



Message from the Executive Director

But first – *My wife was shaking her head, again. Last night I made a chicken salad, apparently, they prefer grain!*

We're coming back from our recent Board Retreat and venue tour in Calgary with a lot of excitement for the year ahead. We've locked in the dates for the 2026 GFOA Alberta Conference and we're shaking things up! Next year, we'll be starting on a Tuesday and wrapping up on a Friday (May 19–22, 2026), giving you more time at the start of your week before diving into the networking, learning, and connections our conference is known for.

We are also considering having a session(s) Tuesday morning with golf taking place in the afternoon. Trying to maximize CPD credits for those that need them! We're also talking to new potential partners, both for the conference and for professional development to ensure we keep bringing fresh perspectives, high-value content, and innovative ways to support

municipal finance officers across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and beyond. The Calgary 2026 conference will provide room for 45 exhibitors, (new high for us) we anticipate space will be sold out quickly based on last year's participation and waiting list. We strive to ensure that we have a variety of industries represented at the trade show and expect 2026 will be no different.

On the PD front, the momentum continues to build with our new [PD Insider](#) newsletter. If you haven't subscribed yet, I encourage you to do so as it's the easiest way to stay informed on learning opportunities without missing a beat.

And here's some news worth repeating: webinars are now only \$88 and just one hour in length.

That means more accessible, focused learning that saves you both time and money; while still delivering the practical, relevant insights you expect from GFOA Alberta. I encourage you to enroll or have your staff enroll in these upcoming webinars and provide feedback for us to continually improve and meet the needs of our members and all attending these sessions.

Additionally, we will be sending our survey out to all members for feedback to help shape future service delivery. I appreciate in advance you taking the time to review and answer as it is quick and extremely valuable to us.

The year ahead is shaping up to be one of growth, connection, and value for our members.

I hope you'll be part of it every step of the way.

Rick Wojtkiw, Executive Director

Featured Article by Vivid Reports

We're proud to feature an article this month from our **Sponsor Partner, Vivid Reports**. Their insights and innovations help finance teams work smarter, not harder and we love being able to bring you perspectives straight from our partners.



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5 Tips to Strengthen Municipal Budget

Preparation and Process Municipal finance teams face unique challenges: balancing multiple funds, aligning with council priorities, engaging stakeholders, and delivering transparent reporting. Strengthening the budget process isn't just about balancing numbers, it's about creating clarity, efficiency, and trust. Here are five practical tips that can help municipal budget teams improve preparation and execution.

1. Start with Clear Strategic Priorities

Budgets should reflect the community's strategic direction. Before crunching numbers, ensure alignment with council-approved goals and long-term plans. Municipalities often work within different budgeting models—Service-Based, Gross Expenditure/Revenue-Based, Net-Based, and Departmental-Based. No matter which model is used, connecting budget requests to broader priorities such as infrastructure, safety, or sustainability helps decision-makers see how spending directly supports community needs.

2. Build Collaboration Across Departments

Municipal budgets span every department, from public works to recreation. Engaging department heads early in the process helps identify realistic forecasts, prevents duplicated requests, and builds ownership in managing approved budgets. Cross-department collaboration ensures the budget reflects the true needs of the entire organization.

3. Automate Data Consolidation and Reporting

Manual spreadsheets slow the process, increase the risk of error, and drain valuable time. Automating data consolidation and reporting reduces manual effort while giving finance teams confidence in their numbers. This is particularly valuable when managing multi-fund accounting or rolling up budgets across departments.

4. Incorporate Scenario Planning

Uncertainty is part of every municipal budget, whether it's changes in grant funding, tax revenues, or unexpected costs. Scenario planning equips municipalities to face future challenges and seize opportunities with confidence. This builds trust and ensures leaders can respond quickly to shifting realities.

5. Enhance Transparency and Engagement

Budgets aren't just internal documents. They are shared with citizens, council, and auditors. Clear reports that communicate spending priorities and revenue challenges help build understanding and trust. Transparent communication reduces friction during council debates and strengthens public confidence in municipal decisions.

What you'll learn:

- ✓ Why data conversion is one of the top ERP risks & how to avoid mistakes
- ✓ The myth of "lift and shift" and what to do instead
- ✓ Conversion vs. migration, key differences that impact your project
- ✓ Common data challenges and how to overcome them
- ✓ Best practices for scoping, cleansing, and assigning data ownership
- ✓ Steps you can start today even before vendor selection

When: Wednesday, September 10, 10:00–11:00 AM

Where: Online

Price: \$85 Members | \$99 Non-Members

Don't leave your ERP project to chance, get the tools, terminology, and checklist to start planning now.

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Demand, watch when it fits your schedule, still earn your CPD credits, and keep your skills sharp year-round.

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