

Annual Comprehensive Financial Reporting Best Practices

Thursday, November 7, 2024 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (ET)



PRESENTED BY

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Today's Conversation

- Introduction
- Understanding ACFR and its purpose
- GFOA's research on the sentiment of financial reporting
- The role of technology in alleviating immediate challenges







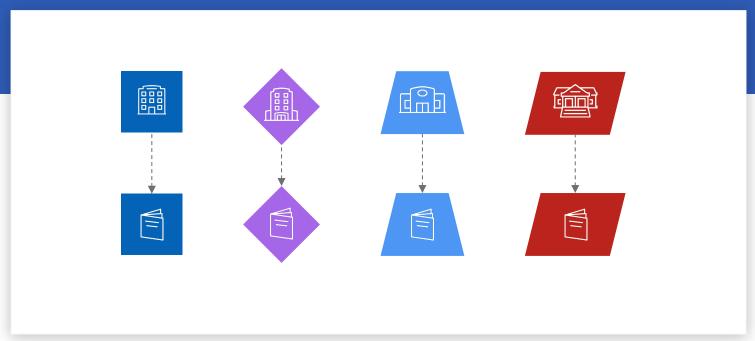
Partnership

Over 1,200+ local governments use ClearGov, including 200 county governments across the country (18 in New York)

We believe that every community desires and deserves a county government that is empowered to work as effectively and efficiently as possible.

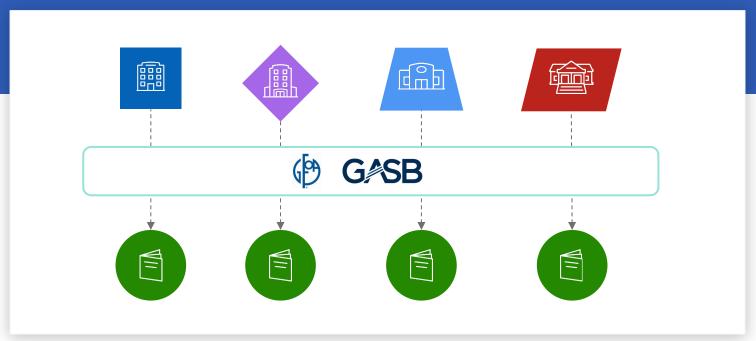
ACFR Was Born From a Need for Transparency and Consistency





ACFR Was Born From a Need for Transparency and Consistency





GASB and GFOA's Acts as the Backbone to ACFR Guidance and Regulation



GASB sets the standards governing the content of an ACFR.

 GASB issued Statement No. 34 in 1999, which introduced the requirement for the MD&A as a key component of government financial statements, including the ACFR.



The GFOA plays a significant role in supporting the GASB standards for an ACFR.

- Promotes best practices
- Provides extensive training to help financial officers understand GASB standards
- Issues Certificate of Excellence awards to entities that produce ACFRs aligned with GASB standards
- Provides feedback to GASB on suggested changes to ACFR standards

Who the ACFR Serves

Finance Team



Internal Team

Finance, Department Head



Auditors

External, independent auditing firms.

Core Audience



General Public



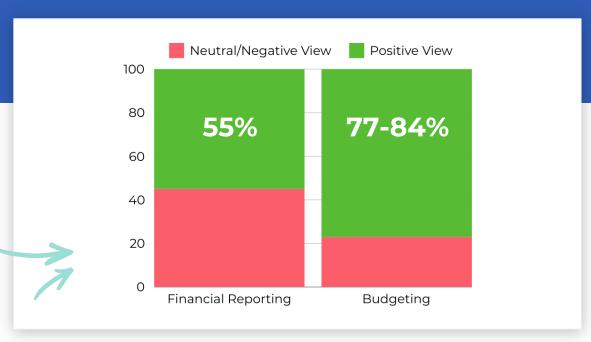
Government Debt Buyers



Elected & Appointed Officials

A GFOA Survey Shines Light on Why Financial Reporting Needs to Evolve





The Public Has Trouble Understanding and Finding Value in ACFR



The Public



Government Debt Buyers



Elected & Appointed Officials

"Why GFOA is Rethinking Financial Reporting" found:

- Difficulty in understanding financial reports for the public was a common theme in the free-form comments
- 60% respondents believed the public has "little or no interest" in financial reporting

Bond Buyer's See a Decline in the Relevance of ACFR Data



The Public

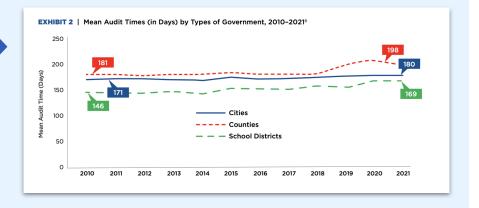


Government Debt Buyers



Elected & Appointed Officials

The relevance of the data is time-sensitive and the mean audit times have increased over time.



Elected Officials Have Only Partial Interest in ACFR



The Public



Government Debt Buyers



Elected & Appointed Officials

- 95% of elected officials are interested in understanding if their organization gets a clean audit. However, there isn't much interest in the other sections.
- Of the 11 elements in the ACFR, only 4% of those surveyed believed their elected board would have a general interest in 8+ elements.

The Time Investment isn't Paying Off for Public Finance Officials



Internal Team Only

Those who build ACFRs in-house are confronted with:

- Trust in Accuracy
- Data Consistency
- Collaboration Challenges
- Inefficient collection of information from various stakeholders
 Cumbersome Consolidation

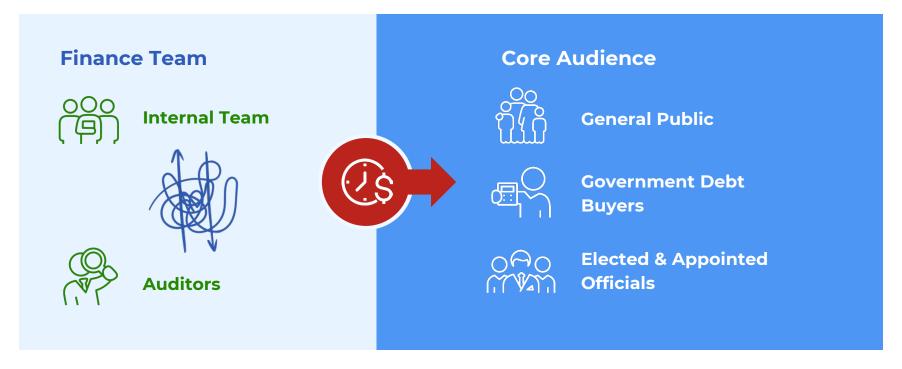
ACFR Creation Through Auditors is Helpful but Still Time Intensive for Public Finance Officials



Those that build ACFRs with auditors are confronted with

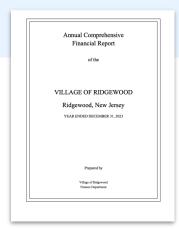
- Inefficient Collaboration
- Deadline Stress

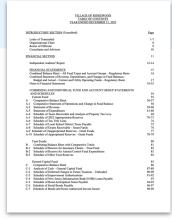
The longer the report preparation, the less likely respondents find financial reporting valuable

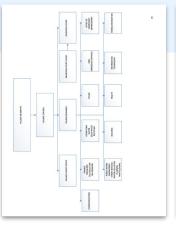


How can we rethink financial reporting?

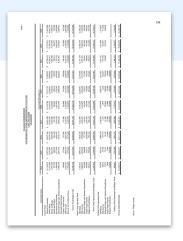
Village of Ridgewood, New Jersey - ACFR











Title Page

TOC

Org Chart

Financial Statement Example

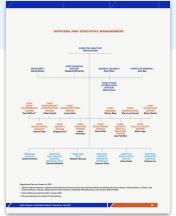
Statistical Section Example

- Table of contents is not clickable and doesn't match PDF page numbers in the browser
- Many pages are horizontal making it difficult to read online

Port Authority NY NJ – ACFR











Title Page

TOC

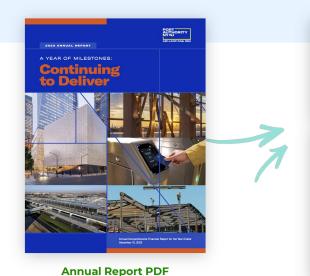
Org Chart

Financial Section Example

Statistical Section Example

- Clickable table of contents for easier navigation
- Consistent and clear formatting

Port Authority NY NJ Brand Alignment

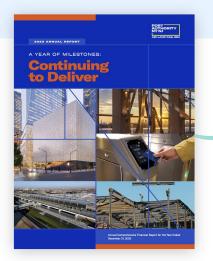






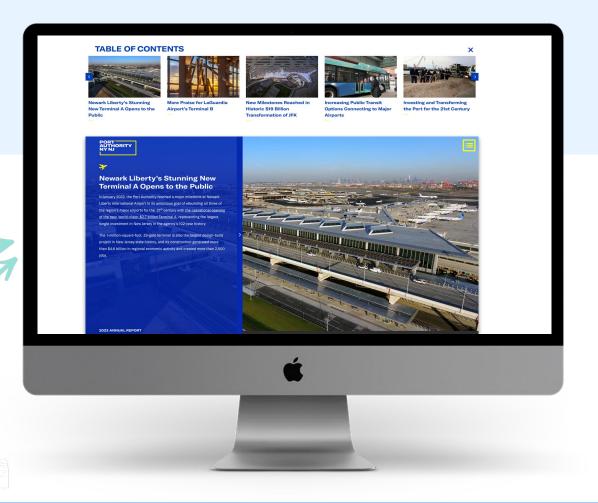
Annual report aligns with overall branding.

Port Authority NY NJ Interactive Website

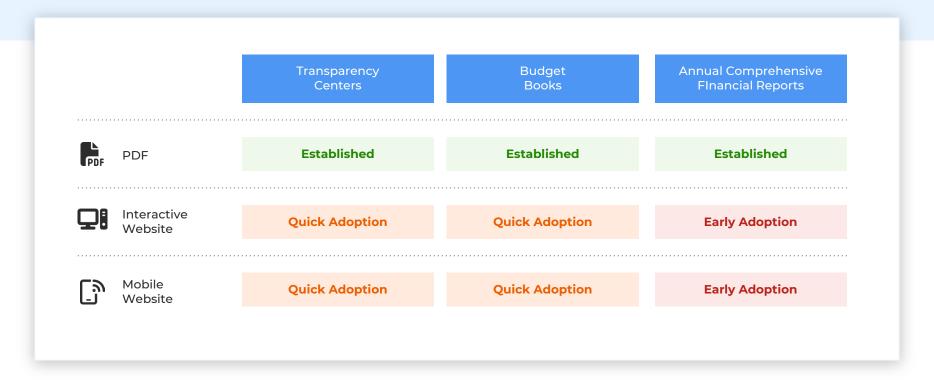


Annual Report PDF

Interactive web-based version of Annual Report



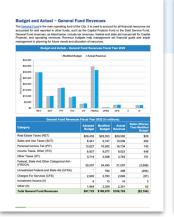
Financial Storytelling Continues to Adopt Online Formats to Meet Stakeholders' Needs

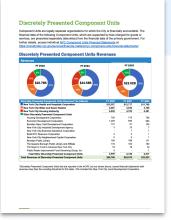


Rethinking Financial Reporting with Compelling Visuals





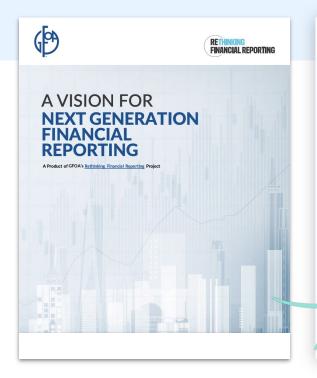






Create custom charts, infographics, and graphs can enhance any page of your ACFR, making your financial information more digestible and engaging for readers.

The Core Purpose of ACFR



"The purpose of local government is not to generate profits or returns for shareholders.

Unlike a private firm, financial performance measures are not enough for defining value.

Value of government must be measured by what it produces for the public, such as quality infrastructure and public services."

"Can financial reporting be made lean?"





Purpose-Built to Streamline the ACFR Process

Purpose

ClearGov's Digital Financial Reporting solution is purpose-built to **streamline the ACFR process.**

It empowers local governments to minimize errors, enhance collaboration, and present financial information with clarity.

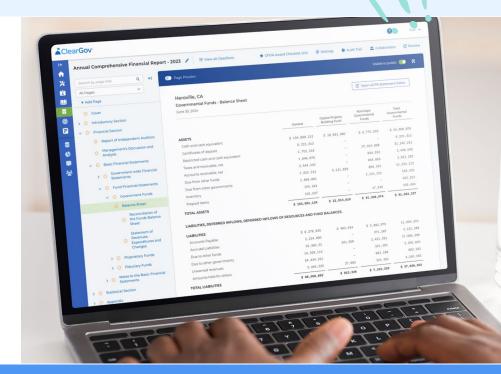
Digital ACFR Meets Evolving GASB Standards While Staying Award-Worthy

Keeping Up with GASB Standards

Leverage automated templates and workflows to ensure that your reports meet the latest GASB requirements.

Follow a GFOA Award Checklist

Meet and exceed the criteria for the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (COA) Program.



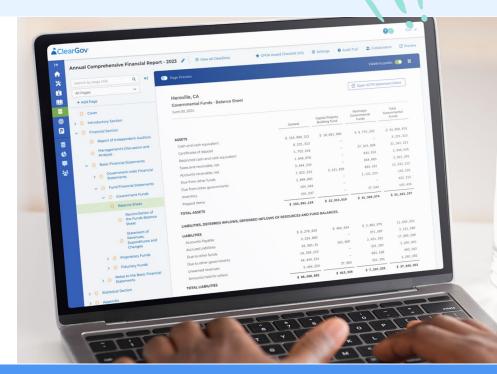
Digital ACFR Enhances Stakeholder Communication

ADA Compliance

Create ADA-compliant reports ensuring that everyone—including those with disabilities—can access and understand your financial reports

Dynamic Website

Turn your ACFR into an interactive website or a shareable PDF for effortless communication and accessibility.



Digital ACFR Saves Your Team Time

Effortless Statement Builder

Simplify ACFR creation and save time with pre-built templates. Ditch tedious Excel struggles and formatting frustrations and build your ACFR in record time.

Intuitive Mapping Workflow

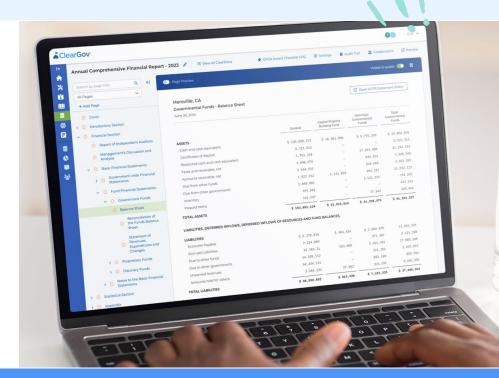
Streamline financial statement preparation with intelligent mapping. Effortlessly link your data sources and ensure consistency throughout.

Collaboration Across Departments

Centralize communication between teams and auditors, accelerate approvals, and ensure ADA compliance with our cloud software.

Stay Updated with Dynamic Figures

Save time with dynamic figures that update automatically throughout your ACFR as source data changes.





Thank You!



