



Canadian Association of Government Finance Officers



CAGFO Develops NEW PD Opportunities

Greetings Members and belated Happy New Year!

With early 2022 still presenting covid impacts to our personal and work lives, we find ourselves balancing remaining concerns and restrictions with increasing optimism for better, healthier times. At CAGFO, we continue to adapt to these uncertainties and find new ways to support our membership. We are finalizing decisions for our annual fall conference and anticipate being able to share news on that front in the next few weeks.

Members will also have seen a series of new CAGFO hosted Virtual CPD Seminars as well as Virtual Webinars presented by our valued Sponsors. We also offer a few On Demand Presentations to watch at your convenience. Information on all can be found on our [website](#) and in our weekly emails.

Also recently launched, is our new "Refer a Colleague" program which thanks referring members of new members with a credit to an upcoming Virtual Seminar of their choice. Details can be found [here](#).

We have been updating the look of our website



with new features such as our new Events Calendar which can be found [here](#).

Your opinion is always valued and you do not need to wait for a membership survey or post event survey to contribute your feedback. Contact our office anytime if you have suggestions, inquiries, concerns or would like to get involved.

Lastly, we invite you to follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

Stay well and stay tuned for our Conference 2022 announcement.

Sheila McFadyen
Executive Director

FEBRUARY 2022

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UPCOMING FREE WEBINARS

ESG: Aligning Value and Values in Government
 Shelley Gilberg, Title: Partner, ESG Markets Leader Canada
 March 2, 2022 1:00pm ET – 2:00pm ET

The world is changing, and with it, the way we think about environmental, social and governance (ESG). Perhaps the biggest transformational opportunity of our time, ESG can't be an add-on. It must be part of your organization's overall strategy. Join us for our session where we will explore what this means for Canadian public sector organizations and how you can align your values and value through ESG.

[REGISTER FREE HERE](#)

Payment Preference Trends
 Albert Lang, Vice President, Payment & Card Services
 March 16, 2022 1:00pm ET – 2:00pm ET

Are there ways to make paying bills and taxes a little less painful for your constituents? Recent research suggests there are. This presentation takes attendees through recent survey findings to identify pain points and service gaps in the way governments and other organizations collect payments. Learn about what frustrates Canadians most about the payment experience and what you can do about it.

[REGISTER FREE HERE](#)

PSAB UPDATE: Making your voice heard

“The impact of Covid-19 cannot be ignored by any corner of society – even standard setting”

Clyde MacLellan, FCPA, FCA, PSAB Chair



Due to the pandemic, the last couple of years have been unprecedented. It can be argued that no industry has remained untouched by change, and this includes public sector accounting.

The Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) views change as an opportunity and continues its work alongside stakeholders in serving the public interest.

An important example of this collaboration in the public interest is the Board-established [Public Sector Accounting Discussion Group \(the Discussion Group\)](#).

The Discussion Group’s purpose is to help the PSAB understand issues arising on the application of the Public Sector Accounting (PSA) Handbook, and other concerns including emerging topics related to public sector financial reporting.

The Discussion Group does not issue pronouncements or interpretations of

standards; however, submissions are discussed publicly, helping those thinking through similar issues in their jurisdiction or entity.

Get Involved

The PSA DG meets two times a year. This year’s first meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 12, 2022, and will be accessible via livestream in English and through simultaneous translation in French.

Get involved by:

1. Submitting an issue or agenda item for the PSA DG’s consideration by March 14, 2022.
2. [Registering](#) for our next meeting as an observer.

For information on our past meeting discussions, [read](#) our meeting reports.

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SPONSORSHIP & ADVERTISING RATE CARD

Connect with thousands of government financial officers across Canada!

The Canadian Association of Government Finance Officers (CAGFO), is one of the oldest organizations representing thousands of government finance officers across Canada. CAGFO is a professional association representing Federal, Provincial, Municipal, First Nations, Inuit and Metis finance officers and teams. CAGFO is pleased to announce a new

Sponsorship and Advertising Rate Card for 2022. Opportunities include exposure on the CAGFO website, email campaigns, quarterly newsletters, webinars, seminars and of course - the 2022 Conference Sponsorship opportunities will be available soon! Opportunities start at only \$175.00! We can also build to suit for a mutual win-win opportunity. Please [click here](#) to view the full rate card or contact Sheila McFadyen at execdir@cagfo.ca.



Taking the Stress Out of Government Financial Reporting



Government accounting reports serve as a key link between governments and the citizens they serve. These documents are their opportunity to showcase their work on key initiatives and programs.

The reporting process, however, has traditionally been one fraught with stress. Accuracy is an absolute must, as incorrect figures and omissions in reporting can result in regulatory compliance violations that can involve thousands of dollars in fines for governments and individual leaders.

Fortunately, today there are flexible, comprehensive and automated software solutions that eliminate these long-standing worries. Let's look at three key features of these offerings.

Automation

Precision with figures is the hallmark of a successful report. The traditional approach to ensuring accuracy involves spending inordinate amounts of time pouring over all figures to ensure everything balances out. It is based on checking, re-checking, and even checking again to ensure accuracy. And let's not forget the need to replicate the final numbers across multiple spreadsheets and report sections.

Automation software eliminates much of this type of tedious work. Solutions like those from CaseWare instantly calculate elements such as adjustments, rounded figures and accruals to save time and ensure consistency.

Additionally, any rounding errors are automatically identified to achieve

agreement across all areas of reports. The correct numbers are then automatically updated throughout all documents, eliminating the need for manual data entry of the same figures over and over again.

Real-Time Collaboration

Finance officers, accountants and the many other employees involved in a government's accounting processes need to work together to get the results that civic leaders and citizens demand. But when hard-to-use and disconnected software systems hinder teams' ability to share files, communicate with each other and keep projects moving toward completion, the result is often lost time, unnecessary frustration and costly inaccuracies.

Modern software delivers real-time, seamless collaboration that lets all team members work on the same files simultaneously. This means no more "checking in" and "checking out" documents. Real-time synchronization eliminates the need to manually compare everyone's spreadsheets and integrate all updates.

A common interface acts as a central hub for all documents that make up a report or statement. Everyone can rest easy knowing that there is the proverbial "single source of truth" to reference, rather than multiple, inconsistent versions that characterized the old approach.

Putting the Report Together

No report is created in an entirely linear fashion. Change happens, and every twist and turn has to be incorporated. With modern software, once a page is added to a report, its page number and title are

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instantly reflected in the Table of Contents. All other pages that now have a new page number are also updated in the blink of an eye.

These solutions also feature convenient drag-and-drop capabilities and familiar tree structures to keep everything neatly organized. The software also makes certain there are no spelling errors and all headers, footers and references are consistent.

To start your journey to simplified public-sector reporting, [explore the benefits of CaseWare Government Financial Reporting](#).

New Member Sign Up Form Now available!

Joining CAGFO is now even easier! Just click here to enter your information for application approval. Be sure to include all of your details; understanding who our members are helps us provide the best products and services to our membership. CAGFO is the voice of government finance officers across Canada – [join us today](#) with FREE membership!

BRONZE SPONSORS



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PARTNERS



CASEWARE

Simplify Your Financial Reporting Experience

Analytics, compliance and automated reporting in one government solution

[EXPLORE NOW](#)

UPCOMING FREE WEBINARS

Do You Have the Right Tools to Meet Changing Budget Needs?

Charlie Francis, Senior Consultant, Questica
April 27, 2022 1:00pm ET – 2:00pm ET



Even the most effective budgeting approach can grow outdated. As technology develops and your budgeting needs change, it can become more difficult to use old budgeting tools to solve new problems. Over time, you might discover that your current budgeting methods no longer deliver what you need. Learn exactly how to audit your current budgeting tools. [REGISTER FREE HERE](#)

How Mississauga's Lean Program is Embracing Change During the Pandemic

The City of Mississauga has a long history of examining its services to ensure they are being delivered efficiently and effectively, and has established cost containment strategies as a key priority of its annual Business Planning and Budget process. The City has undertaken several reviews of its services, and since 2009, Service Areas have been committed to reducing their respective operating budgets by 1% each year. The cumulative savings of this program have saved \$68.4 million to date without impacts to service levels. To support these objectives, the City's Lean Program was established in 2016 following a small pilot, with the goal of strengthening the culture of continuous improvement across the organization.

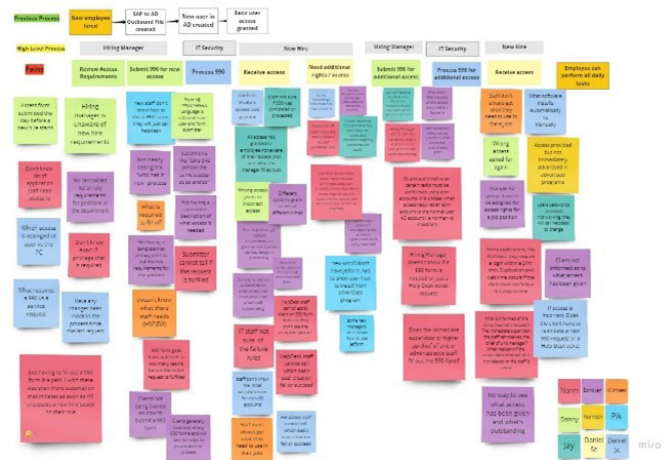
When the Pandemic Hits

Employees were asked to work from home and change the way we provide services. Many services and communications shifted to "appointment-only" mode or electronic service delivery. Depending on the service areas, the demand had dramatically increased (e.g. the emergency responses team) whereas other services were put on-hold (e.g. community services). As a result, staff working in different business-units responded differently to the situation, being:

- Engaged and involved- viewed Lean methodology as a key tool and approach to re-engineer processes in order to continuously improve the operations of the City.
- Disengaged and uninterested- wanted to avoid "Lean" altogether. These are either change averse individuals or those who don't fully understand Lean.
- Shifted-focus onto emergency response only.

Staff's Responses

At first, Project Leads were hesitant and unsure of how to facilitate team collaboration without being physically present in one space. Even with some new virtual communication tools in place such as Webex, there was a learning curve for most to learn to use these tools to the best of our advantage. Some project leads explored other interactive collaboration tools such as Miro and Mural, essentially trying to replicate a whiteboard with sticky notes in an effort to encourage team engagement in their projects.



As collaboration shifted to the virtual space, our team-based problem-solving activities and habits have changed, such as:

- holding Virtual Gemba walks when possible
- working with more frequent but shorter working team meetings in a virtual environment
- assigning team members with pre- and post-session tasks helps to maintain steady progress

Some Emerging Themes based on the improvements:

- Focus on reducing dependence on paper
- The need to make customer facing services available, either electronically (such as receiving applications, accepting payments, etc.) or with physical safety measures in place such as certain court operations.
- A shift towards reducing waste of motion and transportation (with virtual tools available)
- Creating standard work and templates

Leaders, similar to project leads, were hesitant at first as they focussed on helping their staff cope with the new working environment. While others were strictly engaged in emergency response management.

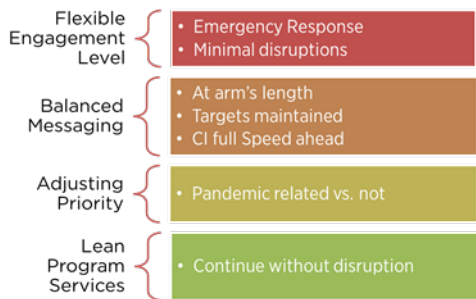
For the *Lean Champions*, it was challenging to encourage continuous improvement of their colleagues with their limited knowledge and experience with virtual collaboration technology.

While we were able to kick start most of our projects, some were not able to continue due to the nature of the projects and the project lead’s priority during the pandemic.

Lean Program’s Responses

Lean Program During the Pandemic

Success Criteria



Flexible Engagement

It was critical that the Lean program can continue to provide the support and training for business improvement. To be successful, we need to be flexible focus on adapting our engagement levels with the business unit’s needs and support change requirements. We adjusted our approach based on each individual business unit’s circumstances. For instance, all the emergency-response related divisions (Fire, IT, Enforcement, Communications, FPM, HR) were given some space as they focused on managing the emergency, while other divisions which had minimal disruption were encouraged and supported to take on improvement opportunities that would not have had the time to address otherwise.

Balanced our messaging

We Balanced our messaging to our divisions- “here is the time for making improvement” (i.e. no reason to stop

Continuous Improvement effort) vs. “you have a fire to fight, we will worry about the improvement targets later” (i.e. “do what you need to do first, we can talk later”).

Adjusting Priority (COVID-related vs. not)

Some projects got expedited because they had a direct impact on customer service or operations during COVID, while other projects were put on hold such as those related to pools or recreation centre operations.

How Did We Do It

Based on the above guiding principles, we have made adjustments to the Lean Program by leveraging the existing Lean infrastructures:

Lean Champions and Roundtables

Lean Champions are Lean practitioners at large within the COM. The Lean Roundtable provides support for the local Lean ambassadors to help drive and coordinate improvement delivery.

Staff and Lean champions are enabled to drive Lean improvements and be self-sustainable on their continuous improvement journey with internal resources including case studies, program statistics, tools, how-to guides and templates.

During the pandemic, the Lean Office continued with the quarterly check-ins with the Lean Champions. This served as a venue to gauge the temperature of our departments and divisions which in turn helped with the Lean Office’s tailored response. It will continue to be one of the main channels to draw alignment and opportunities as the City navigates through the situation.

Improvement targets & Project Delivery

Small Improvement targets remains unchanged, with messaging tailored to each division based on their engagement level.

In other words, we are holding everyone accountable to the agreed improvement targets and there is no reason to change the targets unless the business unit is supporting the emergency response. Nonetheless, the message was to realign improvement efforts to support the current needs as a result of the pandemic and take into account the

post-pandemic circumstances. On-going projects might be paused while expediting others that are deemed to be more critical in the current situation.

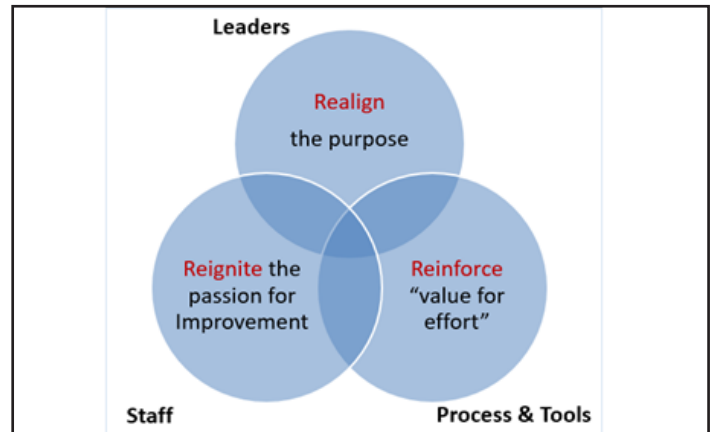
Lean Training and Development

A number of tactics have been deployed to ensure staff receive their training in a timely manner and to grow Lean capacity within the City. Staff is seeking for flexibility and self-paced services with the growing mental-demand during the pandemic.

- **White Belt Training:** Introduction to Lean Training was converted from in-class to virtual training (a combination of e-learning modules and virtual instructor-led session) in 3 months. The hybrid model is more flexible and supports future deployment for staff who work in non-standard shift environments.
- **Certified Lean Innovation Practitioner (CLIP) Program:** The City of Mississauga Lean Program offers an internal program to recognize City staff who are engaged in self-directed Lean learning, apply Lean thinking to improve their business process, and are committed to continuous improvement. CLIP is a self-paced program offering an alternate stream in addition to the Yellow Belt training for staff to be requalified inprogram to recognize City staff who are engaged in self-directed Lean learning, apply Lean thinking to improve their business process, and are committed to continuous improvement. CLIP is a self-paced program offering an alternate stream in addition to the Yellow Belt training for staff to be requalified in applying for the Green Belt Certificationprogram. Ultimately, belt-training programs should not be a bottleneck nor the sole driving force for making improvements.

What's Next?

The pandemic is not over yet, and this ever-changing environment will continue to evolve. In combating the growing fatigue and fast-changing priorities while making improvements progress, the City's Lean Program needs on-going calibration as the organization matures and adapts to the changes.

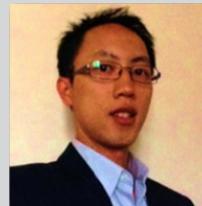


In the coming year, the City's Lean Program is prepared to refocus on the following areas:

- Realign the purpose for decision.
- Reignite the passion for continuous improvement.
- Reinforce "value for effort".

Want to Know More?

For more information about the City of Mississauga's Lean Program, contact:



Kenneth Leung, Manager, Lean Program at Kenneth.Leung@mississauga.ca.



3 Ways to Transform your Government Budgeting in 2022



Behind a global pandemic, many governments are realizing that traditional budget creation methods are slow, inefficient, and outdated. Outdated software programs can be difficult to manage at scale.

Even if budgeting platforms still work after years of use, their efficiency can steeply decline as solutions age.

Fortunately, emerging technology can help governments keep better track of the financial data they need. Slow data entry, communication breakdowns and missed deadlines — all results of an outdated budgeting process — are quickly becoming a thing of the past.

Governments that embrace new budget-oriented technology can improve financial recordkeeping and reporting in many ways. Among other important benefits, governments can vastly improve their scenario planning, forecast budgeting and ongoing budget execution processes after implementing new technology.

Scenario planning — No matter a government’s size or scope, scenario planning is vital in helping governments respond to a variety of potential situations. Traditionally, governments would spend a great deal of time running calculations about many different “what if” scenarios. Fortunately, technology has revolutionized the scenario planning process.

Thanks to modern budgeting software platforms, governments can carry out scenario planning in a much more effective manner.

Public opinion, improvements in technology, new policies and other factors can all affect budget performance — even after budgets have been finalized. Budgeting software can save governments weeks of time by consolidating the scenario planning process from what may previously have been managed across several disconnected tools into a single source of truth. Governments that complete scenario planning through technology are already prepared for any number of outcomes.

Forecast budgeting — Provincial and municipal governments alike depend on forecast budgeting to visualize the future before it arrives. Unlike scenario planning — which determines outcomes for a wide variety of possibilities — forecast budgeting helps governments plan for the short and long-term future according to their team’s best estimates. These estimates are not guesses; they are the result of analysts’ understanding of current realities, combined with trends drawn from readily available historical data.

While short-term forecast budgeting might be possible without robust software, long-term forecast budgeting can be difficult, even impossible, with the use of Excel alone. That’s why government finance departments are consistently opting for cloud-based budgeting software. Programs with the means to forecast five, even ten years into the future can help governments make plans well into the future.

Ongoing budget execution — A well-oiled budget process requires input from different government departments. Research teams might identify new community needs. Leadership teams approve budgets and report plans to the public. Together, this process represents ongoing budget execution.

Ongoing budget execution in the government sector is simplified through modern technology, which allows multiple stakeholders to communicate while sharing a single data source available to every team member in real time. Cloud security keeps all budget materials safe during this collaboration process and allows teams to access their files from any connected location.

Budget execution, forecasting and scenario planning represent only the beginning of technology-informed government budgeting. Provincial and municipal governments can stay ahead of the curve by implementing modern technology to create smarter, faster, automated budget plans in 2022 and beyond.

Learn more about [Questica](https://questica.com), a solution that can help simplify government budgeting.

CAGFO PD OPPORTUNITIES

Asset Management Fundamentals

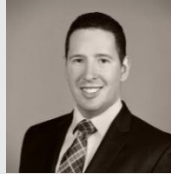


Jude Pillainayagam, MBA, P. Eng., FEC, MIAM
 March 8 – 9, 2022
 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM ET CPD hours: 8
 \$390 plus tax Members
 \$470 plus tax Non-members

This course shatters myths about asset management and helps participants gain a complete understanding of the relationship between asset management elements and the organization's big picture through the eyes of a financial professional. It also aids in gaining skills to develop asset management governance frameworks and policies, sustainable funding model, and performance measures required for a financial professional to monitor and report asset management economics and sustainability. For more info, please [click here](#).

[Register Here](#)

Advanced Excel Reporting



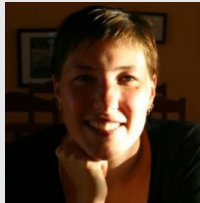
Jeff Cook CPA, CA, CITP, Instructor
 Tuesday March 22, 2022
 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM ET CPD hours: 4
 \$315 plus tax Members
 \$375 plus tax Non-members

In this seminar, you will learn how to use Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) and Online Analytic Processing (OLAP) to connect Excel to external data sources, such as your accounting software database, to extract data for reporting and analysis. You will also learn how to incorporate PivotTables into your reporting routines, including how to add calculations to your PivotTables, how to group PivotTable data into fiscal reporting periods, and how to filter your PivotTables using Slicers.

[Register Here](#)

Building a Municipal Ethics Program

Jill Inget, Director of Corporate Ethics, BC
 Public Service Agency
 March 29, 2022
 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM ET CPD hours: 1
 \$115 plus tax Members
 \$140 plus tax Non-members



Do you need an ethics program? This session will explore the foundations of an ethics program, and why it is beneficial to think about ethics at work. During this session, participants will learn about different elements of ethics programs and help identify the first steps in creating a program for their municipality. The session will also include information about measurement and reporting on ethics-related activities – why this is important and how it will help in developing the program and shape culture in the future.

[Register Here](#)

Pivot Tables for Accountants

Dave Greene CPB, MCSE, MCT, Instructor,
 K2E Canada Inc.
 April 5, 2022
 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM ET CPD hours: 4
 \$315 plus tax Members
 \$375 plus tax Non-members



With a little information, guidance, and demonstration from the instructor, you will be ready to begin using PivotTables to accomplish routine analysis and reporting. This seminar will begin with basic PivotTables and progress to advanced PivotTable topics.

[Register Here](#)

Communicating in a Virtual, In person and Hybrid Workplace

Sue Wazny, MSc, Dip. Leadership, CRC
 April 7, 2022
 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM ET CPD hours: 2
 \$235 plus tax Members
 \$280 plus tax Non-members

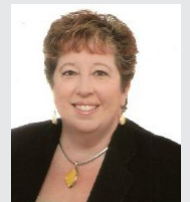


Communication takes on a whole new meaning when you are not face to face. Team members need to understand the channels of communication available and then choose the right channel for the tasks at hand. In this presentation, participants will learn strategies and skills to adapt to working remotely while remaining as an intact team.

[Register Here](#)

Budgeting and Forecasting

Karen Granville, Hons. BMath, Senior
 Associate, K2E Canada Inc.
 April 19 & 20, 2022
 11:00 AM – 3:30 PM ET CPD hours: 7
 \$390 plus tax Members
 \$470 plus tax Non-members



Are your budgeting and forecasting processes working as well for you as they should? Probably not, as many organizations report that budgeting and forecasting activities consume tremendous amounts of time and yield only marginal benefits. In this course, you will learn how to achieve a greater return on your budgeting and forecasting activities by taking advantage of various tools and techniques available in today's market.

[Register Here](#)

Legal Risks in Government Procurement

LIDSTONE & COMPANY

Among the many hats that finance officers find themselves wearing is that of a procurement specialist.

Whether at the forefront of the procurement process or as a troubleshooter, finance officers have to be keenly aware of legal risks in purchasing and how to minimise them.

In this article, we will look at three frequently-seen situations in government purchasing that give rise to legal risk for the procuring entity. The author acknowledges that procurement is a broad and complex subject, and the examples discussed here only represent a small slice of legal and other hazards in procurement.

The earliest situation of legal risk arises even before procurement formally begins, when the decision is made whether procurement should be through a public process or 'sole-sourced'. In Canada, government procurement at all levels (local, provincial, federal) is required to be carried out in accordance with legally-enforceable trade agreements which prescribe when procurement must be conducted through a public process. For finance officers, the key things to know about the trade agreements are that: (a) each trade agreement prescribes a certain dollar-value threshold beyond which procurement must be public, and (b) there are certain exceptions provided to the rule. A full discussion of such rules and exceptions would require this article to be as long as a typical annual financial report, but readers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with current thresholds under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement available [here](#). Regional trade agreements have lower thresholds, so also check the thresholds for whichever regional agreement your province has entered into.

Another example of a legally hazardous situation is when the solicitation (e.g., RFP, RFQ, tender) is being drafted and, particularly, when evaluation criteria is

being developed. Purchasers sometimes do not realise that all criteria that will ultimately be used in evaluation must be written in the solicitation document. A criterion that was intentionally or unintentionally left out of the solicitation cannot later be used at the evaluation stage. Using unpublished criteria can, and often does, result in legal challenges. If you are drafting a solicitation document, spend more time thinking about and developing the evaluation criteria than your instinct tells you to; this effort will pay off at the evaluation stage.

Finally, let's talk about legal risk that arises in the period after the procuring entity has identified the successful proponent but before a contract is entered into. A common misstep at this stage is for purchasers to treat such a proponent as if they were already the contracted party. The legal risk in doing so is that if the proponent undertakes expenses on assurances that a contract will be entered into but the contract is not eventually executed for any reason, the procuring entity may be liable to compensate the proponent for expenses undertaken. Purchasers should remember the motto 'it's not over until it's over' and consider the procurement process to be 'alive' until the contract has been inked.

Finance officers reading this will undoubtedly face a much wider range of legal situations in their purchasing experience. But awareness of some common sources of legal hazards may help reduce some of the risk.

About author

Rahul Ranade is a lawyer at Lidstone & Co Barristers and Solicitors in Vancouver, BC and can be reached at ranade@lidstone.ca.



Make the move to modern accounting and visit blackline.com/cagfo



Volunteer with CAGFO!

CAGFO currently has the following Committees open to Membership:

Public Sector Accounting Standards

The purpose of the CAGFO PSA committee is to collaborate on emerging issues and new standards initiated by the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) in order to have a voice in the future of our industry as well as ongoing discussions to share knowledge that will help us in implementing new (and existing) standards.

Asset Management

This committee dialogues around asset management issues and associated bodies/organizations to provide input and resources to membership.

Newsletter

This committee writes, or solicits from others, articles/content relevant to the interest and advancement of our membership.

Interested in any of the above? Email office@cagfo.ca

Partner Events

Apr 19, 2022
AMM 2022 Spring Convention
Brandon, MB *in person*

Apr 28- 29, 2022
Alberta Municipalities
2022 Public Risk Conference
Canmore, AB *in person*

Apr 28- 29, 2022
Alberta Municipalities
2022 Convention & Trade Show
Calgary, AB *in person*

May 30- June 1, 2022
2022 CAMA Conference
Regina, SK *in person*

Aug 14- 17, 2022
AMO 2022 Annual General
Meeting and Conference
Ottawa *in person*

Sept 12- 13, 2022
CPA Canada The ONE
Conference
Vancouver, BC (also virtual)

Nov 3- 4, 2022
CPA Canada Mastering Money
Conference
Toronto, ON (also virtual)

Nov 21-23, 2022
AMM 2022 Annual Fall
Convention
Winnipeg, MB *in person*