

Questionnaire for Association of Government Accountants

2009 Survey of Federal CFOs

Date of completion:

Interviewee name, title and organization

Name

Title

Organization

Interviewer name and phone number

Name

Number

Return completed questionnaire to:

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Background information

The Association of Government Accountants (AGA) is conducting its annual survey of Federal financial management leaders. As we have for the past 14 years, Grant Thornton LLP is supporting the AGA survey by doing interviews and preparing the survey report. AGA and Grant Thornton design these surveys to identify and describe emerging issues in financial management. For purposes of this survey, the term financial or financial management includes both budget and accounting disciplines.

Interviewees. In this survey, we will interview CFOs, deputy CFOs, comptrollers and directors of major financial management entities and programs. Individuals from the financial management oversight community are interviewed as well.

Topics. Earlier AGA surveys focused on issues such as governance structure, human capital, financial systems, performance measurement, internal control and accounting and auditing standards. For the 2009 survey, our focus is on what the next Administration's CFOs need to know in order to continue to improve federal financial management.

Anonymity. AGA does not attribute thoughts and quotations to individual interviewees in the final CFO Survey Report. This preserves anonymity and encourages interviewees to speak freely.

Prior surveys. You can find CFO surveys from prior years at www.agacgfm.org or www.grantthornton.com/publicsector, under Global Public Sector Publications.

Topic I: Fundamentals

1. **Entity-level financial reports.** What 3 things must the Federal Government do to prevent departments, agencies and other entities from losing their unqualified or clean audit opinions on annual financial reports? (For entities that have not yet achieved a clean opinion, what 3 things must the Federal Government do to ensure that they receive one.)
 - 1.1.
 - 1.2.
 - 1.3.

2. **U.S. consolidated financial report.** What 3 things must the Federal Government do to continue its progress toward a clean opinion on the governmentwide consolidated financial report?
 - 2.1.
 - 2.2.
 - 2.3.

3. How can CFOs increase the value of the annual audited financial statement to their individual entities and to the government as a whole?

Topic II: Dealing with tough financial times

4. What should be the role of financial management, within government, when fiscal crisis threatens government? Consider both from a perspective within the governmental entity and if appropriate, from a broader perspective of how government impacts the economy in general.

5. What should financial management leadership do to help the Federal Government as a whole prevent or fix the underlying problems of such a crisis? Again, consider from within the entity and the broader perspective.

6. What should you, as a financial management leader, do today to help mitigate or fix the problems underlying a government-wide fiscal belt tightening? Consider this question from within the entity.

7. If non-financial leaders within your entity have to make tough choices based on financial analyses, what skills, insights and services should financial management leaders offer them?

8. How can financial management leadership raise the profile of risk management as a tool for dealing with fiscal problems and program issues?

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9. What role do senior policy and program executives in your entity think that financial management should play in dealing with fiscal problems? What do they think about financial management's role in the larger perspective of government?

Topic III: Future CFOs and financial management

10. What should a CFO do to maximize the value of financial management to:

- 10.1. Internal stakeholders?
- 10.2. External stakeholders (e.g., OMB, GAO, watchdog groups)?

11. What are the top 10 items that incoming CFOs must know about their role and responsibilities (the Letterman "Top 10 list on How to be a Good CFO in Government!" Get as many answers as is comfortable.).

- 11.1.
- 11.2.
- 11.3.
- 11.4.
- 11.5.
- 11.6.
- 11.7.
- 11.8.
- 11.9.
- 11.10.

12. Is it time for the CFO of a CFO Act entity to become Chief Accountability Officer or Chief Management Officer (CMO)? (CMOs are to be either the chief operating officers of a federal entity or the chief business and management executives, reporting to an entity chief or deputy chief.)

13. Should CFO's of CFO Act entities continue to be political appointees or should they be career executives?

14. In order to help deal with the mounting compliance requirements and to prevent the CFO from becoming the "Chief Compliance Officer," how do compliance requirements get better divided between the CFO and audit community (OIG and maybe an internal inspection or audit function)?

15. Is there a need or value to formalizing an internal audit or inspection function for all CFOs?

16. How can the CFO have a greater role in program management and oversight?

17. What new or different roles and responsibilities would program executives recommend for CFOs?

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Topic IV: Transparency (for CFOs and their stakeholders)

18. How do you define “transparency” for your entity?
19. From the perspectives of ROI and risk management, how do we judge the right mix of transparency? (Compare the value of the extra information provided by being more transparent to the cost of obtaining that information.)
20. How should transparency be set up one time so that it meets the needs of various stakeholders inside and outside a government entity (i.e., multi-dimensional array of one data set)?

Top three concerns

21. What are your top three concerns about financial and performance management in government in the future? Comments:
 - 21.1.
 - 21.2.
 - 21.3.