

William C. Statler

Fiscal Policy ■ Financial Planning ■ Analysis ■ Training ■ Organizational Review

MEMORANDUM

December 18, 2019

TO: CSMFO Certification Program Working Group

FROM: Bill Statler 

SUBJECT: CERTIFICATION PROGRAM PHASE 1B ASSESSMENT: KEY
REMAINING ISSUES

The following summarizes Working Group feedback from the November 13, 2019 report on outstanding issues.

BACKGROUND

As presented in the November 13 report, Working Group members were asked to provide feedback from the November 5 teleconference on five areas:

Key Issues Requiring Further Discussion

- **Program Eligibility.** Should there be education/experience pre-requirements to begin the program; or if not at the front end, before certification after exams have been passed?
- **Core Subject Areas.** While there was consensus on seven core areas, there were diverse opinions as whether other topics should be added and what form this should take. (As discussed below, this continues to be the case.)

Other Issues

- **Timing of Reaching Out to Partners.** Should soliciting their interest and the results in developing study guides and examination courses, along with any training program modifications that would be required for alignment, be part of the report to the Board on

Documentation

Feedback from eight of ten Working Group members is provided in the following attachments:

- A. Summary of responses to the Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes
- B. Individual responses to the Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes (seven responses)
- C. Individual email responses to other issues (seven responses)
- D. Individual responses to administration and budget issues (two responses)

January 28, 2020; or should we defer this until after the Board meeting when we receive direction on other key issues?

- **Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes from November 5 Teleconference.** The purpose of this form was to confirm consensus on seven areas identified in the November 13 report. As reflected in Attachments A and B (and discussed below), there continue to be three areas requiring further discussion: program name, certification requirements and recognition for passing tests.
- **Other Comments and Suggestions.** Any comments or suggestions you have on other issues.

KEY REMAINING ISSUES

There are four key remaining issues from the November 5 teleconference. As discussed below, I recommend focusing on these at a follow-up teleconference in early January 2020, with the goal of presenting recommendations to the Board at its January 28, 2020 meeting.

❶ Program Name

Setting aside Shakespeare's observation that a rose by any other name would still smell as sweet (of course Mercutio, Tybalt and others end-up dying in refutation to this notion), there was a split decision here: of the seven responses to this, three felt that "California" should be in the title: *California Certified Government Financial Officer* (CCGFO).

Brent offered a unique perspective on this: while he liked the idea of California in the name, he felt it makes for too long a name, so he doesn't recommend it.

However, he offers that recommendation that rather than "officer," the program name should say "professional" in better reflecting the intent of the program.

Recommendation. While I understand the value of differentiation and "branding" in adding California to the program name, I think this would imply that certification is only valid (or somehow only useful) in California. I do not believe that this would be the case. Other state programs have not felt the need to make this distinction. However, I plan to follow-up with Florida and Texas to understand their take on this. (Virginia does not have a program name).

However, I do recommend following Brent's suggestion and naming the program "Certified Government Financial Professional" (CGFP) as better reflecting the program goal of assessing technical competency, as opposed to "officer," which could imply management and leadership skills that this program does not address.

❷ Experience Requirements

While there is strong consensus that there should be an experience requirement to earn certification, there was also agreement that (like becoming a CPA) that this could be met after successfully passing exams.

Teleconference Follow-Up: Certification Program Phase 1B Assessment Key Issues

How much and what kind? Keeping in mind that 12 months of professional general accounting and 500 hours of assurance work under CPA supervision are required for CPA certification (about 15 months), of those expressing an opinion, two to three years surfaced the most often.

Another key issue is what constitutes eligible experience. Does it have to be in a Finance office? What about a fiscal support position in an operating department? Or budget responsibilities in the city manager’s office? (It is not uncommon, especially in larger organizations, to see Accountant, Financial Analyst and Budget Analyst titles in operating departments. On this point, the CSMFO’s president-elect is a deputy department head for finance in a social services agency; and a past-president held a key finance position in a utilities department.) And the budget function is often located in central administration, not finance).

Lastly, does the experience have to be in a local government agency? What about with an audit firm or consulting firm with a focus on local government finance?

No suggestions were made for minimum education requirements.

As a reminder, the following are the requirements for the Texas, Florida and Virginia state programs; and those for the GFOA.

Eligibility Requirements

Texas (GFOAT)	Florida (FGFOA)	Virginia (VGFOA)	GFOA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GFOAT member • Application package but no specific education or experience requirements (other than government agency employee) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGFOA member • BA/BS degree in related field and 3 years government experience; or BA/BS degree on other fields and 5 years of government experience • Professional level position that has oversight/supervision responsibilities. • Pass open-book ethics exam (75 of 100 points) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VGFOA Member • No specific prerequisites 	<p><i>Eligible to take certification examinations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution • Accept and observe the GFOA Code of Professional Ethics <p><i>To become certified after passing exams</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently employed by government agency (or actively seeking if unemployed) • 3 years in government within the last 10 years • GFOA membership

Recommendation. Other than completing an application package and paying a reasonable fee for enrollment, there should be no prerequisites to begin participation in the program and start taking tests. However, there should be a professional experience requirement to earn certification. This could be met by three years of professional experience working in a local government finance office or full-time responsibility for a fiscal support role in an operating department or chief executive's office (such as city manager, county administrative officer or general manager). It could also be met by comparable full-time professional experience in an audit firm or consulting firm with a significant local government financial management practice.

③ Recognition for Passing Tests

With an experience requirement, recognition for passing tests makes sense.

Recommendation. Create a “two-tier” program that provides:

- Formal recognition as individual tests are passed; and then special recognition when all tests have been passed.
- Certification when all tests have been passed and minimum experience requirements have been met. (Given that 7-8 tests will be required for certification, there is strong likelihood that both requirements will be met at the same time for many participants).

④ Core Examination Subjects

While we have consensus on seven topic areas (see side bar), there continue to be diverse opinions on whether other topics should be added (most notably ethics and purchasing); and if so, what form this should take.

The following are excerpted comments from Attachment C on this issue, which illustrate the wide range of opinions.

- *Perhaps there is an argument for the seventh section that includes pension and OPEB to be broadened to something like “other critical topics”. Then we could include a higher-level discussion of purchasing, ethics, pensions, OPEB, and perhaps risk management? I think the ethics prerequisite might be overkill, so I would encourage keeping it within the program and not adding another external requirement to obtain the certification.*
- *Seven individual tests may be a lot though and there may be an opportunity to combine revenue, pensions and OPEB and possibly*

Consensus on Seven Core Subjects

There was consensus on the following seven subject areas. However, there continue to be diverse views on whether other topics should be added; and so, what they should be and what form they should take.

- Accounting and financial reporting (including interim as well as annual reporting)
- Operating and capital budgeting
- Cash management/investments
- Debt financing/management
- Fiscal policies and long-term financial planning
- Revenue management: taxes, assessments and fees
- Pensions and retiree health care

procurement if added. That would also allow a seventh test in ethics or a pre-ethics qualification. Seven tests though is a lot to get through. In regards to procurement, I would disagree that it is not critical and procurement is one of the most challenging areas that I've dealt with in my career. Not every agency has centralized procurement within Finance, but that is often the ideal and it helps to understand the do's and don'ts of procurement and how to set up and manage a successfully procurement process. If it can be covered in some manner, I believe it useful.

- *7 core areas of technical competence AND an ethics exam;” NOT 8 areas of testing. It’s basically semantics, but I’m a fan of the ethics portion being an add on, standalone section regardless of how any sections we have.*
- *I agree with Brent on the ethics comments. It is so critical in today’s world. Just an exam is not enough.*
- *As to areas of study, I do think we should add Ethics as the 8th area.*
- *I heard multiple voices saying that Ethics should be its own core area.*

Recommendation. Given the diversity of opinions, there is no clear-cut path on this. Options include:

- Returning to the initial recommendation for a seventh area (“public administration”) that combines ethics, pensions, OPEB, purchasing and possibly other topics.
- Stay with the seven core areas and cover ethics as part of the application process like Florida and the GFOA.
- Add an eighth subject area on ethics.
- Some hybrid approach to addressing ethics but staying with the seven core subject areas previously agreed upon.

Recommendation. One possible “hybrid” approach for ethics that I believe makes sense: rather than a test, require taking an ethics course that surfaces and discusses ethics issues. This may make sense given that many ethical issues do not have “right and wrong” answers per se that are amenable to a “test.” Moreover, different organizations have different cultures on acceptable practices; and many have specific policies. In short, “testing” on normative issues is problematic.

On the other hand, it can be useful to surface ethics issues and discuss “what if” scenarios. There are several “short course” options and content/presentation approaches. For example:

- The Weekend Training program offers a two-hour section on “Ethics and the Public Finance Professional” presented by A.J. Wilson, ICMA senior advisor.
- Michael Josephson with the Josephson Institute has provided well-received ethics training for the CMTA and other public sector agencies: <http://josephsoninstitute.org>.

- And the CSMFO recently presented a webinar on this topic.

In short, significant groundwork that we can build upon has already been laid for this topic. This approach assures that ethics are addressed in a meaningful way while staying with seven core subject areas that are more amenable to objectively “right and wrong” answers.

OTHER ISSUES

Timing of Reaching Out to Partners

From those expressing an opinion, there was a clear preference to defer reaching out to partners in soliciting their interest in developing study guides and examination courses (along with any training program modifications that would be required for alignment) until after the January 28 Board meeting.

Program Administration and Budget

We were not able to discuss these topics at the November 5 teleconference. However, two Working Group members (Will and Stephen) offered their thoughts on these, which are summarized in Attachment D. Since this approach seemed to work well on the consensus items, I will follow-up with a similar form for discussion at the teleconference in early January 2020.

NEXT STEPS

As noted above, the following six issues will require further discussion and decision-making in preparing recommendations for Board consideration. As such, I recommend focusing on these at a follow-up teleconference in early January 2020, with the goal of presenting recommendations to the Board at its January 28, 2019 meeting.

Key Remaining Issues from November 5 Teleconference

- Program Name
- Experience Requirements
- Recognition for Passing Exams
- Subject Areas

Other Issues

- Program Administration
- Budget

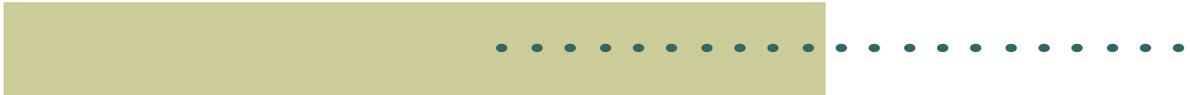
In those cases where an easy consensus on these issues doesn't readily surface, the best approach for moving forward with recommendations to the Board is the one we are most familiar with from governing body meetings: make a motion and vote.

Scheduling the Teleconference. I will follow-up with an email to find the best date/time for the teleconference, tentatively for the week of January 7 to 14.

Preparing the Board Report. After the teleconference, I will prepare a draft report with recommendations for the Working Group's review, with the goal of finalizing the report by January 20 for distribution to the Board for its January 28 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Summary of responses to the Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes
- B. Individual responses to the Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes (seven responses)
- C. Individual email responses to other issues (seven responses)
- D. Individual responses to administration and budget issues



Summary of Consensus Outcomes

The following is a summary of responses to the seven areas where the November 13 report indicates there was concurrence. Comments are provided for those who believe this was the not the case.

Issue	Consensus		Comments
	Yes	No	
A. Key Program Elements			
1. Working with the GFOA. Since the Board authorized moving forward with the Phase 1B in assessing a CSMFO-sponsored program: no further consideration of this option.	7	-	
2. Examinations sole basis for certification. Successful passage of comprehensive examinations in core subject areas should be the sole basis for earning certification.	3	4	<p><i>Note: The fuller statement was mainly intended to reflect that course attendance was not required (see A.3 for unanimous consensus on this). However, as summarized, this overlaps with the issue of whether experience/education should also be required.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle with how “newbie” can earn same title as someone with 25 years’ experience. See B.1 for suggested approach. • Four supported concept (like CPA) of no exp/educ requirements to take exams, but some minimum professional experience requirements to earn certificate, ie, Phase 1 is passing the exams and Phase 2 is certification after exp requirement met. There could be form of recognition that tests have been passed if exp requirements have not yet been met.

Summary of Consensus Outcomes

Issue	Consensus		Comments
	Yes	No	
3. Examination preparation assistance. Based on the benefits in other state programs and survey results, preparation should include both on-line study guides and focused courses that are offered both on-line and on-site. (Note: These are just assistance tools. Per A.2 above, <u>course attendance is not required to earn certification.</u>)	7	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider ongoing orientation program at annual conference where a “class” of participants could network. Could also be a similar “graduation” at the conference where the certificate recipients are acknowledged.
4. Only form of recognition. Since passing examinations is the sole basis for certification (course attendance is not required), a “certificate of completion” option does not make sense.	4	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three supported some form of recognition of test passage. See A2. comments about “two phases.”
B. Program Content			
1. Program name. Follow Texas and Florida’s lead and call this program “Certified Government Financial Officer” (CGFO).	3	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three indicated that California should be in the title, ie “California Certified Government Financial Officer” (CCGFO). One preferred “professional” to “officer” to better reflect nature of the program (see A.2). Also, while liked having CA in the title of the designation, it gets kind if long with 5 words, which would be primary reasoning to leave it out.
2. Integrating curriculum and examination development. To ensure proper integration, the study guides, training sessions and examination questions (per subject area), should be developed by the same person(s), agency or institution.	7	-	<p><i>Note: This item was development on study guide, courses and tests “per subject area.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two agreed in general, recognizing that there may be some exceptions.

Summary of Consensus Outcomes

Issue	Consensus		Comments
	Yes	No	
<p>3. Selecting curriculum and examination development partners. Rather than creating new, “freestanding” courses, the Working Group agreed to <u>build on training programs already in place</u>, modifying them as appropriate. However, while recognizing that this will mean working with current course partners to develop study guides and examination questions, the Working Group wanted to hold-off in contacting them about their interest in doing so, since some of the programs are under review.</p>	7	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May need to develop one or more stand-alone video training sessions (similar to our “quick hits” program but longer) that could be used to fill in any holes that we identify in a cost-effective way. Perhaps it is just more of the quick hits as that program is envisioned to do essentially exactly that – provide training for areas that don’t warrant a core course.

Reflects Responses from:

- Mary Bradley
- Scott Catlett
- Will Fuentes
- Brent Mason
- Margaret Moggia
- Stephen Parker
- Dave Persseline

Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes

To ensure we are all on the “same page” on issues going forward, please confirm your concurrence with the consensus outcome for the seven issues where the November 13 report indicates there was concurrence. If you do not believe this was the case, please provide comments.

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
A. Confirmation of Key Program Elements		
1. Working with the GFOA. Since the Board authorized moving forward with the Phase 1B in assessing a CSMFO-sponsored program: no further consideration of this option.	Yes	
2. Examinations sole basis for certification. Successful passage of comprehensive examinations in core subject areas should be the sole basis for earning certification.	Yes	
3. Examination preparation assistance. Based on the benefits in other state programs and survey results, preparation should include both on-line study guides and focused courses that are offered both on-line and on-site. (Note: These are just assistance tools. Per A.2 above, <u>course attendance is not required to earn certification.</u>)	Yes	
4. Only form of recognition. Since passing examinations is the sole basis for certification (course attendance is not required), a “certificate of completion” option does not make sense.	Yes	
B. Program Content		
1. Program name. Follow Texas and Florida’s lead and call this program “Certified Government Financial Officer” (CGFO).	No	Needs to have some identification of California base

Attachment B: Individual Responses

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
<p>2. Integrating curriculum and examination development. To ensure proper integration, the study guides, training sessions and examination questions (per subject area), should be developed by the same person(s), agency or institution.</p>	Yes	In general. May be some exceptions
<p>3. Selecting curriculum and examination development partners. Rather than creating new, “freestanding” courses, the Working Group agreed to <u>build on training programs already in place</u>, modifying them as appropriate. However, while recognizing that this will mean working with current course partners to develop study guides and examination questions, the Working Group wanted to hold-off in contacting them about their interest in doing so, since some of the programs are under review.</p>	Yes	

Name
Mary Bradley

Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes

To ensure we are all on the “same page” on issues going forward, please confirm your concurrence with the consensus outcome for the seven issues where the November 13 report indicates there was concurrence. If you do not believe this was the case, please provide comments.

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
A. Confirmation of Key Program Elements		
<p>1. Working with the GFOA. Since the Board authorized moving forward with the Phase 1B in assessing a CSMFO-sponsored program: no further consideration of this option.</p>	Agreed	
<p>2. Examinations sole basis for certification. Successful passage of comprehensive examinations in core subject areas should be the sole basis for earning certification.</p>		<p>I am fine with the idea of no qualifications to take the exams and that the participants are “ready” for certification after completing the exams. That being said, I am in favor of CPA-style additional requirements to be further specified to include education and experience. I believe that the standard in this area should be higher than for the CPA certification because we are indicating that they are a qualified <i>Finance Officer</i>. This is different than technical proficiency. The idea behind the “two tiers” of certification was along those lines. There could be a certificate of exam passage that is the “phase 1” certification and then the CPFO designation is achieved when the education and experience requirements are met. One would also assume that the continuing education requirements would be triggered at the time one received the CPFO designation.</p>

Attachment B: Individual Responses

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
<p>3. Examination preparation assistance. Based on the benefits in other state programs and survey results, preparation should include both on-line study guides and focused courses that are offered both on-line and on-site. (Note: These are just assistance tools. Per A.2 above, <u>course attendance is not required to earn certification.</u>)</p>	Agreed	<p>I also suggested in the early discussions that there may be value in offering an “orientation” session at the Annual Conference where a “class” of participants could network. There could also be a similar “graduation” at the conference where the CPFO recipients are acknowledged. This need not be required, but seems like it would be beneficial to provide a support network of those going through the same program as well as recognition.</p>
<p>4. Only form of recognition. Since passing examinations is the sole basis for certification (course attendance is not required), a “certificate of completion” option does not make sense.</p>	See my comments under #2.	
B. Program Content		
<p>1. Program name. Follow Texas and Florida’s lead and call this program “Certified Government Financial Officer” (CGFO).</p>	Agreed.	
<p>2. Integrating curriculum and examination development. To ensure proper integration, the study guides, training sessions and examination questions (per subject area), should be developed by the same person(s), agency or institution.</p>	Agreed, in part.	<p>I would agree with “should be coordinated”, but perhaps there may be a need to engage other experts in providing specific content that the coordinator assembles. Nobody is an expert on everything.</p>

Attachment B: Individual Responses

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
<p>3. Selecting curriculum and examination development partners. Rather than creating new, “freestanding” courses, the Working Group agreed to <u>build on training programs already in place</u>, modifying them as appropriate. However, while recognizing that this will mean working with current course partners to develop study guides and examination questions, the Working Group wanted to hold-off in contacting them about their interest in doing so, since some of the programs are under review.</p>	<p>Agreed, in part.</p>	<p>I agree that we should leverage our existing trainers and trainings. However, I remain open to the notion of developing one or more stand-alone video training sessions (similar to our “quick hits” program but longer) that could be used to fill in any holes that we identify in a cost-effective way. Perhaps it is just more of the quick hits as that program is envisioned to do essentially exactly that – provide training for areas that don’t warrant a core course.</p>

Name
Scott Catlett

Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes

To ensure we are all on the “same page” on issues going forward, please confirm your concurrence with the consensus outcome for the seven issues where the November 13 report indicates there was concurrence. If you do not believe this was the case, please provide comments.

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
A. Confirmation of Key Program Elements		
<p>1. Working with the GFOA. Since the Board authorized moving forward with the Phase 1B in assessing a CSMFO-sponsored program: no further consideration of this option.</p>	<p>Yes. Confirm Consensus.</p>	
<p>2. Examinations sole basis for certification. Successful passage of comprehensive examinations in core subject areas should be the sole basis for earning certification.</p>	<p>Yes. Confirm Consensus.</p>	<p>Though, I believe and some may disagree, that like the GFOA, there should be some criteria for applying such as working in the field for so long. This could also be accomplished by allowing all to apply, but not giving out the CGFO designation until both the tests were passed and the person had reached a certain experience level. My fear is not diluting the CGFO and CSMFO brand. I see the CGFO as a seal of approval and a verification of one’s proficiency and competence. I want employers to be able to trust that.</p>
<p>3. Examination preparation assistance. Based on the benefits in other state programs and survey results, preparation should include both on-line study guides and focused courses that are offered both on-line and on-site. (Note: These are just assistance tools. Per A.2 above, <u>course attendance is not required to earn certification.</u>)</p>	<p>Yes. Confirm Consensus.</p>	

Attachment B: Individual Responses

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
4. Only form of recognition. Since passing examinations is the sole basis for certification (course attendance is not required), a “certificate of completion” option does not make sense.	Yes. Confirm Consensus.	Yes, but see my comments for 2.
B. Program Content		
1. Program name. Follow Texas and Florida’s lead and call this program “Certified Government Financial Officer” (CGFO).	Yes. Confirm Consensus.	
2. Integrating curriculum and examination development. To ensure proper integration, the study guides, training sessions and examination questions (per subject area), should be developed by the same person(s), agency or institution.	Yes. Confirm Consensus.	I would recommend contacting Radford University as they may have helped to develop for GFOA. However, it may be hard to get one person to develop all content based on subject matter expertise. This can be overcome though if there is one person or institution that oversees and approves all final content to ensure consistency and appropriateness.
3. Selecting curriculum and examination development partners. Rather than creating new, “freestanding” courses, the Working Group agreed to <u>build on training programs already in place</u> , modifying them as appropriate. However, while recognizing that this will mean working with current course partners to develop study guides and examination questions, the Working Group wanted to hold-off in contacting them about their interest in doing so, since some of the programs are under review.	Yes. Confirm Consensus.	My recommendation is to build off as much of our current course content as possible and modify some as necessary, but we will no doubt also need to build new course content. Not all of our current course content meets the areas of the CGFO that we will be touching. In regards to exact timing and manner of reaching out, I’ll defer to the Career Development Committee (CDC) Chair, but agree with comments so far that it should be after January 28 meeting.

Name
Will Fuentes, Board Member, Finance Director – City of Campbell

Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes

To ensure we are all on the “same page” on issues going forward, please confirm your concurrence with the consensus outcome for the seven issues where the November 13 report indicates there was concurrence. If you do not believe this was the case, please provide comments.

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
A. Confirmation of Key Program Elements		
<p>1. Working with the GFOA. Since the Board authorized moving forward with the Phase 1B in assessing a CSMFO-sponsored program: no further consideration of this option.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	
<p>2. Examinations sole basis for certification. Successful passage of comprehensive examinations in core subject areas should be the sole basis for earning certification.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>I struggle with this. I am concerned that a “newbie” can academically prepare for the material covered on the exams and pass and be a “CSMFO Certified...” When that’s used on a resume, I believe CM’s, etc. will want to be able to look to it to “mean something.” Without any experience requirement, the designation is very different for Bob with 25 years’ experience and a CFO now for a small city vs. Sally who is an Acct 2 with the same designation a year out of school. My concern is that in the eyes of the folks to whom we want the designation to be meaningful, it may not hit the mark. The CM will look to the resume for experience, but may wonder how a newbie and an oldie both carry the same designation, be confused and simply ignore. But if you make an experience requirement, what is it – 2-3 years, 5-7 years, etc.? I think the answer may be in what we call the designation not “Officer (CGFO)” but something like “Professional (CGFP).”</p>

Attachment B: Individual Responses

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
<p>3. Examination preparation assistance. Based on the benefits in other state programs and survey results, preparation should include both on-line study guides and focused courses that are offered both on-line and on-site. (Note: These are just assistance tools. Per A.2 above, <u>course attendance is not required to earn certification.</u>)</p>	Agree	
<p>4. Only form of recognition. Since passing examinations is the sole basis for certification (course attendance is not required), a “certificate of completion” option does not make sense.</p>	Agree	
B. Program Content		
<p>1. Program name. Follow Texas and Florida’s lead and call this program “Certified Government Financial Officer” (CGFO).</p>	Unsure	<p>See comments above in #2. I think I’d prefer replacing the word “Officer” with “Professional;” I think the word Officer implies a level of experience and competence that must include working experience with the topics being tested in the examinations.</p>
<p>2. Integrating curriculum and examination development. To ensure proper integration, the study guides, training sessions and examination questions (per subject area), should be developed by the same person(s), agency or institution.</p>	Agree	<p>Maybe one coordinator; I think the material will likely be developed by various parties; but one responsible party to assure consistency throughout.</p>

Attachment B: Individual Responses

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
<p>3. Selecting curriculum and examination development partners. Rather than creating new, “freestanding” courses, the Working Group agreed to <u>build on training programs already in place</u>, modifying them as appropriate. However, while recognizing that this will mean working with current course partners to develop study guides and examination questions, the Working Group wanted to hold-off in contacting them about their interest in doing so, since some of the programs are under review.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	

Name
Brent Mason

Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes

To ensure we are all on the “same page” on issues going forward, please confirm your concurrence with the consensus outcome for the seven issues where the November 13 report indicates there was concurrence. If you do not believe this was the case, please provide comments.

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
A. Confirmation of Key Program Elements		
1. Working with the GFOA. Since the Board authorized moving forward with the Phase 1B in assessing a CSMFO-sponsored program: no further consideration of this option.	Yes	
2. Examinations sole basis for certification. Successful passage of comprehensive examinations in core subject areas should be the sole basis for earning certification.		There was some discussion about pass the exams and getting the certification without demonstrating experience. For instance, for my CPA license I had to pass the tests but I also needed my management to sign off that I had certain experience in the different areas. I believe that to take the tests there is no pre-requisites, but to earn the designation, there needs to be some form of recognition of one’s school/work experience.
3. Examination preparation assistance. Based on the benefits in other state programs and survey results, preparation should include both on-line study guides and focused courses that are offered both on-line and on-site. (Note: These are just assistance tools. Per A.2 above, <u>course attendance is not required to earn certification.</u>)	Yes	
4. Only form of recognition. Since passing examinations is the sole basis for certification (course attendance is not required), a “certificate of completion” option does not make sense.	Yes	While true, some form to indicate passage may be nice as certain individuals may need to demonstrate to their management.

Attachment B: Individual Responses

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
B. Program Content		
1. Program name. Follow Texas and Florida’s lead and call this program “Certified Government Financial Officer” (CGFO).	Yes	
2. Integrating curriculum and examination development. To ensure proper integration, the study guides, training sessions and examination questions (per subject area), should be developed by the same person(s), agency or institution.	Yes	
3. Selecting curriculum and examination development partners. Rather than creating new, “freestanding” courses, the Working Group agreed to <u>build on training programs already in place</u> , modifying them as appropriate. However, while recognizing that this will mean working with current course partners to develop study guides and examination questions, the Working Group wanted to hold-off in contacting them about their interest in doing so, since some of the programs are under review.	Yes	We had discussed about how other certificate programs/license may be factored into our program. I think we should focus on what is our core courses and then they should pass the exam. If they have information from another certificate program that they can use to pass the test, this means they can rely on their knowledge from that experience and not attend our course.

Name
Margaret Moggia

Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes

To ensure we are all on the “same page” on issues going forward, please confirm your concurrence with the consensus outcome for the seven issues where the November 13 report indicates there was concurrence. If you do not believe this was the case, please provide comments.

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
A. Confirmation of Key Program Elements		
<p>1. Working with the GFOA. Since the Board authorized moving forward with the Phase 1B in assessing a CSMFO-sponsored program: no further consideration of this option.</p>	Agreed	
<p>2. Examinations sole basis for certification. Successful passage of comprehensive examinations in core subject areas should be the sole basis for earning certification.</p>	Disagreed	<p>I heard almost unanimous consensus on having two levels to the certification. The lower one could consist of just successfully passing exams. The higher one – the one that would receive a certification, though, would require other elements including, but not limited to, experience and participation in CSMFO. The two-tier system is integral to the success of this project.</p>
<p>3. Examination preparation assistance. Based on the benefits in other state programs and survey results, preparation should include both on-line study guides and focused courses that are offered both on-line and on-site. (Note: These are just assistance tools. Per A.2 above, <u>course attendance is not required to earn certification.</u>)</p>	Agreed	
<p>4. Only form of recognition. Since passing examinations is the sole basis for certification (course attendance is not required), a “certificate of completion” option does not make sense.</p>	Disagreed	<p>I believe a certificate of completion would be appropriate as the reward for passing the exams (the lower tier of the two-tier system). Those interested in a designation would have to achieve additional elements.</p>
B. Program Content		

Attachment B: Individual Responses

Issue	Confirm Consensus	If you do not believe this was the consensus on this issue, please comment
<p>1. Program name. Follow Texas and Florida’s lead and call this program “Certified Government Financial Officer” (CGFO).</p>	Disagreed	<p>Would it be California Certified Government Financial Officer? I’m not opposed to that name, but I didn’t remember the discussion surrounding this item.</p>
<p>2. Integrating curriculum and examination development. To ensure proper integration, the study guides, training sessions and examination questions (per subject area), should be developed by the same person(s), agency or institution.</p>	Partially agreed	<p>I thought we would be incorporating our existing classes into the program. If so, we have classes run by different parties. It makes sense to have one group tie it all together, but wouldn’t that group have to integrate with the existing training providers?</p>
<p>3. Selecting curriculum and examination development partners. Rather than creating new, “freestanding” courses, the Working Group agreed to <u>build on training programs already in place</u>, modifying them as appropriate. However, while recognizing that this will mean working with current course partners to develop study guides and examination questions, the Working Group wanted to hold-off in contacting them about their interest in doing so, since some of the programs are under review.</p>	Agreed	
<p>4. What should be the subject areas covered by the exam? Consensus was reached on the following seven core areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting and financial reporting (including interim as well as annual reporting) • Operating and capital budgeting • Cash management/investments • Debt financing/management • Fiscal policies and long-term financial planning • Revenue management: taxes, assessments and fees • Pensions and retiree health care </p>	Disagreed	<p>I heard multiple voices saying that Ethics should be its own core area. There was also another recommended tweak, but I don’t remember it right now.</p>

C. Undiscussed Items		
<p>1. How often and where should onsite courses be provided? Continue to provide training courses with the same frequency as they are currently at locations throughout the State. That said, on-site courses should be offered at least twice per year. Based on demand, this may need to be increased.</p>	Agreed	
<p>2. How should on-line training be provided? Conduct further research on this, including Virginia's approach to on-line training and thoughts that prospective trainers may have.</p>	Agreed	
<p>3. How should the tests be administered and how often? Use on-line testing that is proctored on-site at least six times per year, following procedures like those in Texas.</p>	Agreed	
<p>4. What happens if an applicant fails an exam? Follow the lead of the other state programs and allow failed tests to be retaken, without restrictions such as a waiting period, other than paying a new test fee and passing all exams within the prescribed timeframe.</p>	Agreed	
<p>5. What time limits should there be between passing the first and last exams? Follow the Florida model and allow five years to pass all examinations after registration. (Note: Texas limits this to four years.)</p>	Disagreed	I prefer 4 years, but not strongly.

Attachment B: Individual Responses

<p>6. Should there be continuing education requirements? Follow the Texas model and require continuing education of 75 CPE credits spread over three years; use CPA criteria for qualifying training.</p>	<p>Partially Agreed</p>	<p>I don't believe the lower tier (certificate) would need continuing education requirements, but the upper tier (designation) would definitely require it. The 75 over 3 years approach works for me.</p>
<p>7. Should there be grounds for revocation of the certification? As the program develops, establish criteria under which certification could be revoked. While the Florida program provides guidance, this will require thoughtful consideration</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	
<p>Budget At this point, only a very high-level, "reconnaissance" estimate for development costs is possible. As a floor, consider that it will cost Florida \$30,000 to "update" existing curriculum and tests. There are seven recommended test areas. If the added work can be accomplished for \$5,000 to \$10,000 per subject area, development costs would range from \$35,000 to \$70,000. That said, it is not possible to better assess this until contacting current training partners. However, it is likely that development costs with this approach will be under \$100,000.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	

<p>Name</p>
<p>Stephen Parker</p>

Bill Statler

From: David Persselin <DPersselin@fremont.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2019 1:25 PM
To: Bill Statler; 'Margaret Moggia'; Laura Nomura; Mary Bradley; Scott Catlett; Will Fuentes; David Cain; Stephen Parker; Brent Mason; Dennis Kauffman
Cc: David Persselin
Subject: RE: Last Call: Responses to Certification Program Key Issues

Hi --

I concur with all of the consensus items, although I'm wondering if the name for our designation should include "California" somewhere.

I'm okay with no pre-requisites. I'd rather have more people take advantage of the program than fewer.

Since we are looking to complement (with a California focus), rather than replace the CPFO and other similar programs (CAPPO's CPPO, CMRTA's CRO), I suggest we try to avoid overlap. If there's nothing in a given area that's special about the regulatory or operating environment in California, I'd wonder why we are ploughing the same ground as the other organizations.

-- Dave Persselin

From: Bill Statler [mailto:bstatler@pacbell.net]
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2019 2:59 PM
To: 'Margaret Moggia'; Laura Nomura; Mary Bradley; Scott Catlett; David Persselin; Will Fuentes; David Cain; Stephen Parker; Brent Mason; Dennis Kauffman
Subject: Last Call: Responses to Certification Program Key Issues

A reminder that I am looking for responses to certification program key issues as discussed in the attached report by Wednesday, 11/27. (I've only heard from two of you).

Along with the form confirming consensus areas (or not) – and any other areas you would like to comment on, I'm hoping to get your comments on two key issues as discussed more fully in the attached report:

1. Program Eligibility (Issue A.5)

Should there be education/experience pre-requirements to begin the program; or if not at the front end, before certification after exams have been passed?

For context, my recommendation was no prerequisites for participation other than completing an application package and a reasonable fee for enrollment. Enrollment will then provide on-line access to the study guides. Additionally, following the Florida model, applicants should certify that they have read and accept the CSMFO Code of Ethics.

My primary rationale for this, in following the Texas and Florida models, was that as a "technical proficiency" certification, this program has value to applicants and employers at every stage of professional development and employer hiring: entry level accountants/analysts; first line supervisors; division managers; and department heads.

Bill Statler

From: Gov Fin <davidcain.govfinance@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 9:37 AM
To: Brent Mason
Cc: Bill Statler; Margaret Moggia; Laura Nomura; Mary Bradley; Scott Catlett; David Persselin; Will Fuentes; Stephen Parker; Dennis Kauffman
Subject: Re: Teleconference Follow-Up: Certification Program Phase 1B Assessment Key Issues

I agree with Brent on the ethics comments. It is so critical in today's world. Just an exam is not enough.

David.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 27, 2019, at 9:28 AM, Brent Mason <bmason@eidebailly.com> wrote:

Good Morning Bill/Everyone!

My thoughts/comments on the various topics about the consensus topics we are chatting about are included on the attached consensus form.

As for the Eligibility to Sit for the Examinations Question, my thoughts are that I favor some kind of eligibility, as think ultimately it makes the designation more meaningful, though I'm not certain as I sit here, what I think that should be. As noted on the attached, if the title is something other than "Finance Officer," something like "Finance Professional," that would cause me to lean toward a shorter experience requirement (maybe 2-3 years). If the designation is "Finance Officer," I'm inclined to think of something more like 5-7 years. I'm big on wanting the designation to NOT just be an academic exercise.

As for the Core Subject Areas issue, I'm inclined to define it as "7 Core areas of technical competence AND an ethics exam;" NOT 8 areas of testing. It's basically semantics, but I'm a fan of the ethics portion being an add on, standalone section regardless of how any sections we have.

I think that's all my comments....thanks and good luck! 😊

Brent A. Mason

Senior Manager
Eide Bailly LLP
Rancho Cucamonga, CA

☎ 760.217.4952

From: Bill Statler <bstatler@pacbell.net>
Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2019 7:20 PM
To: 'Margaret Moggia' <margaretm@westbasin.org>; Laura Nomura <nomural@emwd.org>; Mary Bradley <mbradley@fremont.gov>; Scott Catlett <SCatlett@yorbalindaca.gov>; David Persselin <DPersselin@fremont.gov>; Will Fuentes <willf@campbellca.gov>; David Cain <davidcain.govfinance@gmail.com>; Stephen Parker <stephenparkercpa@gmail.com>; Brent Mason

Bill Statler

From: Scott Catlett <scatlett@yorbalindaca.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2019 4:42 PM
To: Bill Statler
Subject: RE: Teleconference Follow-Up: Certification Program Phase 1B Assessment Key Issues

Hi Bill,

I agree that waiting to contact partners has merit to fast-track the board review of 1B. On the other point, I like the idea of not having too many subject areas but agree also that purchasing and ethics are important. In the class that I teach at CSUSB, I include both in the course on public financial management. I would argue, however, that some topics are more important than others. Perhaps there is an argument for the seventh section that includes pension and OPEB to be broadened to something like “other critical topics”. Then we could include a higher-level discussion of purchasing, ethics, pensions, OPEB, and perhaps risk management? I think the ethics prerequisite might be overkill, so I would encourage keeping it within the program and not adding another external requirement to obtain the certification.

Scott

SCOTT CATLETT
Finance Director / City Treasurer
P: 714-961-7141

From: Bill Statler <bstatler@pacbell.net>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2019 4:36 PM
To: Scott Catlett <scatlett@yorbalindaca.gov>
Subject: RE: Teleconference Follow-Up: Certification Program Phase 1B Assessment Key Issues

Scott – Thanks! Any thoughts on the following two issues?

1. Core Subject Areas (Issue B.4)

I believe that we reached consensus on seven topic areas as discussed in the attached report.

However, there was further discussion of adding an eighth program that would focus just on ethics or a broader “financial management” topic (as previously recommended) that would include ethics, purchasing (both of which tend to be aligned topics) and perhaps other topics. I suggested that if there was an interest in staying with seven topics, that ethics could be handled as it is Florida, where passing a test on ethics is a prerequisite. On purchasing, one Working Group member noted that it was not a “core” responsibility for many finance division/departments, and as such, may not be a strong candidate for inclusion. For “best practices” on purchasing, another member mentioned that CAPPO (California Association of Public Procurement Officials) might be a better resource for this. (Note: CAPPO has its own certification program (<https://www.cappo.org/page/Certification>)).

2. Timing of Reaching Out to Partners (Issue B.3)

Should we wait to reach-out to partners until after the January 28 Board meeting?

Thanks!

Bill Statler

From: Will Fuentes <willf@campbellca.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2019 2:52 PM
To: Bill Statler
Subject: RE: Teleconference Follow-Up: Certification Program Phase 1B Assessment Key Issues
Attachments: Confirmation of Consensus Outcome (W Fuentes 11-25-19).docx

Thank you Bill.

I'll divide my comments into the two areas you are seeking further feedback on and also attach my responses on the other areas.

- **Core Subject Areas**

If there is group agreement, I believe the seven core areas identified are appropriate as I see the CGFO program, much like the CPFO program, as means to fill in gaps in a person's technical proficiencies. This is how I used the CPFO personally. Seven individual tests may be a lot though and there may be an opportunity to combine revenue, pensions and OPEB and possibly procurement if added. That would also allow a seventh test in ethics or a pre-ethics qualification. Seven tests though is a lot to get through. In regards to procurement, I would disagree that it is not critical and procurement is one of the most challenging areas that I've dealt with in my career. Not every agency has centralized procurement within Finance, but that is often the ideal and it helps to understand the do's and don'ts of procurement and how to set up and manage a successfully procurement process. If it can be covered in some manner, I believe it useful. In regards to course content in a general sense, I believe the topics covered by GFOA are great places to start and build on with California specific issues and ethics added on.

For Accounting and Financial Reporting and other areas that applicants may be familiar in, I agree that they would still need to take each test to verify proficiency, but they would not have to attend in person classes and perhaps prepare or read as much. How they prepare to pass a test should be up to them, but we will provide them various resources to ensure success that will meet a variety of needs and skill levels.

- **Prerequisites to participate in the program or take examinations**

I wrote this in my comments for #2 in the attachment, but I like the second approach mentioned and having some minimum education and professional requirements on the back end to be certified in addition to passing the CGFO tests. The CPFO does it in reverse, but a big draw of our program will be its accessibility. Thus, as we discussed at the Board Meeting in October, let's make it easy to apply and participate, but hard to obtain and maintain. Copying my comments in the attachment, my fear is not diluting the CGFO and CSMFO brand. I see the CGFO as a seal of approval and a verification of one's proficiency and competence. I want employers to be able to trust that much like they do now with the CPFO and CPA.

In addition, here are comments on the areas we didn't get to:

- **Program Administration:**

1. I addressed this somewhat in my attachment comments, but while we can leverage our current course content greatly, we'll also need to add some new courses. For each course area, on-site courses should be at least twice per year and that will add to the work of CDC and may require additional instructors.
2. Agree. Continue research this including Virginia. GFOA has many successful online trainings and I'd recommend also learning from them.

Attachment C: Key Issue Responses

3. I agree with this method, but I'd also reach out to GFOA to see how they are allowing people to take tests anywhere they have a PC. I know these are proctored via webcam. My fear of course is being able to cheat on an exam, but GFOA has given this option for over a year now I believe. All my tests were taken onsite. I was awarded my CPFO in 2014. But this is an interesting option if cheating can be prevented and it is cost-effective. One thing I also found useful with GFOA is you could volunteer your agency to host test dates as long as you found a proctor. I did this several times and it allowed me to schedule my tests in a way that best met my schedule. I often used someone from HR or elsewhere in the City as a proctor based on their availability. I also opened up the testing to others in different agencies that wanted to take tests on same day. They could take any of the five tests for the CPFO. This was highly instrumental in my receiving the CPFO in only 1 ½ years.
 4. Yes. They should be allowed to take with no waiting period. It's their money and time. They should be charged each time though.
 5. I think this depends on how many tests and topics. The CPFO is seven years. I'd be ok with this especially if we have seven tests. Five is also doable, but seven allows for one test per year.
 6. Yes. See CPFO which requires 30 CPE filed annually or 60 filed every two years. CPA criteria or similar is appropriate.
 7. Agree with comments. Also see what GFOA CPFO has.
- **Budget:**
 1. Going to be costs to develop and then maintain ongoing. I'd be comfortable with \$150,000 to \$200,000 upfront with ongoing operating costs as needed offset by user fees.

Thanks again Bill. Let me know if you need anything else or have any questions.

Will Fuentes, CPFO, MBA



Finance Director

City of Campbell | Finance Department
70 N. First Street | Campbell, CA 95008
www.cityofcampbell.com | 408.866.2113

From: Bill Statler <bstatler@pacbell.net>

Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2019 7:20 PM

To: 'Margaret Moggia' <margaretm@westbasin.org>; Laura Nomura <nomural@emwd.org>; Mary Bradley <mbradley@fremont.gov>; Scott Catlett <SCatlett@yorbalinga.gov>; David Persselin <DPersselin@fremont.gov>; Will Fuentes <willf@campbellca.gov>; David Cain <davidcain.govfinance@gmail.com>; Stephen Parker <stephenparkercpa@gmail.com>; Brent Mason <bmason@eidebailly.com>; Dennis Kauffman <DKauffman@roseville.ca.us>

Subject: Teleconference Follow-Up: Certification Program Phase 1B Assessment Key Issues

WARNING: This email originated from an external sender!

Attached for your review is a report summarizing the outcome from the teleconference on November 5, 2018 regarding key issues discussed in the "Phase 1B Assessment: Key Issues" report.

The Short Story: While follow-up comments are welcome on any issue that surfaced in the report or teleconference, the report identifies two key issues where further discussion is needed: program eligibility and core subject areas.

As proposed at the teleconference "wrap-up," the report provides a recommended approach to resolving these two issues as well as areas we were not able to discuss during the teleconference. In ensuring we are all on the "same page" on issues going forward, the report also request that you respond to the attached form (Confirmation of Consensus Outcomes) to confirm your concurrence with the consensus outcome for the seven issues in this report. If you do not believe this was the case, the form provides space for your comments.

Bill Statler

From: Brent Mason <bmason@eidebailly.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 9:29 AM
To: Bill Statler; 'Margaret Moggia'; Laura Nomura; Mary Bradley; Scott Catlett; David Persselin; Will Fuentes; David Cain; Stephen Parker; Dennis Kauffman
Subject: RE: Teleconference Follow-Up: Certification Program Phase 1B Assessment Key Issues
Attachments: Confirmation of Consensus Outcome - Mason.docx

Good Morning Bill/Everyone!

My thoughts/comments on the various topics about the consensus topics we are chatting about are included on the attached consensus form.

As for the Eligibility to Sit for the Examinations Question, my thoughts are that I favor some kind of eligibility, as think ultimately it makes the designation more meaningful, though I'm not certain as I sit here, what I think that should be. As noted on the attached, if the title is something other than "Finance Officer," something like "Finance Professional," that would cause me to lean toward a shorter experience requirement (maybe 2-3 years). If the designation is "Finance Officer," I'm inclined to think of something more like 5-7 years. I'm big on wanting the designation to NOT just be an academic exercise.

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I think that's all my comments....thanks and good luck! 😊

Brent A. Mason

Senior Manager
Eide Bailly LLP
Rancho Cucamonga, CA

☎ 760.217.4952

From: Bill Statler <bstatler@pacbell.net>
Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2019 7:20 PM
To: 'Margaret Moggia' <margaretm@westbasin.org>; Laura Nomura <nomural@emwd.org>; Mary Bradley <mbradley@fremont.gov>; Scott Catlett <SCatlett@yorbalinga.gov>; David Persselin <DPersselin@fremont.gov>; Will Fuentes <willf@campbellca.gov>; David Cain <davidcain.govfinance@gmail.com>; Stephen Parker <stephenparkercpa@gmail.com>; Brent Mason <bmason@eidebailly.com>; Dennis Kauffman <DKauffman@roseville.ca.us>
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The Short Story: While follow-up comments are welcome on any issue that surfaced in the report or teleconference, the report identifies two key issues where further discussion is needed: program eligibility and core subject areas.

Bill Statler

From: Brent Mason <bmason@eidebailly.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 3:53 PM
To: Bill Statler
Subject: Re: Teleconference Follow-Up: Certification Program Phase 1B Assessment Key Issues

Thx Bill. I like having CA in the title of the designation. It gets kind of long with 5 words, which would be my primary reasoning to leave it out.

Happy Thanksgiving!!

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 27, 2019, at 2:46 PM, Bill Statler <bstatler@pacbell.net> wrote:

Brent – Thanks for your comments. I really like the “professional” vs “officer” change (and will be recommending this change).

On this issues: we’ve received a few comments that “California” should be in the title, ie, California Certified Government Finance Professional. (CCGFP). As someone who has given the title some a lot of thought, what do you think about that?

On one hand, it may help differentiate the CSMFO vs GFOA program (which is why some think CA should be in the title) – although your “professional” change helps do that as well. On the other hand, including “California” in the title may imply that the program is only valid or useful in California; and while the program will have definite California-centric features, I don’t believe that will be the case (and thus why I am leaning towards not including this in the title – but just leaning: I’m open!).

Thanks!
- Bill

From: Brent Mason <bmason@eidebailly.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 9:29 AM
To: Bill Statler <bstatler@pacbell.net>; 'Margaret Moggia' <margaretm@westbasin.org>; Laura Nomura <nomural@emwd.org>; Mary Bradley <mbradley@fremont.gov>; Scott Catlett <SCatlett@yorbalingca.gov>; David Persselin <DPersselin@fremont.gov>; Will Fuentes <willf@campbellca.gov>; David Cain <davidcain.govfinance@gmail.com>; Stephen Parker <stephenparkercpa@gmail.com>; Dennis Kauffman <DKauffman@roseville.ca.us>
Subject: RE: Teleconference Follow-Up: Certification Program Phase 1B Assessment Key Issues

Good Morning Bill/Everyone!

My thoughts/comments on the various topics about the consensus topics we are chatting about are included on the attached consensus form.

As for the Eligibility to Sit for the Examinations Question, my thoughts are that I favor some kind of eligibility, as think ultimately it makes the designation more meaningful, though I’m not certain as I sit here, what I think that should be. As noted on the attached, if the title is something other than “Finance

Bill Statler

From: Margaret Moggia <margaretm@westbasin.org>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2019 8:30 AM
To: Bill Statler
Subject: RE: Reminder: Responses to Certification Program Key Issues

Bill,

I cannot recall if my comments on the consensus form included the following thoughts:

1. As to program eligibility, I do not think that a person needs to have certain qualifications to take the courses, tests, but I do think that they should demonstrate experience before being named a CGFO. So, it may make sense to provide some acknowledgement along the way that they have passed the requisite areas.
2. As to areas of study, I do think we should add Ethics as the 8th area.
3. I would hold off reaching out to other groups until we receive Board's input.



Margaret Moggia

Executive Manager of Finance

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Mobile: 310.218.2377

margaretm@westbasin.org

West Basin Municipal Water District

www.westbasin.org

17140 South Avalon Boulevard
Carson, CA 90746-1296, www.westbasin.org

From: Bill Statler <bstatler@pacbell.net>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2019 11:48 PM
To: Margaret Moggia <margaretm@westbasin.org>; Laura Nomura <nomural@emwd.org>; Mary Bradley <mbradley@fremont.gov>; Scott Catlett <SCatlett@yorbalinga.gov>; David Persselin <DPersselin@fremont.gov>; Will Fuentes <willf@campbellca.gov>; David Cain <davidcain.govfinance@gmail.com>; Stephen Parker <stephenparkercpa@gmail.com>; Brent Mason <bmason@eidebailly.com>; Dennis Kauffman <DKauffman@roseville.ca.us>
Subject: Reminder: Responses to Certification Program Key Issues

Just a quick reminder that I am looking for four responses to the attached report by Wednesday, 11/27:

1. Program eligibility (Issue A.5)
2. Core subject areas (Issue B.4)
3. Thoughts on the timing of reaching out to partners in building on training programs already in place. (Issue B.3)
4. Confirmation of consensus areas (see attached form)

Bill Statler

From: Margaret Moggia <margaretm@westbasin.org>
Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2019 4:25 PM
To: Bill Statler
Subject: RE: Program Participation

The GFOA requirements seem fine – I would be interested what other working group members thoughts are on this subject.

Margaret



Margaret Moggia

Executive Manager of Finance

Office: 310.660.6256

Mobile: 310.218.2377

margaretm@westbasin.org

West Basin Municipal Water District

www.westbasin.org

17140 South Avalon Boulevard
Carson, CA 90746-1296, www.westbasin.org

From: Bill Statler <bstatler@pacbell.net>
Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2019 11:36 AM
To: Margaret Moggia <margaretm@westbasin.org>
Subject: Program Participation

Yeah, it's a poser ... here's a thought that would be consistent with CPA requirements:

1. Minimum two years of professional experience working in a government agency with significant fiscal responsibilities in a finance office, city manager's office or duties for fiscal support in an operating department.
2. What about work experience for an accounting firm or consultant?

For context, the GFOA requires (see attached):

1. BA from accredited college/university
2. Accept and observe ethics code
3. Be currently employed by government agency (or actively seeking if unemployed)
4. 3 years in government within the last 10 years
5. GFOA membership

- Bill

Bill Statler

From: Stephen Parker <stephenparkercpa@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 9:05 AM
To: Bill Statler
Subject: Re: Last Call: Responses to Certification Program Key Issues
Attachments: Confirmation of Consensus Outcome - Stephen Parker.docx

Bill,

Thank you for the multiple reminder emails. Attached are my responses.

Note: All of Stephen's responses are in his "Confirmation" reply.

- Stephen

On Mon, Nov 25, 2019 at 2:59 PM Bill Statler <bstatler@pacbell.net> wrote:

A reminder that I am looking for responses to certification program key issues as discussed in the attached report by Wednesday, 11/27. (I've only heard from two of you).

Along with the form confirming consensus areas (or not) – and any other areas you would like to comment on, I'm hoping to get your comments on two key issues as discussed more fully in the attached report:

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Should there be education/experience pre-requirements to begin the program; or if not at the front end, before certification after exams have been passed?

For context, my recommendation was no prerequisites for participation other than completing an application package and a reasonable fee for enrollment. Enrollment will then provide on-line access to the study guides. Additionally, following the Florida model, applicants should certify that they have read and accept the CSMFO Code of Ethics.

My primary rationale for this, in following the Texas and Florida models, was that as a “technical proficiency” certification, this program has value to applicants and employers at every stage of professional development and employer hiring: entry level accountants/analysts; first line supervisors; division managers; and department heads.

2. Core Subject Areas (Issue B.4)

Bill Statler

From: David Persselin <DPersselin@fremont.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2019 1:25 PM
To: Bill Statler; 'Margaret Moggia'; Laura Nomura; Mary Bradley; Scott Catlett; Will Fuentes; David Cain; Stephen Parker; Brent Mason; Dennis Kauffman
Cc: David Persselin
Subject: RE: Last Call: Responses to Certification Program Key Issues

Hi --

I concur with all of the consensus items, although I'm wondering if the name for our designation should include "California" somewhere.

I'm okay with no pre-requisites. I'd rather have more people take advantage of the program than fewer.

Since we are looking to complement (with a California focus), rather than replace the CPFO and other similar programs (CAPPO's CPPO, CMRTA's CRO), I suggest we try to avoid overlap. If there's nothing in a given area that's special about the regulatory or operating environment in California, I'd wonder why we are ploughing the same ground as the other organizations.

-- Dave Persselin

From: Bill Statler [mailto:bstatler@pacbell.net]
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2019 2:59 PM
To: 'Margaret Moggia'; Laura Nomura; Mary Bradley; Scott Catlett; David Persselin; Will Fuentes; David Cain; Stephen Parker; Brent Mason; Dennis Kauffman
Subject: Last Call: Responses to Certification Program Key Issues

A reminder that I am looking for responses to certification program key issues as discussed in the attached report by Wednesday, 11/27. (I've only heard from two of you).

Along with the form confirming consensus areas (or not) – and any other areas you would like to comment on, I'm hoping to get your comments on two key issues as discussed more fully in the attached report:

1. Program Eligibility (Issue A.5)

Should there be education/experience pre-requirements to begin the program; or if not at the front end, before certification after exams have been passed?

For context, my recommendation was no prerequisites for participation other than completing an application package and a reasonable fee for enrollment. Enrollment will then provide on-line access to the study guides. Additionally, following the Florida model, applicants should certify that they have read and accept the CSMFO Code of Ethics.

My primary rationale for this, in following the Texas and Florida models, was that as a "technical proficiency" certification, this program has value to applicants and employers at every stage of professional development and employer hiring: entry level accountants/analysts; first line supervisors; division managers; and department heads.

Program Administration and Budget Issues

The following is a summary of program administration and budget issues that were not discussed at the November 5 teleconference. While more fully discussed in the November 1 report, the following lists each topic and provides my initial recommendation for each one.

This summary provides the responses from Will Fuentes and Stephen Parker. A similar form will be emailed to all Working Group members in preparation for an early-January 2020 teleconference

Issue	Consensus		Comments
	Yes	No	
C. Program Administration			
1. How often and where should onsite courses be provided? Continue to provide training courses with the same frequency as they are currently at locations throughout the State. That said, on-site courses should be offered at least twice per year. Based on demand, this may need to be increased.	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each course area, on-site courses should be at least twice per year and that will add to the work of CDC and may require additional instructors.
2. How should on-line training be provided? Conduct further research on this, including Virginia's approach to on-line training and thoughts that prospective trainers may have.	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue research this including Virginia. GFOA has many successful online trainings and I'd recommend also learning from them.
3. How should the tests be administered and how often? Use on-line testing that is proctored on-site at least six times per year, following procedures like those in Texas.	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also reach out to GFOA to see how they are allowing people to take tests anywhere they have a PC. I know these are proctored via webcam.
4. What happens if an applicant fails an exam? Follow the lead of the other state programs and allow failed tests to be retaken, without restrictions such as a waiting period, other than paying a new test fee and passing all exams within the prescribed timeframe.	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They should be allowed to take with no waiting period. It's their money and time. They should be charged each time though.
5. What time limits should there be between passing the first and last exams? Follow the Florida model and allow five years to pass all examinations after registration. (Note: Texas limits this to four years.)	Qualified		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends on how many tests and topics. The CPFO is seven years. I'd be ok with this especially if we have seven tests. Five is also doable, but seven allows for one test per year. Prefer 4 years, but not strongly.

Program Administration and Budget Issues

Issue	Consensus		Comments
	Yes	No	
6. Should there be continuing education requirements? Follow the Texas model and require continuing education of 75 CPE credits spread over three years; use CPA criteria for qualifying training.	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See CPFO which requires 30 CPE filed annually or 60 filed every two years. CPA criteria or similar is appropriate. • I don't believe the lower tier would need continuing education requirements, but the upper tier would definitely require it. The 75 over 3 years approach works for me.
7. Should there be grounds for revocation of the certification? As the program develops, establish criteria under which certification could be revoked. While the Florida program provides guidance, this will require thoughtful consideration	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also see what GFOA CPFO has.
D. Budget			
<p>How much is this likely to cost and how should it be funded?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Funding.</i> Fund development costs with general purpose CSMFO sources and fund ongoing costs through participant fees. • <i>Development Costs.</i> At this point, only a very high-level, "reconnaissance" estimate for development costs is possible. Assuming we build on current programs, it is not possible to better assess this until contacting current training partners. If the added work can be accomplished for \$5,000 to \$15,000 per subject area, development costs would range from \$35,000 (for seven areas at \$5,000) to \$120,000 (eight areas at \$15,000). • <i>Ongoing Costs.</i> Courses should be similar to current costs; based on other programs, exams are likely to be \$100 or less. 	Yes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going to be costs to develop and then maintain ongoing. I'd be comfortable with \$150,000 to \$200,000 upfront with ongoing operating costs as needed offset by user fees.