



Observations



A monthly publication of the Chicago Chapter, Association of Government Accountants

AGA – Dedicated to serving the community and promoting government accountability

January 2010

Issue 5

Upcoming Events

Luncheon:
Tuesday,
January 19, 2010
11:30 AM

Speaker:
Eric L. Schleef,
DOJ Antitrust Division

Location:
HHS Conference Room
233 N. Michigan Ave.,
Suite 1329

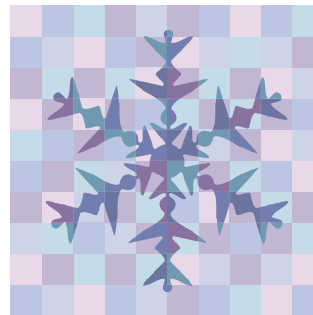
Price:
\$5 members
\$12 non-members

1 CPE

Please RSVP to:
Diane Terzian
dterzian@hudoig.gov
cc: **Heath Wolfe**
WWolfe@hudoig.gov

AGA PDC - SAVE THE DATE!

Please notice the date change for this year's AGA Chicago Chapter PDC. The PDC, now structured into a 2-day event, will be held on April 1-2, 2010 at 77 W. Jackson - GSA Conference Room, 3rd Floor.



In This Issue . . .

President's Message	2
Training Schedule	4
Guest Speaker Bio	5
Chicago Chapter News	6
CGFM Corner	8
Training Opportunities	9
Audio Conference Information	10
From the National Office	11
Contact Us	15



*Advancing
Government
Accountability*

Association
of Government
Accountants

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January 5, 2010

Dear AGA Chicago Members,

Happy New Year!

With the New Year upon us, I would like to take this opportunity to remind our members of their importance to this Chapter, both locally and nationally. At our last Executive Committee meeting, we decided to form a **Member Recruitment Stimulus Offer** to our members. A member can earn \$10 for each new chapter member recruited up to a total of three new members. For more information, please see the Chapter Newsletter.

I want to inform the membership of a community service opportunity! The **Center for Economic Progress** is looking for volunteers to provide tax assistance services to low-income families. For more information, please see the Chapter Newsletter.

Please note that there has been a date change for our Chapter PDC. The PDC, now structured into a 2-day event, will be held on April 1-2, 2010 at 77 W. Jackson - GSA Conference Room, 3rd Floor. The change in format allows us to increase the number of speakers and in turn, provide more continuing professional education (CPE) credits.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at the **HHS Conference Room**, 233 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1329, Chicago, IL. Our speaker at this meeting will be Mr. Eric L. Schleef, Attorney with the Department of Justice. Our meeting will start at 11:30 AM with a lunch buffet, followed by our luncheon speaker at 12:00 PM.

If you are interested in the attending this meeting, please email Diane Terzian at: derzian@hudoig.gov. Please CC myself on the email, WWolfe@hudoig.gov before close of business January 14, 2010.

I hope to see you all on January 19th! If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at (312) 913-8674 or wwolfe@hudoig.gov.

Cordially,

Heath Wolfe

Heath Wolfe
President





AGA Chicago Chapter would like to thank Mr. Brian Miller for his presentation last month! We had a fantastic membership turnout for the last meeting of 2009! Thanks to all who participated!



Brian Miller, Inspector General GSA and Heath Wolfe, President AGA, Chicago Chapter

*******DATE CHANGE!!*******

AGA Chicago Chapter PDC Information

Please notice the date change for this year's AGA Chicago Chapter PDC. The PDC, now structured into a 2-day event, will be held on April 1-2, 2010 at 77 W. Jackson - GSA Conference Room, 3rd Floor.

2009-2010 Training Schedule*

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER	LOCATION
January 19, 2010	Antitrust ARRA	Eric L. Schleef , DOJ Antitrust Division	HHS Conference Room 233 N. Michigan Ave. Suite 1329
February 16, 2010	TBD	Patrick M. Blanchard Inspector General Office of the Independent Inspector General, Cook County, Illinois	HHS Conference Room 233 N. Michigan Ave. Suite 1329
March 15, 2010	TBD	Renée Brooker , Assistant Director U.S. Department of Justice Civil Division Commercial Litigation Branch Fraud Section	Department of Education Conference Room 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1414
April 1-2, 2010	PDC	PDC	GSA Conference Room, 3rd Floor 77 W. Jackson
May 17, 2010	TBD	TBD	Department of Education Conference Room 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1414

*Dates subject to change

Please RSVP to Diane by January 14th

Diane Terzian

EMail: dterzian@hudoig.gov

Please cc: Heath Wolfe: WWolfe@hudoig.gov

Guest Speaker Bio

Eric L. Schleef

Mr. Schleef graduated with Honors from the University of Illinois College of Law in 2001. After graduation, he clerked in Central District of Illinois prior to being accepted into the Department of Justice Honors Program. In his five years with the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division, he participated in numerous criminal investigations into a variety of fraudulent and anti-competitive conduct, including recent efforts to prosecute fraud in connection with Department of Defense support services contracts in the Middle East. During the course of all of these investigations, he worked closely with other law enforcement and investigative agencies including U.S. Attorney's Offices, other Divisions of the Department of Justice, the FBI, DCIS, and numerous Inspector General Offices, and has represented the United States before both District and Appellate courts.



**Please join us on Tuesday, January 19th in the HHS
Conference Room (233 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1329)
at 11:30AM!!!**

New AGA Chicago Chapter Stimulus Program

(Janet Knauff, Membership Director, AGA Chicago Chapter)

CHAPTER MEMBER RECRUITMENT STIMULUS OFFER

Beginning Today and Continuing Through April, 2010

Earn \$10 for each new chapter member you recruit up to a total of three new members. Only current chapter members are eligible for this recruitment incentive. In addition, new members recruited in this stimulus event will receive a \$10 rebate on their first year's membership. This membership recruitment stimulus offer will run from today through the Chicago PDC in April 2010.

In these days of stimulus packages to get the economy going again, we thought we would offer a stimulus package to grow our chapter membership.

This package is patterned after the Indianapolis Chapter's member recruitment campaign that was held for only 1 hour and yielded 32 new members. The high result in such a short time was partly the result of the chapter consisting of almost all one-employer civilian military employees located in a military installation and having a large membership to start with.

By contrast, the Chicago Chapter has members from many different employers. We are offering this stimulus program over the next few months.

So, if you are a member, start recruiting and if you are not a member, this is a great time to join. AGA membership applications and information is on the national website www.agacgm.org

AGA dues depend on the various membership categories. The chapter has no additional dues.

Please remind potential members that their first lunch is free when they join and after that they receive the member rate for lunches (\$5.00) and for other events.

Community Service Opportunity

(Tom McManigal, Community Service Chair, AGA Chicago Chapter)

It is almost tax season and the Center for Economic Progress is looking for volunteers to provide tax assistance services to low-income families.

Please send a log of all training and tax assistance hours donated, or any questions you may have to us at chicago.aga.communityservice@gmail.com.

Volunteer as a Tax Preparer:
Sponsored by the Center for Economic Progress

By volunteering as a tax preparer you can help build your community, learn new skills, make new friends, and share your knowledge and experience with others.

Tax preparer responsibilities

*Serve low-income families by preparing federal and state income tax returns.
Provide basic counseling to clients on tax law and credits.*

Time Commitment

Schedule training (through **mid January**) and commit to volunteering.
*Volunteers are asked to commit to 20 hours during the tax season. Individual tax sites prefer volunteers to commit to 4 hours a week.
Check out the tax preparation sites
at: <http://www.economicprogress.org/assets/events/Site%20list.pdf>*

Training

Volunteers must attend training starting in January and ending January 22nd.
*New volunteers attend 7-9 hours of training depending on the region.
Returning volunteers attend a 3-hour refresher course.
All volunteers must pass a certification test on line or at a training site from January 1st through January 28th.*

Check out training locations

at: <http://www.economicprogress.org/assets/events/Training%20locations.pdf>

Registration

Spend five minutes and register online. Volunteer registration is available until mid-January; however, course availability may be limited later in the month.
*When you register you will (1) setup an online account, (2) schedule your training dates and locations, and (3) schedule your volunteer dates and locations.
Register online at: http://www.economicprogress.org/index.php/c/Register_to_Volunteer*

Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits

*The Center is authorized to award one credit per hour spent in classroom training.
Volunteers must meet Center requirements to receive their credits: pass this year's certification test and donate at least 20 hours of service during the tax season.*

For general information go

to: <http://www.economicprogress.org/index.php/c/Opportunities#Tax%20Preparer>

Please contact Volunteer Services with any tax assistance questions at (312) 630-0244 or send your questions via [email](mailto:volunteer@economicprogress.org) to volunteer@economicprogress.org.

CGFM Corner



The Mark of Excellence in Government Financial Management

CGFM Exams

Interested in the CGFM certification? Sign up for AGA's special [Intensive Review Course](#) and take the CGFM Examinations after the NLC. Don't miss this opportunity to earn your CGFM.

The Intensive Review Course will take place from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 22, and Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2010. The CGFM Examinations will be offered by appointment only on Feb. 24-25.

The cost of the course is only \$249 for qualified participants, and offers 18 CPE hours. Special Bonus: The CGFM Examinations are offered at no cost to course attendees. This is a special limited enrollment offer for those individuals who have already been studying for the CGFM Examinations and need extra reinforcement of the material. The Intensive Review Course is **not a substitute** for the three instructor-led training courses. On the contrary, it is designed as a supplement to previous preparation for the CGFM Examinations. Attending previous courses or studying using CGFM Study Guides before participating in this event is strongly encouraged.

The cost of this course is not included in the NLC registration fee.

Registration

To participate in this event, individuals must:

- 1) Apply for the [CGFM Program](#) (submitting CGFM application form, fee and college transcript—see Eligibility section below).
- 2) Pre-register for this event by submitting the [Intensive Review Course Registration Form](#) and appropriate fee. Walk-ins will not be accepted.

The complete application for the CGFM Program must be submitted BEFORE or TOGETHER with the Intensive Review Course Registration Form. Registrations for this event will not be confirmed until after the CGFM application is accepted.

- **Deadline:** Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Space is limited, so we encourage you to sign up early. Registrations will not be accepted after **Feb. 10, 2010**.
- *Cancellations must be received by Jan. 25, 2010; refunds will not be granted after this date.*

Eligibility

To attend the Intensive Review Course and/or take the CGFM Examinations participants must first apply and be accepted into the CGFM Program. Candidates need to submit the CGFM Program application form with \$85 application fee and a copy of a transcript from an accredited college or university.

The transcript must show that a degree (bachelor's or higher) was awarded and list at least 24 credit hours of courses in financial management or related topics. Applicant's name and the name of the college or university must appear on all transcripts. Please see www.agacgfm.org/cgfm/start/ for more information.

In addition, those individuals who want to complete their CGFM at this event need to submit a Work Verification Form listing at least two years of professional-level government financial management experience.

Prior attendance of CGFM training course(s) or purchase of the CGFM Study Guides is not required, but is strongly encouraged.

If you have already taken a CGFM Examination and did not pass, you must satisfy the waiting period before taking that CGFM Examination at this event.

[AGA Training Opportunities](#)
Click to find events near your area!

UPCOMING AUDIO CONFERENCES

President's Executive Order: Reduce Improper Payments and Eliminate Waste; Audio Conference Set for Jan. 27

AGA, in conjunction with the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers (NASACT), and the Association of Local Government Auditors (ALGA), is pleased to announce a new and significant audio conference on Wednesday, January 27, 2010, addressing the President's recent Executive Order dealing with improper payments.

To discuss the Executive Order and its implications are **Gene L. Dodaro, CGFM**, acting comptroller general, U.S. Government Accountability Office; **Jeffrey C. Steinhoff, CGFM, CPA**, Retired Managing Director, Financial Management and Assurance, U.S. Government Accountability Office, Past AGA National President and currently Executive Director, KPMG Government Institute; **Daniel I. Werfel**, controller, Office of Federal Financial Management, U.S. Office of Management and Budget; and a state or local official.

The audio conference runs from 2 - 3:50 p.m. Eastern Standard Time and offers 2 CPE hours. [Find more information and register.](#)

Fraud Audio Conference Set for March 3

AGA, in conjunction with the National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers and the Association of Local Government Auditors is offering a new audio conference March 3, "The War Against Fraud and Abuse: Are We Winning?" Speaker is **David L. Cotton, CGFM, CPA, CFE**, chairman, Cotton & Company LLP. This session will reveal the answer to who is winning the war on fraud, waste and abuse and introduce a recently published set of protocols that organizations committed to combating fraud can implement and follow. The audio conference, worth 2 CPE hours, is set for 2-3:50 p.m. (EST). [Learn more.](#)

From the National Office

OMB Sets Up Best Practices Website on Reducing Improper Payments

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has established Partner4Solutions.gov to gather solutions and best practices to improve service delivery, payment accuracy, administrative efficiency, and reduce access barriers in federally funded assistance programs. States and local governments are already addressing these issues head-on and have identified many innovative approaches. Partner4Solutions.gov is an opportunity for taxpayers, program participants, and federal, state and local program administrators to provide their input and begin a dialogue to better understand some of the on-the-ground best practices in this area. This website is also a central element in meeting the transparency and collaboration principles of Executive Order 13520, "Reducing Improper Payments and Eliminating Waste in Federal Programs." Please join this effort as a partner by contributing your ideas and solutions at Partner4Solutions.gov.

Economist: Stimulus Critical to Avoiding 'Draconian' State Government Cuts

Mark Zandi, the chief economist for Moody's Economy.com, said Tuesday that additional federal stimulus dollars are crucial to helping state governments avoid Draconian spending cuts and tax increases in the difficult budget year ahead. Reacting to President Obama's call on Congress to boost aid to state and local governments, Zandi said if states do not receive additional federal money, it could slow the recovery, because states would have to cut spending and jobs and raise taxes. "If we're focused on creating jobs, state and local governments are one of the largest employers," he said. "It can't help the job market if we're cutting jobs." --Stephen C. Fehr, *Stateline.org*. [Read more.](#)

States and Localities Encouraged to Embrace New Openness Directive

A directive from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released Tuesday orders federal government agencies to publish "high-value" data sets, launch Web sites for open government, and write agencywide plans that will hardwire transparency into the public process. Federal CIO Vivek Kundra and Federal Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra unveiled the long-awaited Open Government Directive during a [live video chat](#) on Whitehouse.gov. Chopra said the OMB "highly encourages" state and local governments to follow suit with similar transparency directives. "One of the things that we were so proud of when Vivek launched Data.gov was how many state and local governments replicated the model," Chopra said. "We see this as a key pillar of public-sector work—not just within the Obama administration. ... We think, we hope, this will be a helpful tool in support of state and local entrepreneurial activities to promote open government." [A 22-page progress report](#) on open government also was released. —Matt Williams, *Government Technology*. [Read more.](#)

AGA's FMSB Comments on Exposure Drafts by GASB, FASAB



AGA's Financial Management Standards Board (FMSB) has commented on two Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) exposure drafts: a proposal to issue [Suggested Voluntary Guidelines on Reporting of SEA Performance Information](#); and a proposed statement on [Financial Instruments Omnibus](#).



The FMSB also commented on two Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB) exposure drafts on proposed Technical Releases giving implementation guidance on [Equipment Cleanup Costs and Cleanup Costs for Asbestos: Implementation Guidance on Asbestos Cleanup Costs Associated with Facilities](#) and [Installed Equipment and Implementation Guidance on Cleanup Costs Associated with Equipment](#).

New AGA Onsite Training Courses



AGA is introducing several new courses that relate to Internal Audit. They include:

- Building a Productive Audit Team (1 or 2 days)
- Developing Audit Findings (1 day)
- Developing Effective and Efficient Audit Programs (1 day)
- Effective Writing Skills for Accountants and Auditors (1 day)
- The Government Audit: Basic Concepts Through Resolution (5 days)
- Working Papers and Audit Evidence (1 day)

For more pricing and additional information, please [contact Joe Jozefczyk](#), AGA's director of Education, at 800.AGA.7211, ext 307.



Dream. Learn. Achieve... And Get Ready for AGA PDC 2010

Mark your calendar and make plans now to join us in sunny Orlando, Florida for AGA's 59th Annual Professional Development Conference & Exposition-- *the* premier education and networking event for government financial managers and accountability professionals.

Worth 24 CPE hours, the conference covers the latest research and information about the American Recovery Act, the constantly changing rules and standards, new management techniques, technological advances and practical tips for bringing greater efficiency to government operations. The PDC offers a comprehensive program, captivating speakers,

lively discussions, top-quality education sessions, and equips you with knowledge and skills you need to be more effective leader.

While the PDC has long been respected for offering the best training in the profession, it also offers a number of networking events to help you make new contacts, exchange ideas and collaboratively work on solutions to common problems. Exhibitors are also available to demonstrate the newest products, tools and cutting-edge technology available to help your agency achieve its mission.

Registration fees are \$800 for AGA members and \$1,000 for nonmembers until June 11, 2010. Early registration saves you money and increases your chances of obtaining accommodations at the conference hotel.

- [Register Online Now](#)
- [Print Registration Form](#)

Hotel Accommodations: We reserved a block of rooms at the Orlando World Center Marriott to accommodate PDC attendees. The rate is \$108 per night (plus tax) until **June 18, 2010**, or until the room block is sold out. Reservations *received after June 18, or after the room block has been filled, will only be made on a space-available basis, and may be subject to significantly higher rates.*

- To make a reservation, please call the Marriott at 800.621.0638 and mention the "AGA PDC" to receive the discounted rate. You can also [reserve a room online](#).

Information about the agenda, speakers, travel discounts and tours is coming soon. [Stay tuned to the website](#) for more information...See you in Orlando!

AGA Grants Management Training Available

Are you receiving ARRA grant funds and struggling with the accounting and financial requirements? AGA's onsite Grants Management training course may help. The course provides a general overview of grants management, including preparation, review and submittal of proposals; negotiation and acceptance of grants; post-award financial and administrative management; closeout and audit; and relevant compliance issues. For more details about this and other AGA-sponsored training courses, including pricing and availability, please contact AGA Education Director [Joe Jozefczyk](#) at 800.AGA.7211, ext. 307, or [Lynn Hoffman](#) at ext. 342



Let AGA Transport You to New Horizons in Networking

Did you know that you and your chapter can stay connected with AGA through Facebook? With AGA members of all career levels and backgrounds embracing the growing trend of online networking, AGA is increasing its presence on sites like Facebook.

[The AGA page on Facebook](#) keeps its subscriber base current with a feed of recent financial management news, upcoming events and articles, plus photos and announcements.

Facebook is one of the premier networking sites on the Web, allowing users to join networks organized by city, workplace, interests and region to connect and interact with other people. As the New Year approaches we look to new ways to engage members. As leaders in the AGA community, we encourage you to become a fan of AGA on Facebook today. With your support, we hope to grow AGA's Facebook fan page to well over 1,000 members in 2010.

So, get online today to check out AGA on Facebook to see what's new at your professional Association. Get exclusive content, find friends, view photos and much more!

Important Reminder for CGFMs Certified in 1994, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 or 2007

We are almost at the end of the year--have you earned your 80 CPE hours?

If your CGFM certification was awarded in 1994, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 or 2007, you need to have at least 80 Continuing Professional Education (CPE) hours earned within the two-year period of **Jan. 1, 2008 - Dec. 31, 2009**. If short of the requirement, you can take advantage of the grace period of **Jan. 1 - March 31, 2010** to catch up on your CPEs. These hours cannot be counted toward your next cycle of 2010-2011. [Read more.](#)



<p>Executive Committee</p> <p>President Heath Wolfe HUD/OIG 312/ 913-8674 wwolfe@hudoig.gov</p> <p>President – Elect Vacant</p> <p>Past President Raul Nieto ED/OIG 312/ 730-1634 raul.nieto@ed.gov</p> <p>Secretary Sandy Lawera HHS/OIG 312/ 353-3144 Sandy.Lawera@oig.hhs.gov</p> <p>Treasurer Thomas DiLisio DOL 312/ 596-5454 Dilisio.thomas@dol.gov</p> <p>Meetings Director Vacant</p> <p>Program Director Kate Bercaw-Hartl HUD/OIG 312/ 913-8489 KBercawHartl@hudoig.gov</p>	<p>Membership Director Janet Knauff RRB/OIG 312/ 751-4683 Janet.Knauff@rrb.gov</p> <p>Newsletter Editor Alexandria Hayden HHS/OIG 312/ 353-3033 Alexandria.Hayden@oig.hhs.gov</p> <p>Historian Aníbal Marrero HHS/OIG 312/ 353-3029 Anibal.marrero@oig.hhs.gov</p> <p>Education Director Frank Moy GSA/OIG 312/ 353-7781, Ext. 112 franklin.moy@gsa.gov</p> <p>Website Director Mark Knudson RRB/ OIG 312/ 751-4764 mark.knudson@rb.gov</p> <p>Community Service Director Tom McManigal HUD/OIG 312/ 913-8035 tmcmanigal@hudoig.gov</p>	<p>CGFM Raul Nieto ED/OIG 312/ 730-1634 raul.nieto@ed.gov</p> <p>Early Careers Coordinator Jolanta Biskup ED/OIG 312/ 730-1619 Jolanta.biskup@ed.gov</p> <p>Job Referral Rick Urbanowski HUD/OIG 312/ 913-8492 rurbanowski@hudoig.gov</p> <p>Publicity Director Olga Gesell HHS/OIG 312/ 353-7907 Olga.Gesell@oig.hhs.gov</p> <p>Awards Director Zakia Haneef HUD/OIG 312/ 913-8693 zhaneef@hudoig.gov</p> <p>Chapter Recognition Rick Urbanowski HUD/OIG 312/ 913-8492 rurbanowski@hudoig.gov</p>
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Newsletter Information

Observations is the monthly newsletter of the Chicago Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants (AGA). Observations is published six times each year. Subscriptions to Observations may only be obtained by joining AGA. This is the fifth edition of Observations for the **2009-2010** chapter year. To submit material for upcoming issues, contact Alexandria Hayden at 312/353-3033 (phone) or 312/353-3814 (FAX). **The deadline for submissions to upcoming issues is the second Friday of each month. To update delivery information, contact Alexandria Hayden at 312/353-3033.** If you are not receiving the Chicago Chapter Newsletter electronically, please send your current e-mail address to: Alexandria.Hayden@oig.hhs.gov