



GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
NEWS RELEASE

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GFOA Awards 2017 Scholarships

(Chicago, Illinois – May 15, 2017) Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has announced the recipients of its 2017 scholarships. GFOA’s mission is to enhance and promote the professional management of governments and the awarding of scholarships is one of the ways GFOA accomplishes its mission.

The recipient of the **\$14,000 *Goldberg-Miller Public Finance Scholarship*** is **Megan N. Erwin**, who will graduate in May 2017 with a Master of Public Affairs degree, with concentrations in Public Finance Administration and Policy Analysis, from Indiana University, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, in Bloomington, Indiana. Megan was awarded a Service Corps Fellowship and currently serves as a budget analyst with the local Monroe County Council, where she assists the budget process by calculating fiscal impact statements of policy and program changes. Megan also interned with the Government Accountability Office in Washington DC, last summer where she learned best practices in program auditing and project management. She is currently interviewing with state and local governments across the United States with a goal of obtaining a budget analyst position. *Funded by the Girard Miller Foundation.*

The recipients of the two awards for the ***Frank L. Greathouse Government Accounting Scholarship*** are **Hannah F. Chu and Magali Moralez**. Each will receive **\$9,000**. *Funded by Government Finance Officers Association.*

- **Hannah F. Chu** will graduate in May 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a concentration in Accounting from California State University, Sacramento, California. She presently serves as a Student Auditor with the State of California Franchise Tax Board. In this position, Hannah analyzes assessment information and works directly with taxpayers to resolve audit disputes. Prior to obtaining her current position, Hannah worked as a Student Assistant with the State Board of Equalization where she worked alongside the Chief Legal Counsel and

top attorneys on various tax appeal cases. Hannah plans to pursue a Master in Accountancy degree and work toward obtaining the Certified Fraud Examiner and Certified in Financial Forensics credentials, with the goal of achieving a Forensic Accountant position with the state or federal government.

- **Magali Moralez** will graduate in August 2017 with a Bachelor of Business Administration/Master of Professional Accounting degree from West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas. She has been working as an intern in the Accounting Department for the City of Amarillo for almost two years. Her responsibilities include preparing the monthly bank reconciliations, journal entries, and research and reconciling the daily cash deposits to the receipts. Magali is also involved in her community by volunteering with several non-profits in the Amarillo and Canyon area. Her goals include becoming a Certified Public Accountant and obtaining full-time employment as an Accountant with the City of Amarillo or another local government.

The recipient of the **\$9,000 Minorities in Government Finance Scholarship** is **Dora Ama Okai**, who will graduate in the spring of 2018 with an Executive Master of Business Administration degree from the University of San Francisco in California. Dora is currently a Chief Financial Officer, managing the Accounting and Finance Division in the San Francisco City Attorney's office, City and County of San Francisco, California. Dora oversees the planning, preparing, implementing, and monitoring of all the daily financial and budgetary activities for the City Attorney's office. She is also responsible for assuring full compliance with the myriad of local, state, and federal laws and policies governing the public law office's fiduciary duties to its taxpayers. Dora plans to continue her employment with the City and County of San Francisco. Her goals include obtaining an executive level position, and one day to be the Controller of the City and County of San Francisco, managing their \$9 billion plus budget. *Funded by Tyler Technologies.*

The recipients of the four awards for the **Government Finance Professional Development Scholarship** are **Christopher Carlos, CPA, Michelle M. DeNeui, Tiffany Leigh Jacobs, and Robert D. Symanski**. Each will receive **\$9,000**. *Funded by the Government Finance Officers Association Scholarship Reserve.*

- **Christopher Carlos, CPA**, will graduate in the fall of 2018 with a Master of Science degree in Accountancy from the State University of New York, Polytechnic Institute in Utica, New York. He is currently employed as a Senior Accountant for the Eastern Suffolk Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in New York, a position he has held for the past five years. Christopher's responsibilities include overseeing the school lunch, inventory, and capital asset management programs for the cooperative, and assisting with budget preparations for the capital asset management department and leased facilities. His goals include pursuing a School District Business Leader certification and becoming an Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations.

- **Michelle M. DeNeui** will graduate in August 2018 with a Master of Professional Accountancy from the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota. She has been employed by the City of Spearfish, South Dakota, for the past fifteen years, currently as the Assistant Finance Officer. In her current position, Michelle processes the payroll for approximately 110 employees, coordinates the annual audit, and prepares the annual budget, appropriations ordinance, and the annual financial report. She also manages the capital asset records for accounting purposes, and assists in utility billings, collections, and managing the investments. Michelle's career goal is to be a Finance Officer with the City of Spearfish.
- **Tiffany Leigh Jacobs** will graduate in the fall of 2019 with a Master of Public Administration from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. She has been employed by the Virginia Beach City Public Schools for the past twelve years, most recently as a Grants Manager in the Department of Budget and Finance. In that capacity, Tiffany is responsible for the financial administration of over \$47 million in federal, state, and private-organization grants, ensuring that the program staff are compliant with all applicable regulations and reporting requirements. Tiffany oversees the preparation and submission of grants, reviews and approves grant-funded purchases, and serves as a liaison between the principals, departments, Virginia Department of Education, and other grantors. Tiffany's career goal is to secure a promotion to the Budget Development Coordinator position within the Virginia Beach City Public Schools.
- **Robert D. Symanski** will graduate from Boston College, Carroll School of Management in Boston, Massachusetts in the spring of 2019 with a Master in Business Administration degree. He is currently employed by the City of Newton, Massachusetts, as the Business and Finance Manager for the Public Works Department. Robert's responsibilities consist of supervising the financial duties of five employees and managing the budgeting, accounting, purchasing, and payroll functions of an \$80 million operating budget and \$100 million capital budget. His accomplishments include assisting the City's Chief Financial Officer in instituting zero-based and outcomes-based budgeting for the City, which has yielded savings in the millions. Robert's goals include securing a Finance Director position within a local community.

For more information about GFOA's scholarships, please contact Peg Hartnett, Senior Manager, at phartnett@gfoa.org.

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