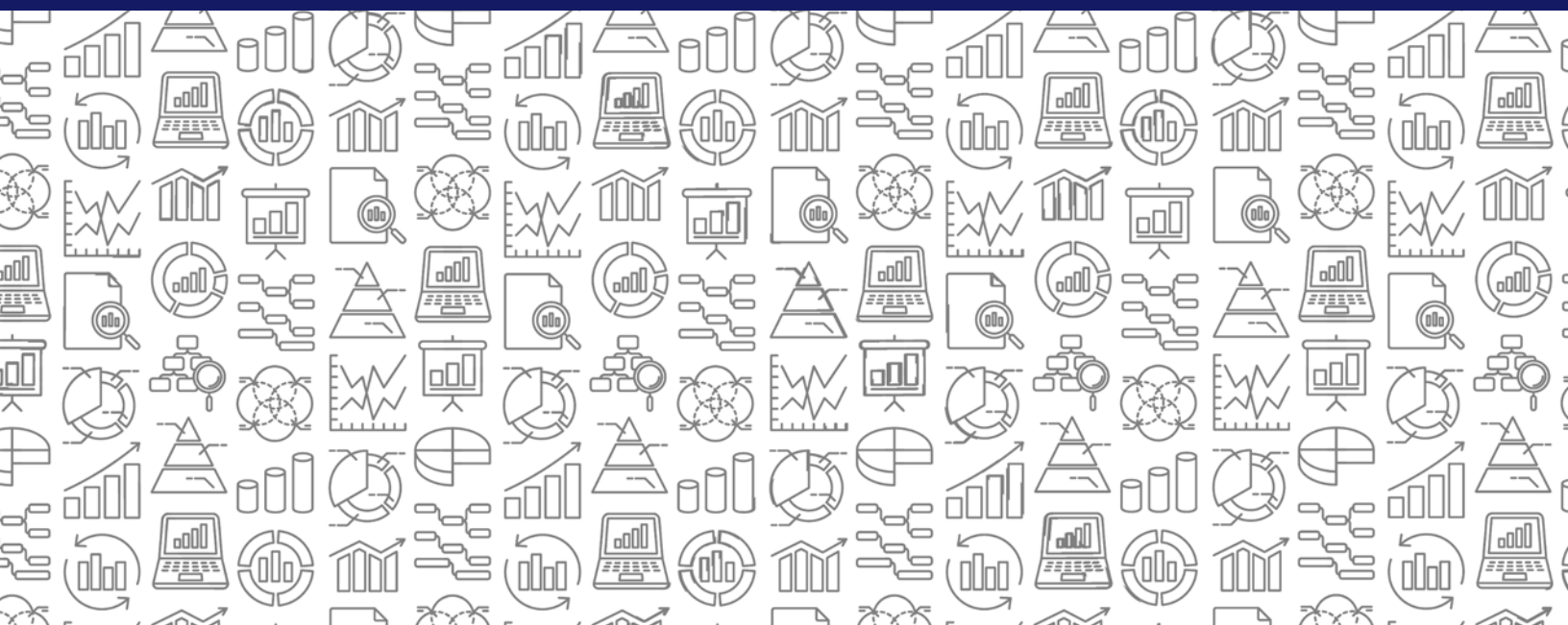
Direct General Ledger Accounts

All appropriations are considered direct. Originally, there was no flag to indicate this because it was unambiguous, but now all the accounts from 411100 to 412900 have a flag of **D**. The proceeds funding cycle can start with

anticipations in 406000 (if public) or 407000 (if federal), which can then be earned and receivable in the 428500 to 428700 series of accounts, but mostly are collected using an account in the 426000 to 427700 series. There are 14 accounts in the collection series. In FY20, only 6 were restricted to have a flag of **D** (the remaining 8 could have **D** or **R**), but in FY20, that number was expanded to 10. Accounts 406000 and 407000 were also changed to remove **R** from the valid values for the Reimbursable Flag. Several agencies suddenly found errors in the GTAS submissions when collections they had thought were reimbursements were now required to be reported as direct.

Conclusion

The official definition of the Reimbursable Flag says it indicates if these amounts represent offsetting collections, but the Statement of Budgetary Resources (SBR) reports those on line 1890 and accounts with both Reimbursable Flag values of **D** and **R** are mapped there. So I'm not certain what the flag really means, and wonder if any accounts outside of the reimbursement sequence 421000 - 422100 - 422200 - 423000 - 423100 - 425100 - 4252000 - 425300 - 425400 really should have a Reimbursable Flag values of **R**.



Thought Leadership: Just Do It: Jump Into Advanced Automation

By: John L. Hooley, Vice President, Federal Financial Services, The MIL Corporation (MIL)

To play off of the highly successful marketing phrase, there is no better time than the present for Government agencies to take the step into advanced automation. **Robotics Process Automation (RPA)** has been around for years, and is pervasive throughout Federal agencies and beyond, but implementation of more **advanced automation** - often referred to using hot terms such as **Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR)**, **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**, **Machine Learning (ML)**, and **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** - is still in its nascency. There are a variety of reasons for agencies' reluctance to explore and implement advanced automation such as:

- trepidation over perceived risk - security and ability to implement (not unlike RPA a few years ago)
- perceived lack of access due to unavailability of these tools in agency technology "stacks"
- a myriad of vendors with platforms (which one do I choose?), and
- the inability to focus on moving to these next-generation technologies due to time, bandwidth, and resource constraints.

However, some agencies are moving to these solutions often with relative ease and reaping enormous benefits in the form of **cost savings, time savings, access to data not previously available, and perhaps most important, freeing up staff time to do more higher-value and rewarding work.** For advanced automation, the time is now. First, it is important to understand exactly what these solutions are.

- **RPA** is software that automates typically manual, transaction-based processes by mimicking a human's interaction with desktop applications, systems, and software and usually does so through a user-friendly graphical user interface (GUI)



allowing even novice "technologists" to create automated processes. Such processes include pulling data - from source systems, spreadsheets, and publicly available data on the web - and presenting in a user-defined format. Often this data is subsequently processed prior to and during human interaction such as performing simple and complex reconciliations, predefined calculations, and data input into other systems requiring the data for processing.

- **AI** is the ability of machines to logically think like humans in certain situations and execute a task based upon that logic.
- **ML** is an application of AI which allows systems to learn and improve from experience rather than explicit programming. A subset of ML, deep learning, allows computer systems to learn and improve through the analysis of large sets of unstructured or unlabeled data—providing analytics which would not be possible otherwise.
- **ICR** is a form of smart data capture whereby applications work through a combination of optical character recognition (OCR) and ML to extract the required data points from semi-structured and unstructured sources (think pdf files or handwritten documents).
- **NLP** technologies such as speech-to-text, natural language understanding (NLU), and

natural language generation are also being used for conversational applications, including virtual customer assistants (VCAs), virtual personal assistants (VPAs), and chatbots.

Some agencies are currently putting these solutions to work to solve age-old challenges or explore new opportunities. One agency is using ICR to convert handwritten notes into structured data that is then pushed into the accounts payable system or “system of record” (SOR) to validate and ultimately make payments to thousands of individuals – a process that previously required analysts countless hours to read the handwritten notes, type data into a spreadsheet, and then enter into the SOR. The new process, the need for which was driven by the pandemic, is not only saving time and money, but it is also getting money more quickly to the US citizens who so desperately need it. Another agency is exploring the use of ICR and NLP to comb through thousands of documents to pull out salient data points and present them in a dashboard with analytics. This will help analysts more quickly identify focus areas that allow the agency investigators and inspectors to better target their efforts – a critically important benefit given their limited resources.

Steps to consider when deciding whether to make the jump into advanced automation include:

1. Conduct research: performing due diligence is important either using an agency’s own resources or engaging with a vendor partner who has experience in delivering advanced automation. There are a dizzying number of advanced automation platform vendors out there – bringing in a partner who knows the landscape and has relevant experience is critical.
2. Engage agency internal partners: the Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Data Officer (CDO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), the Office of Acquisitions, and system owners

impacted by a process are just a few of the internal partners that should be considered when looking at taking the advanced automation jump. Each agency operates with its own flavor of governance and therefore the process of engaging and who to engage will vary from agency to agency.

3. Identify target processes: Agency leaders should solicit input from a variety of process owners on potential processes that could benefit from advanced automation. Agencies should consider the following criteria when looking at candidate processes: a) complexity of process, b) systems involved in the process, c) users impacted by the process, d) visibility/sensitivity of the process to external stakeholders, e) severity of challenges with the current process, and f) potential benefits, impact, and outcomes of using advanced automation.
4. Conduct pilot/proof of concept: To make it easier to get approval, agencies should test the waters through a proof of concept which limits the investment and potential exposure to downside risks. Once the feasibility and benefits or impact have been demonstrated, it becomes a lot easier to make a full investment and broaden scope of tasks to be automated.

Advanced automation is here and it’s a good thing. So, just do it!

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Thought Leadership: **Fiscal Management Transformation – Standards Matter**

By: Kathleen Turco, Director, CGI Federal

A federal CFO's responsibilities are vast and include achieving a clean audit opinion on an annual basis. Fiscal management transformation within an agency is a formidable and costly endeavor, taking time and money. Agencies must avoid lost time and unnecessary expense. To achieve successful results, agencies must choose proven technology solutions to allow clients to spend their time on high-value mission work rather than transactional tasks or workarounds, and ensure chosen systems are compliant with federal standards so a clean audit will be achieved.

CGI Federal embeds standard business and financial practices into our shared services information technology offerings. We build for the federal government and specifically design to meet federal standards, regulations, and business requirements, such as the Federal Integrated Business Framework (FIBF), which evolve over time. We provide rigorous federal financial management software that meets or exceeds federal financial standards and business capabilities.

Why Federal Governance and Standards Matter

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Act of 1990, the Treasury Department's financial management standards and the Office of Management and Budget policy circulars all govern federal agency financial standards and reporting requirements. Treasury's Financial Management Quality Service Management Office (FM QSMO) initiatives are driving new approaches in financial management. Key to these efforts are standardized processes and data, reducing operation and maintenance costs, ensuring modern and automated processes

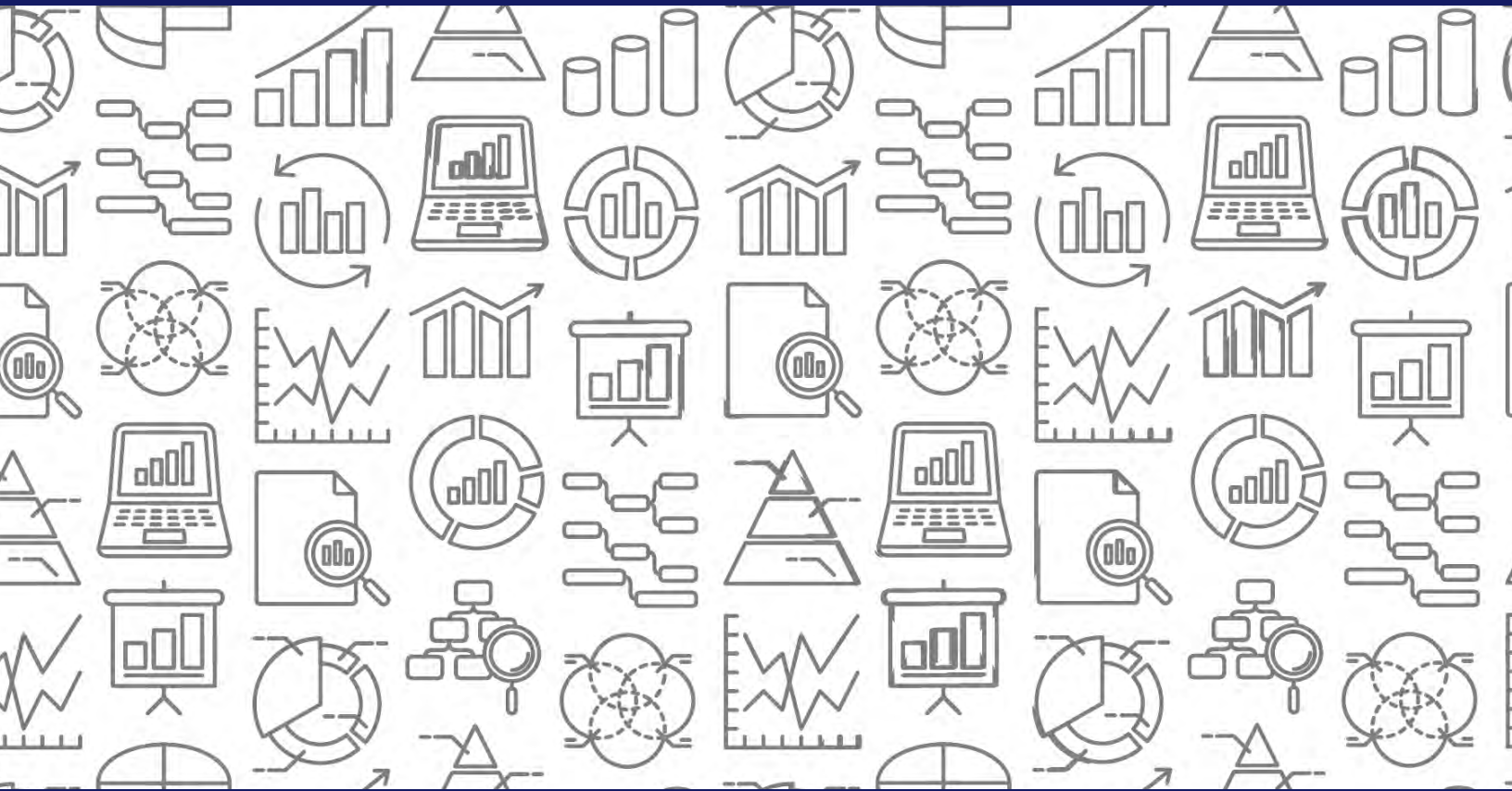


and improved customer satisfaction. Agencies need modern, standards-based solutions to support government mission delivery operations and reduce the impact of evolving compliance changes.

Our customer experience focus ensures that we develop our Momentum Enterprise financial solutions products to fully support federal financial standards delivering timely financial reporting and clean audit opinions. We use a user-driven, agile approach to software development, including the government-run Momentum User Group and pre-market release demonstrations to obtain customer feedback. We build, and continually invest in, our solutions based on this input from federal users and stakeholders.

Why Federal Financial Systems Experience Matters

Working with experienced financial systems accountants is a critical component of our systems transformation strategy. We have invested in staff that understand the business of government, ensuring delivery of tested and compliant financial software. We think about how our clients will meet their requirements based on years of experience. Federal financial systems accountants are right in the middle of fiscal management transformation; having the right partner, one that can adapt and has the agility to change to meet new standards, is key to their success.



Why Use Standards-Based Solutions

CGI offers Momentum as a standards-based shared service across multiple implementations. We also integrate robotic process automation, low code/no code and machine learning technologies with Momentum to deliver agency-focused results. For our federal CFO partners, we ensure Momentum provides accurate and timely information upon which to base sound business decisions, while at the same time, achieving mandated information assurance and auditability requirements. We also deliver Momentum on various cloud technology platforms, allowing agency choice and avoiding proprietary vendor lock so agencies can choose the right solution for their need and environment.

Maintaining compliance requires proactive and ongoing effort. Major initiatives such as DATA Act, G-Invoicing, and the Unique Entity Identifier require significant investment and coordination with customers and compliance entities. Smaller, ongoing compliance updates related to the Standard General Ledger, Government-wide

Treasury Account Symbol, and other entities are no less important and also require an ongoing, proactive approach. In order to offer a compliant, standards-based solution, we strive to know our federal customers' requirements before they do.

Yes, Standards Matter...

Treasury's efforts to develop a lifecycle approach to financial management ensures functional areas, functions and activities embedded in financial management software meet the needs of the agency financial managers out of the box. This approach will allow the CFO and team to focus operations on agency mission delivery and customer experience. Through years of experience and thoughtful approaches focused on meeting government-wide financial management goals, CGI created Momentum financial management software to support this vision and the long-term success of our government partners.

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Thought Leadership: Chief Risk Officers in a Crisis

By: David Fisher, Risk Solutions Leader,
Guidehouse

Risk management is *proactive*, peering around corners to identify uncertainties that may impact the ability of an organization to achieve its objectives. **Crisis management** is *reactive*, marshalling resources to respond to a risk that has already manifested and requires immediate attention. Both require senior leadership engagement to be effective, but the roles and methods can be very different. And that includes the Chief Risk Officer (CRO). If CROs are typically focused on addressing how current exposures might impact future results, what's their role in the middle of a crisis, when a significant risk has already manifested? Many CROs have had to manage through crises, myself included, but the unprecedented nature of the current pandemic is stretching everyone into uncharted territories. The challenge (and opportunity) for CROs is to pursue actions that can add value to their enterprises, both in the immediacy of the moment and for the long-term. The following highlights two actionable considerations that cover two distinct time horizons.

Immediate Time Horizon

Most organizations have established an all-hands-on-deck approach for their senior leadership teams to deal with the coronavirus outbreak. This is expected and appropriate. All aspects of organizational activity have been impacted, and all leaders have a role to play in dealing with the countless discrete challenges that are arising. But what about Chief Risk Officers? What should their focus be in the midst of this crisis management scenario?

When leaders are reacting in the moment, there is often little time to assess the impact of decisions being made. Given that reality, these decisions might be creating risks in the process of attempting to deal with the immediate crisis. Organizations don't have to wait for unintended consequences of well-intended decisions to manifest before addressing these kinds of



collateral risks. CROs are skilled at anticipating these very kinds of outcomes. Having them intimately involved in these discussions provides a real-time forward-looking perspective on the known (or even the seemingly unknown) implications of these directives.

In some cases, the CRO's risk insights might inform specifics of the decisions themselves, leading to adjustments that seek to accomplish the initial objective but in a manner that doesn't negatively impact some other part of the organization. In other scenarios, management may continue down the original path, but identify additional or alternative risk responses to decrease a vulnerability that may otherwise be created. Moreover, management's ability to articulate the thoughtful, risk-informed process it followed in formulating its crisis response actions could also pay significant dividends in the future. Identifying risks upfront provides a record that may clarify real-time decisions to oversight or regulatory bodies in subsequent audits or investigations.

CROs bring a different lens to the crisis management table, advising their leadership colleagues on the risk-based implications of the rapid decisions leaders are being compelled to make. CROs can help anticipate unintended consequences, proactively plan for them, and maintain a record for the future — all without distracting from the immediate demands on management for timely action in the midst of the crisis.

Actions for CROs for the Immediate Time Horizon

- Demonstrate to senior leaders how a proactive risk-management lens can be an invaluable component to crisis response.
- Commit to assessing enterprise-level crisis response decisions for collateral consequences across all risk types, including reputational risk.
- Provide feedback to crisis response teams on potential risks being created by their real-time decisions, as well as potential mitigations that might limit these exposures.
- Proactively engage risk officers throughout the organization to monitor for emerging risks resulting from crisis response decisions. Provide a simple, standard mechanism to report

emerging risks — as soon as they are identified — to the crisis response team.

- Lead the effort to document risk-based decisions made by the crisis response team, including the decisions themselves, a straightforward risk-based rationale, and the nature of any identified risks that are being accepted as a result of these decisions. If feasible, place these decisions in the context of the organization's risk appetite. A simple, standard form can be used, stored in a central repository, to enable easy access during future reviews by auditors, regulators, or inspectors general.

Longer-Term Time Horizon

The second perspective uniquely suited for CROs during a crisis such as the current pandemic is to anticipate the risks that their organizations may encounter when the crisis ebbs and it is time to ramp up normal operations. The vast majority of the leadership team is almost exclusively focused on dealing with the current organizational stresses from a vantage point that may not extend beyond a few days or weeks. But someone should be anticipating the challenges that may confront these enterprises when the “all clear” is given and the competitive pressures of the business world — or mission requirements in the public sector — are suddenly subjected to circumstances they never previously encountered.

Organizations will likely face risks across the full gamut from operations to compliance to financial to human capital and even to the very essence of the enterprise. Strategies may need adjustments

based on new market realities. Internal operations and even organizational culture may require modifications, trying to maintain consistency with the mission, vision, and values of the organization. Each of these realities will introduce risks that were not evident just a few weeks ago.

The truth is that “normal” operations will likely not be normal in many respects right out of the gate. Organizations will encounter all manner of obstacles in their effort to return to normalcy. In order to avoid another kind of crisis when it is time to resume operational activities, someone should be analyzing these risk areas, anticipating likely scenarios, and developing risk responses that can be deployed in a proactive, rather than reactive, mode. This responsibility is perfectly suited for the organization's Chief Risk Officer and can be performed with limited disruption to the pressing needs of the current crisis.

Actions Longer-Term Time Horizon

- Activate processes that are normally utilized for annual enterprise risk assessments, but with the specific focus on the risks associated with the return to “normal” business operations.
- As appropriate, differentiate between a partial return over an interim period, which may have different characteristics than the final reestablishment of full business operations.
- Engage senior leaders to determine if anything has fundamentally changed with respect to the mission, vision, and values of the organization, its enterprise-level strategic objectives, or its risk appetite as a result of the pandemic. Risk

identification and analyses should be aligned to any updates to these overarching concepts.

- Provide guidance and standardized tools for risk officers to update risks in the current enterprise risk profile, along with new entrants for consideration that are specific to the post-pandemic environment. The full portfolio of risk types should be considered, including strategic, financial, operational, and compliance. Particular consideration should be given to workforce-related risks given the massive disruption to the workforce as a result of the current crisis, as well as reputational risks that

may otherwise be missed without proactive assessment.

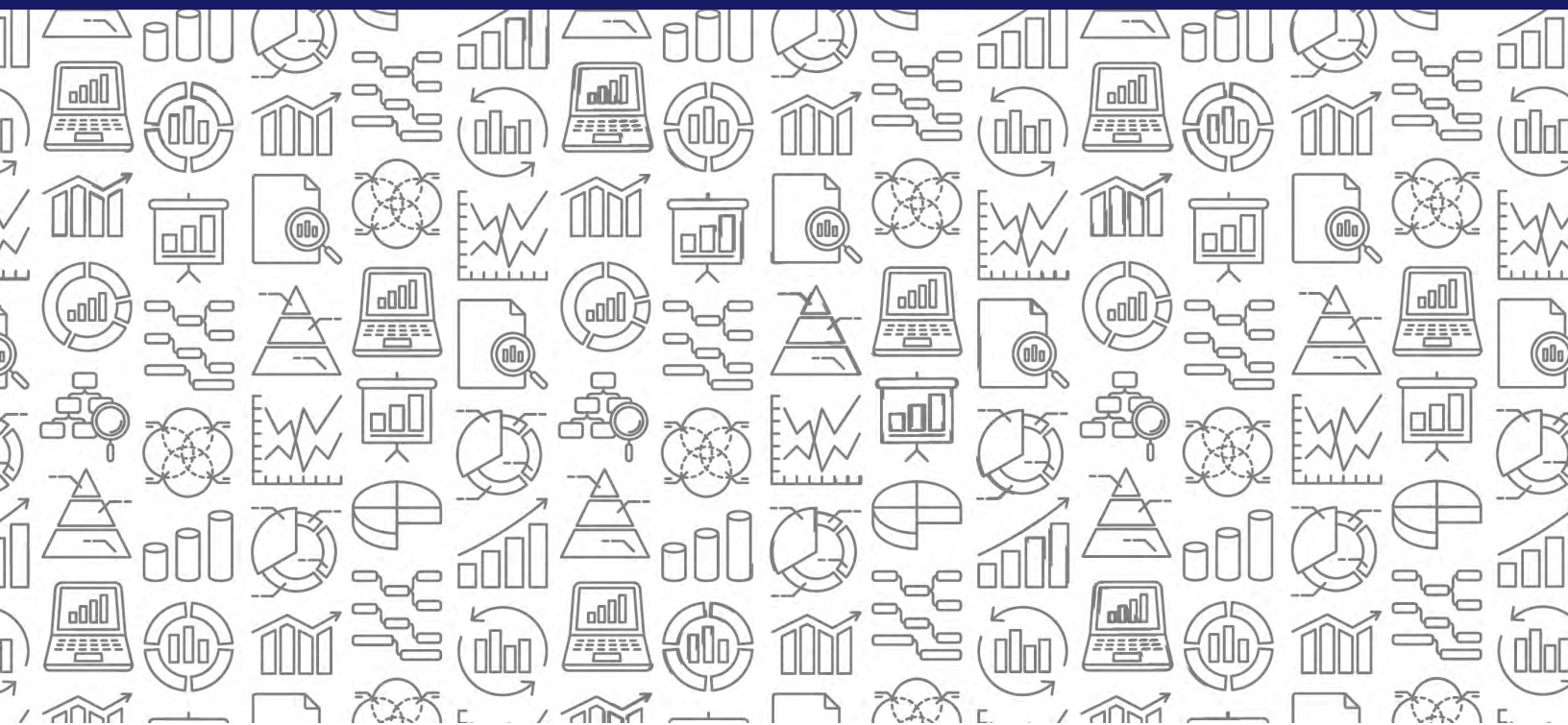
- Risk identification should include both top-down and bottom-up activities, with the CRO taking the lead to obtain input from senior leaders, while risk officers capture insights from across organizational business units. These efforts should be pre-planned and targeted in order to minimize disruption to current crisis response activities.
- Aggregate the input received, create/update risk statements, assess the risks for Likelihood and Impact to assist in prioritization, and prepare potential risk responses for leadership consideration.
- As the nature of the pandemic will continue to evolve, this exercise should be ongoing and dynamic, perhaps including updates on a predefined cadence established by the CRO and senior leadership.
- Update the enterprise risk profile based on the preceding activities and provide the results to the organization's senior risk governance board.
- Commit to working alongside business owners to provide advice on the effective implementation of risk responses as early as possible to reduce the likelihood of risk manifestation.

Summary

Most organizations are currently in crisis mode, reacting as best they can to the unprecedented health, economic, and operational challenges associated with the coronavirus pandemic. Chief Risk Officers have a unique set of skills and perspectives to provide insights and assistance to their leadership colleagues on how to minimize negative secondary effects from crisis-driven decisions. These insights can also proactively address the kinds of unanticipated challenges that may be farther down the road. These views might otherwise be missed in the midst of the crisis.

CROs should seek to fill these gaps and do what they always do, seek to enhance their organization's ability to achieve its strategic objectives, both during the immediate crisis and far beyond.

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Thought Leadership:

Automate Accounting and Asset Management Processes to Match the Speed of Your Mission

Presented By: Infor

The Bloomberg Government found that agencies spent almost \$700 billion on procurement in 2020, a 43% increase since 2016 and more than any time in the past five years.¹ Spending on supplies and technology assets related to COVID-19 is growing by more than \$5.5 billion, observes the same Bloomberg Government report.² This means government accountants must account for more assets, types of assets, and services never procured before by their organization to meet citizens' needs. As the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) notes in its risk of internal controls for inventory capital and asset management, this creates risks and reduces visibility in these and other areas:

- Equipment or other assets can be used without authorization.
- Fictitious purchases or payments are made to contractors or suppliers, with or without kickbacks to employees.
- Assets are physically lost by employees or outsiders through inadequate security or insurance coverage.
- Actual costs exceed projected amounts; over-payments are made to contractors.
- No basis exists for comparing actual usage with expected usage, resulting in the inability to determine material reorder points.
- Financial statements are misstated or inaccurate; losses, shortages, or material defects in reported assets are concealed.
- Conflict of interest exists for vendor purchasing arrangements.
- Expenditures in excess of originally approved amounts without authorized review and/or approval³

Facing limited resources and compressed timelines



to meet citizens' needs, accountants require tools that can give them and their organization visibility from the stockroom to the boardroom.

Cost Predictability, Forecasting, and Compliance

Cost predictability, forecasting, and compliance are not merely an accounting exercise for the government. These factors are a fiduciary duty in support of the government's mission and public trust. For many government organizations, these are impossible due to existing technology, hampering organizations' ability to adapt, innovate, and provide the transparency citizens expect.

Better Options Than Copy/Paste and Sneaker Networks?

Disconnected legacy networks that don't share data have been part of the government accounting landscape since the Federalists and the Jeffersonians. However, the burden of wasted time, talent, and migraines created by legacy systems has left government accountants unable to move beyond managing past transactions to increase their capacity to support strategic decision-making. They simply don't have the resources or the time to pull and organize information from disparate systems to get the information and analytics their agencies need. Consider these factors:

- COVID-19 changed operational norms to the services agencies render, as well as the government services they procure and the compliance mandates that must be followed.
- The government has moved to leases and third-party service providers, changing the relationship between agencies and their assets.
- There is now a government mandate to move towards cloud adoption.

Security Compliance and Reduction of Liabilities

According to the Ponemon Institute, a data breach costs on average \$8.19 million, while the cost per breached record is \$242.⁴ Accounting for and controlling the cost of protecting legacy systems is challenging, but it should be considered in the true TCO and accounting assessments of an organization's assets. Moving applications to the cloud not only shifts liability and in-house costs away, but it also makes costs both more predictable and lowers overall security expenses by providing NIST and other compliance requirements mandated for an agency's mission out of the box.

Integrate to Innovate

Gartner reports that 80% of government organizations are still at the initial or developing digital maturity stages.⁵ So, while government agencies rush to increase their digital service, very few will have those services integrated across silos. Getting real cost and predictive capabilities requires automating core processes and having asset management systems that integrate directly with all back office financial and business intelligence systems. This adaptive back office with a digital twin of company assets and leases can provide a clear POV of mission status, while at the same time automating accounting and

reporting updates at the speed of the mission.

An added advantage of integrated systems is the augmentation of long-term investment planning in assets and better/faster analytical capabilities. A FedRAMP-certified, cloud-based asset management platform integrated to a financial system eliminates data black holes and thumb drives, and can elevate data to the innovation layer. With automated and real-time data, agencies can also avoid spending a week in Excel at the end of the month, attempting to accomplish basic processes.

Path Forward

The National Science Foundation won the Association of Government Accountants' 2020 Innovation Challenge for developing a statistical model to flag potential improper payments in grants. Using single audit data from the Federal Audit Clearinghouse, NSF's Payments and Analytics branch accurately predicted whether a grantee had a questionable cost on their audit report 87% of the time.⁶ This type of innovation is not possible without being able to bring data together and create the fast, convenient digital interactions that automate and enable good governance and proper accounting. This is now table stakes to effective governance. Fast, convenient accounting is impossible without real-time data and integrated systems. Assets might seem like rudimentary work, but they are the resources your agency depends on to support its mission, and they are the starting point of all accounting activity. The easiest place to begin this transformation is to start with your asset management system and move towards integrating data—so you can build the foundation for a successful and scalable path to innovation.

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¹ Bloomberg Government, "[Federal Contract Spending: Five Trends in Five Charts](#)," Jan 5, 2021.

² Bloomberg Government.

³ Association of Government Accountants (AGA), Internal Controls – Inventory & Capital Asset Management, 2021.

⁴ Ponemon Institute, [Cost of a Data Breach](#), 2020.

⁵ Gartner, [Digital Maturity in Government: Lofty Ambitions Seldom Lead to Tangible Impacts](#), 2020.

⁶ Jory Heckman, "[NSF develops predictive model to flag improper payments in grants](#)," Federal News Network, Jan 6, 2020.

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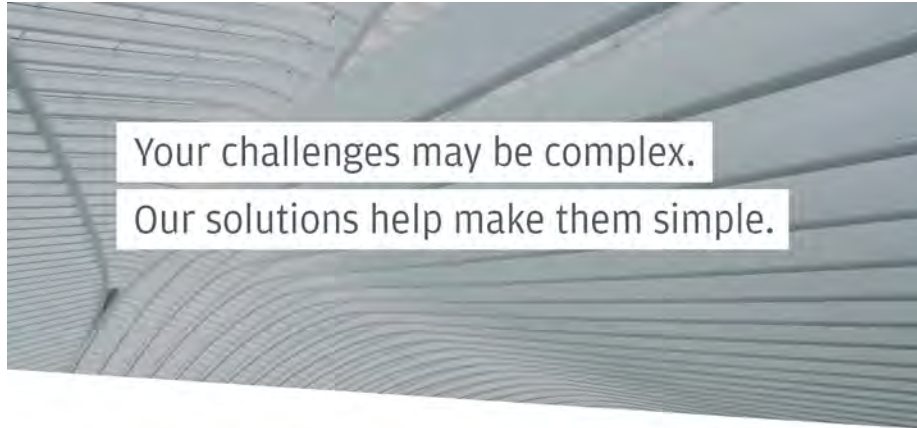


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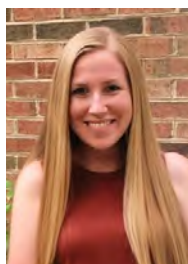
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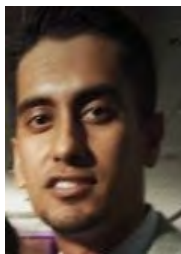
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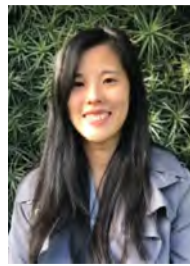


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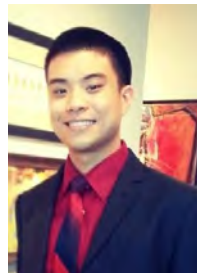
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The most direct way to get your question answered is to send an email to the AGA DC Board Member via AGADC.org. Check out the Officers and Directors for their contact information.

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