23rd Biennial Forum of Government Auditors Virtual Forum

Accountability in Challenging Times and Building Auditor Resilience
SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Session 1
Welcome to the Biennial Forum and Federal, State and Local Issues Briefing

The 23rd Biennial Forum comes at a time when all of government is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, our inaugural virtual forum brings together a record turn-out from across the country and world. In this inaugural session we hear first from the Comptroller General of the United States for opening remarks on this unprecedented time, followed by the federal, state, and local issues briefing featuring the Chair of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, the President of the National State Auditors Association, and the President of Association of Local Government Auditors. Each of them will share the topics of concern for their communities and help us to set the stage for our three day event.

Session 2
Welcome to the Biennial Forum and Federal, State and Local Issues Briefing

On May 20, 2019, Lori E. Lightfoot became the 56th Mayor of the City of Chicago. One year later, she is in the midst of responding to the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19. In April 2020, she established a Task Force comprised of experts from a wide range of industries, regional government leaders, community-based partners and policymakers with the responsibility to advise the City on its recovery efforts. Although cities are slowly starting to reopen, Mayor Lightfoot has been staunch in her approach to ensuring the safety of her residents and the full recovery of the City of Chicago. She is quoted saying, "Some of you have joked that I'm like the mom who will turn the car around if you're acting up. No, friends. It's actually worse. I won't just turn the car around. I'm going to shut it off, I'm going to kick you out and I'm going to make you walk home. That's who I am. That's who I must be." The Pandemic has shown the importance of independent oversight and reinforced the necessity of fact-based civic discourse and policymaking. Mayor Lightfoot will share her views on ensuring confidence and transparency in pandemic response and recovery programs. She will also provide her perspective on the challenges of leadership in a time when collaboration, coordination, communication, and change are paramount. Following her remarks, Mayor Lightfoot will take questions from the attendees.

Session 3
Audit Collaboration:
How intergovernmental collaboration can produce more effective audits

While audit offices must protect their independence, they must also find appropriate ways to collaborate across jurisdictional boundaries. Two of the most important—but sometimes difficult—boundaries to cross are the lines between federal and state and between auditors and agency management. In this session, two state audit offices will discuss their efforts to cross those boundaries to more effectively audit federal human service programs administered by their states. Representatives from Oregon Audits Division and U.S. Treasury will discuss how audits used the federal Do Not Pay System and collaborated with managers in Oregon state agencies to identify

ineligible recipients of health and human service programs. A representative of the Massachusetts Office of State Audits will discuss efforts to obtain Medicaid data from CMS to use in auditing the state's Medicaid program.

Session 4
Initial Approaches for Auditing the CARES Act

The devastating economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the allocation of an unprecedented amount of federal relief funds to governments, businesses, and citizens. These funds are being deployed rapidly resulting in substantive risks including placing immense pressure on already inherently weak internal controls in government. The responsibility for auditors to provide transparency over these monies is critical and provides an excellent opportunity and need for auditors to communicate and collaborate. This esteemed panel, that includes audit leaders from the federal, state, tribal, and local government levels, will share their insights and ideas for auditing risks related to the CARES Act and other emergency relief funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic. After brief presentations, a question and answer will be facilitated to allow for attendee participation and information sharing.

Session 5
Lessons learned from oversight of Troubled Asset Relief Program to enable effective coronavirus oversight

The Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in the largest federal stimulus program since the 2007 Global Financial Crisis and the Great Recession, affecting businesses; state, local, and tribal governments; hospitals; and individuals. In addition to the stimulus program, Congress created several oversight mechanisms in the CARES Act to supervise and safeguard these programs from fraud, waste, and abuse. The oversight programs were modeled after those established to oversee the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) in 2008, including establishing a Special Inspector General. 12 years later the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program (SIGTARP) continues to serve as the federal law enforcement agency and independent audit watchdog that targets financial institution crime and other fraud, waste and abuse related to TARP. In this session, join the Special Inspector General for the Trouble Asset Relief Program for a conversation about the work of the SIGTARP office, how the office priorities have evolved over time, insights into similarities and differences between TARP oversight and the coronavirus oversight, and advice for auditors working in this fast-paced audit environment.

Session 6
A Conversation with the Inaugural Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery

The stimulus in the CARES Act represents the largest government stimulus program in U.S. history. Section 4018 of the CARES Act establishes a new office, the Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery (SIGPR), in the Department of the Treasury to oversee Treasury's programs related to the coronavirus stimulus programs. Under the Act, the office must: conduct audits and investigations of loans, loan guarantees, and other investments made by Treasury under this subtitle; perform audits and investigations of the management by Treasury of programs established under this subtitle; track the status and amounts of outstanding loans, loan guarantees, and other investments; gather information related to the recipients of loans, loan guarantees, or other investments; and record Treasury's justification for transactions under this subtitle. In this session, we sit down with the new SIGPR to discuss his role leading and shaping this new office, what from his past experiences can assist him with his new role and the opportunities it presents, and learn more about goals for the office and how it will conduct this important work.

Session 7

Preventing the Milk from Spilling: the High Value Impact Proposition of Real Time Auditing

Government auditors have been criticized for not providing timely information, especially in terms of allocating public resources effectively and preventing poor outcomes. This is especially the case for large-scale government projects and expenditures. "Real-time" auditing focuses on evaluating front-end strategic planning, governance, service delivery processes, controls, and performance measurement frameworks before or at the onset of major funding, program, and policy implementations by government organizations. Using case examples to illustrate key points, this session will explore opportunities and techniques for deploying real-time auditing to enhance audit impact and value including possible applications for the CARES Act. The session will highlight the use of data analytics as a key method in the real-time auditing tool kit.

Session 8
When are External Risk Assessments more important than internal Risk Assessments?

Auditors are directed to perform extensive internal control assessments as prescribed by the Yellow Book, using the Control Standards of The Green Book and Enterprise Risk Management. However, the reaction of external force factors on organizations, as described by Newton's laws of physics, which are not controllable, present far greater significant risks - which may be otherwise ignored. This session will explore the factors of external risk assessment using PESTLE analysis and how to help organizations adapt and respond. Think Titanic or COVID-19! The best internal control assessment would not have averted disaster – but external risk and opportunity assessment in organizations can help them prepare, mitigate, survive and prosper through change or crises. At the end of the session, attendees will be able to: apply the elements of critical thinking to deeply consider root causes and potential impacts, understand the constant external forces in a changing world and how to apply PESTLE analysis, and recognize the risks and opportunities we cannot we control, to better adapt, mitigate and prosper.

Session 9
Auditing Efforts to Reduce/Eliminate Homelessness

Homelessness is a complex issue that has received increased attention nationwide. Almost 600,000 people in the United States experienced homelessness in 2019, an increase of approximately 15,000 since 2018. Despite numerous initiatives to assist individuals and provide services, the number of homeless remains high. Moreover, the risks to this population have been significantly exacerbated by the current COVID-19 crisis, as these services are often provided in congregate settings—which could facilitate the spread of infection—and many people who are homeless may be particularly vulnerable to the virus. This session will examine the current trends and risks in homelessness, the approach auditors at all levels of government are taking to tackle this complex issue, and the lessons learned from these efforts on reducing/eliminating homelessness.

Session 10
Recovery after the Crisis: Accelerating the Oversight Process while Maintaining Quality and Adhering to Government Auditing Standards

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) revised the Yellow Book in 2018 and it is now in effect. The presentation will cover key changes and challenges with implementation. Additionally, the presenter will address the newly issued Continuing Professional Education (CPE) guidance due to COVID-19 and the related audit risk areas.

Session 11

Power of Persuasion through Emotional Intelligence

Managing positive and productive relationships during the course of audit work, directing, coaching or working with members of the audit team, dealing with auditees, clients, boards, stakeholders, management of your own organization, perhaps the media or testifying at hearings are some of the everyday emotionally challenging and often confrontational components of our jobs. We often have to deal with difficult people in difficult situations– and they have to deal with us! This class will examine how to develop the emotional intelligent competencies and communication skills necessary to maintain control, be flexible, and better connected with people in defusing angst and building positive, cooperative relationships for constructive problem solving and inspired action. We will explore differences in personality types that cause misunderstandings, how to identify and manage your own hot buttons, and how to manage difficult personality types or potentially contentions situations for positive outcomes. At the end of the session, attendees will be able to: examine key characteristics of emotional intelligences as applied to auditing, maintain control, power and influence by managing challenging personalities and situations, and build strong working relationships through trust and confidence to overcome resistance to change and maximize personal leadership for buy-in and action.

Session 12
Blockchain: How might emerging adoption of distributed ledgers impact auditors?

While blockchain technology may have originated in the realm of cryptocurrencies, the concept of a distributed ledger is finding interesting use cases across public sector organizations. The panelists will discuss the current state of technology as well as how features of distributed ledgers—such as transparency and immutability—are being leveraged to make meaningful improvements in compliance, oversight, and information sharing. For auditors, this could mean access to more timely, complete, and accurate data but also potentially poses new assurance challenges. The session will explore two different public sector use cases and discuss risks and rewards associated with deployment of distributed ledger technology.

Session 13
Auditing remotely and ensuring security of data and information (i.e., Cybersecurity)

The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the auditing profession's movement toward using remote techniques to perform engagements. Remote auditing has long been a subject of skepticism among audit organizations due to the belief that auditors may be more likely to discover fraud, waste, or abuse when they visit a site. However, the risk of missing findings is not the only concern that auditors working in a virtual environment must consider. All organizations that work remotely must also confront cybersecurity risks and employ appropriate mitigation. This session will explore the risks of working in a virtual environment as well as the steps auditors can take to mitigate those risks, including best practices for ensuring that data and information are protected.

Session 14
Keynote Address - Recovery Planning: How Can We Apply Technology to Accelerate Crisis Oversight?

As public sector officials across the country respond to the novel coronavirus, many are realizing a unique opportunity to rethink the new normal. Increasingly, the tech sector is playing an outsized role in shaping the future. As the pandemic hastens advances in technology, accountability professionals risk being left behind. In such a landscape, how do accountability leaders ensure their organizations respond effectively while capitalizing on opportunities to add value for their organizations? This session will explore how coronavirus is accelerating technological collaboration between the public and private sector, new advances and applications, and how accountability professionals can use these advances to accelerate crisis oversight.