

**Georgia Fiscal Management Council**

**APRIL**

**2025**

# **NEWSLETTER**

## **Annual Training Conference**

**Jekyll Island Convention Center**

**75 Beachview Dr. North**

**Jekyll Island GA, 31527**

**Sun Sep 28 2025 - Wed Oct 1 2025**



[www.georgiafmc.com](http://www.georgiafmc.com)



**Gerlda B. Hines**  
State Accounting Officer

## GA@WORK Promises Innovations and Improvements in October 2025

*by State Accounting Officer Gerlda B. Hines*

The state is now six months away from delivering our new, cloud-based enterprise resource planning system, GA@WORK! In October, Georgia will set out to serve its citizens in a brand-new environment that boasts innovative technology, streamlined processes and an optimized workforce. Georgia's finance professionals are a huge part of that!

GA@WORK is shaping the future of how the state delivers services to the 11 million people who call Georgia home. Whether that's through providing business licenses, vehicle registrations, public health services, child welfare or public safety, GA@WORK will enable a more efficient workforce to better serve the people of our great state.

The new system introduces many new opportunities. Individual platforms currently being used for Finance and Human Capital Management (HCM) tasks will go away, moving into a single platform that encompasses HCM, Finance, Procurement and several new functionalities such as asset, grant and project management. This enhanced user experience makes it easier for our employees and customers to get what they need. New reporting features with real-time data will enable us to make better-informed business decisions. Access to a statewide learning management system and contract management system will help to improve efficiency across the state.

Routing documents for approval will be faster than ever and mobile access to critical business processes will help you keep things moving from anywhere. Also, the state has brought on Automatic Data Processing (ADP) to handle payroll tax services for agencies. This change ensures compliance for all in-state and out-of-state employees and provides a consistent process, removing the filing burden from agencies.

So, how can you be ready for GA@WORK in October? The following is a good place for you and your colleagues to start learning more.

- **Learn more about the project:** <https://sao.georgia.gov/nextgen>
- **Check out the GA@WORK Resource Library** for videos that offer sneak peeks of the system, information about training and more. As we get closer to go-live, this site will be updated with more materials, so check back often. <https://sao.georgia.gov/gawork-resource-library>
- **Stay tuned for upcoming training.** Auto-enrollment and registration efforts will start in May with most training opportunities rolling out this summer. Note that training will continue after go-live to sustain the new system and the state's workforce.

We are very excited about the future for Georgia and what it means for employees across the state. In a time when recruiting for financial professions has become extremely difficult, GA@WORK will be a great tool for attracting and retaining new talent. It will also be a great tool for your success. I hope you are as excited as I am to usher in a new era for Georgia in October.

# Leadership Lessons from Around the World

by Carla Morris

Ever feel like leadership advice sounds the same... everywhere?

- "Be authentic."
- "Communicate clearly."
- "Lead by example."

Yeah, yeah. We get it. But what if the missing piece to becoming a truly transformational leader is already thriving halfway across the world — and you've never heard of it? Let's explore some leadership ideas from Japan, Nigeria, and Denmark.

## Japan: Master the Art of *Nemawashi*

In Japan, great leadership often starts **before** the meeting even happens. The concept of ***nemawashi*** literally means "preparing the roots" and it's all about building consensus quietly, behind the scenes. The core process is to build support first by having casual conversations with key individuals to get a feel for their thoughts. This allows everyone to share their concerns and ideas, making them feel part of the decision-making process. Instead of springing a big decision on a team, Japanese leaders:

- Consult key players individually ahead of time.
- Listen to objections privately.
- Adapt their proposals based on early feedback.
- **Then** host the formal meeting — where everyone is already aligned.

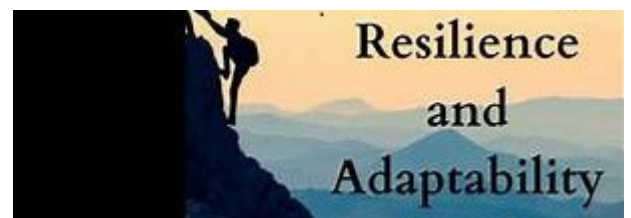


It's a slower burn, yes. But the result is buy-in from the start. Less drama. More execution. Imagine how different your next big project would play out if **your whole team was already on board before the kickoff meeting**.

## Nigeria: Lead With *Resilience and Adaptability*

In Nigeria, leadership is often shaped by **uncertainty** — political changes, economic swings, and resource scarcity are common. Managers in Nigeria are **masters of agility**. They:

- Embrace rapid change without losing momentum.
- Make decisions with **imperfect information**.
- Motivate teams when resources are slim.



American managers tend to freeze when plans get derailed. But Nigerian leaders pivot **fast**, rallying teams around a shared mission rather than a rigid plan.

In a world where business environments change overnight, **adaptability isn't optional anymore** — it's your edge.

# Leadership Lessons from Around the World

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## Denmark: Build Trust Through Radical Transparency

Denmark consistently ranks among the top countries for happiest employees and highest productivity.

Coincidence? Not at all. Danish managers practice radical transparency:

- Salary structures are often public.
- Leadership openly communicates company challenges — not just wins.
- Employees are trusted to make big decisions without gatekeeping.



This kind of openness builds deep trust — the foundation of resilient, self-driven teams. Imagine telling your team exactly where the company stands, without sugarcoating.

Scary? Maybe.

Powerful? Absolutely.

### Your Leadership Challenge: Go Global This Month

Pick **one** of these global leadership habits and weave it into your management style for the next 30 days.

Here's how you can start:

- **Nemawashi:** Before your next team meeting, individually check in with key teammates about the topic in advance.
- **Nigerian Adaptability:** When a project hits a roadblock, resist rigid planning. Host a 15-min "pivot brainstorm" instead.
- **Danish Transparency:** Share one company challenge openly with your team — and ask for their ideas.

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## Leadership Lessons from some of the World's Best CEOs

*by Carla Morris*

After exploring leadership lessons from around the world, Let's now explore some leadership lessons from two of the world's best CEOs.

### Arianna Huffington

Arianna Huffington is the founder of The Huffington Post, an author and well-known businesswoman. Her leadership lessons emphasize employee wellbeing.

- **Employee wellbeing is a business imperative** - Huffington believes that companies that prioritize employee wellbeing are more successful. Companies that invest in employee wellbeing are more likely to attract and retain top talent, and they are more likely to be innovative.

# Leadership Lessons from some of the World’s Best CEOs

*continued from page 2*

- **Wellbeing is not a luxury; it is a necessity** - Huffington views wellbeing as essential for productivity and creativity and believes that when people are well, they are more productive, more creative, and more engaged.
- **Leaders need to set an example** - Huffington believes that leaders need to set an example when it comes to employee wellbeing, be mindful of their own wellbeing, and they need to create a culture where wellbeing is valued.
- **Ways to promote employee wellbeing** - Huffington believes that there are many things that companies can do to promote employee wellbeing, including the following:
  - ❖ Provide flexible work arrangements
  - ❖ Offer wellness programs
  - ❖ Create supportive work environments
  - ❖ Encourage employees to take breaks

## Marc Benioff

Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce, is a strong advocate for leading with compassion. He believes that compassion is the foundation of great leadership. Marc’s leadership lessons include:

- **Creating a positive work environment** - Leading with compassion creates a positive work environment where everyone feels valued and respected, which is essential for employee engagement and productivity.
- **Putting others first** - Put the needs of others before your own by being empathetic, understanding, and willing to help others succeed.
- **Building relationships** - Build strong relationships with your employees, customers, and partners. Strong relationships are essential for success and allow you to work effectively together to achieve common goals.

### Additional lessons that can be learned from Arianna Huffington and Marc Benioff:

Be a role model	Be open to feedback	Be willing to change
Be compassionate	Be a visionary leader	Listen to others
Be empathetic	Be helpful	Be respectful

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Fredrell Evans



**Fredrell Evans** began his career with the State of Georgia in August 2005 at the former Department of Human Resources (now the Department of Human Services). Over the years, he has held various roles across state agencies, including positions in Payroll, Accounts Payable, General Ledger, and serving as an Accounting Manager at the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council. Currently, Fredrell serves as the Financials Business Analyst Manager with the State Accounting Office of Georgia.

### What is your favorite part of your job and why?

I've always enjoyed problem-solving and approaching challenges like puzzles. My current role allows me to leverage my analytical skills to research, troubleshoot, and resolve complex issues—ultimately helping others and improving processes.

### What is your biggest work challenge?

Challenge, What are those? 😊 No, one of the ongoing challenges is managing competing priorities, especially when several high-impact tasks need attention simultaneously. The key is to assess urgency and importance, then navigate accordingly. Each challenge is an opportunity to learn and become more efficient in the future.

### You have been heavily involved with the implementation of NextGen.

#### How do you see your role changing in the next two years?

I'm excited about the transition to a modern, cloud-based financial system. NextGen will streamline operations and allow users to spend less time producing data and more time using it for informed decision-making. In the coming years, I anticipate my role evolving to focus more on back-end process management, user training, and helping teams adapt to and thrive in the new environment.

### What advice would you give to other professionals seeking a long-term career in finance with the state?

Stay engaged, pursue challenges that promote growth, and continuously develop your skills. Building a strong professional network is also essential—over the years, many of my colleagues have advanced their careers throughout the State of Georgia. These relationships often lead to new opportunities and offer diverse perspectives that help in tackling work tasks.

### What do you enjoy most about your FMC membership?

My role in customer support has allowed me to connect with many professionals—mostly through calls or emails. Attending the FMC Conference provides a valuable opportunity to meet those individuals in person. It's incredibly rewarding to hear how my support has positively impacted their work, built their confidence in our team, and helped them grow professionally.



## Annissa Thompson

**Annissa Thompson** is the Grants Manager for the Georgia Department of Human Services. She has over 24 years of accounting experience. Annissa started her government career as an Accountant with the Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources. Annissa's prior experience includes working for the Georgia Student Finance Commission as the Federal Financial Services Manager and the Georgia Department of Community Health as the General Ledger Manager.

### **What is your favorite part of your job and why?**

The Georgia Department of Human Services receives over \$1.3 billion in federal funds. Grants management is responsible for submitting all federal financial reports for the agency. It is rewarding to know that my support of the agency's financial services provides benefits and services for the citizens of Georgia.

### **What is your biggest work challenge?**

The biggest challenge at work is attracting qualified candidates and retaining skilled employees. Many professionals feel the entry-level compensation is below the private sector. Highly skilled employees are often recruited internally and externally into different roles.

### **How are you involved with the implementation of NextGen?**

I am the workstream lead for grants. I participated in the development and now implementation of GA@WORK. The system will help to automate processes that are currently manual and reduce workload. As a subject matter expert, I will continue to provide training and assistance to grants management personnel throughout the go-live and post-implementation.

### **Advice to other professionals seeking a long-term career in finance with the state.**

My advice to any professional is to keep an open mind, adapt to change, and maintain flexibility. This will help you to overcome challenges you may encounter and turn them into opportunities for advancement.

### **What do you enjoy most about your FMC membership?**

I enjoy attending FMC, networking, and interacting with personnel from different state agencies. The monthly meetings and annual conference give you the opportunity for professional development.

# TRAINING & EDUCATION

by Dave Lakly

The Vinson Institute is proud to recognize recent Budget and Financial Management Certification recipients. This program offers an overview of the state's budget and fiscal management cycle, and it covers important information on many topics, including budget and accounting, revenue and debt, and purchasing and internal controls. Students must complete eight classes – and exams! - comprised of 78 total training hours. Students leave this program ready to meet the challenge of working in an ever-changing environment, equipped with knowledge and resources to keep Georgia the best state in the country. **Please join me in congratulating:**

Nazeeya Abudulai  
Heather Adams-Bonczek  
Christian Andrews  
Bridgett Barbee  
David Boyd  
Courtney Buntyn  
Keisha Burkes  
Sharon Byrd  
Stefanie Calhoun  
Tijuana Carter  
Kelly Coffey  
Roshana Collier  
Marie-Alice Cuffy-Le Blanc  
Delia Deen  
Satonya Dickson  
Arletha Dixon  
Andito Ewings  
Halimah Glover

TeAnna Hart  
Angelica Hester  
Renita Jeffries  
Deauntria Lavette  
Frederick Link  
Erica Maldonado  
Graciela Marquez  
Joseph McRae  
Evelyn Mejia  
Ada Messer  
LaToyia Milner  
Amanda Mori  
Kim Morris  
Izuru Oho  
Brittane' Payne  
Shanalee Pitter-Brown  
Marcia Primus  
Abhishek Rai

Tandra Rogers  
Wendall Rucker  
Deborah Saffo  
Shauna Schaffer  
Troy Senter  
Bergette Shepherd  
Kristina Taylor  
Marvine Tchitche  
Chase Thomas  
Jim Vollrath  
Lafreda Welborn  
Kimberli Werndli-Wilson  
Cody Whitlock  
Kathy Wiggins  
Evelyn Woods  
LaTrisha Wright  
Samantha Wynn  
Andrew Zoll



Dave celebrates with recent grads from the Georgia Department of Corrections.

# Georgia Fiscal Management Council



## Join Today

Membership to the Georgia Fiscal Management Council is open to any State employee engaged in a function related to fiscal operation and/or management. If you would like to join, please complete an [application form](#).

### Benefits of being an FMC Member

- **Professional Development.** An FMC membership gives you access to up-to-date information on fiscal matters. When a change in methodology, policy or procedure is required, FMC usually hears about it first.
- **Mentorship.** FMC is made up of many leaders across the state of Georgia. These leaders are seasoned professionals and career state government employees. The depth of knowledge is vast and they provide a strong support system within the fiscal community.
- **Leadership Development.** An FMC membership gives you access to an organization where the possibilities of participation is unlimited! Build your leadership skills by serving/chairing on a committee or leading an effort.
- **Networking.** Being a member of FMC allows you to mix and mingle with others in the fiscal community within the state of Georgia. You can establish relationships with other FMC members who share common professional interests and similar business concerns.
- **Jobs.** Most fiscal officers in FMC share open job or vacancy announcements with the FMC since it represents the state's fiscal community.

### Council Leadership and Committees

Kelly Dudley	President
Jackson Defore	President Elect
Peter Adams	Past President
Chad Dabella	Treasurer
Alicia Hautala	Secretary

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Newsletter (Chair: [Carla Morris](#))

Program and Professional Development (Chair: [Dave Lakly](#))

Scholarship (Chair: [Teresa Loggins](#))

Sponsorship (Chair: [Kenley Finlayson](#))

Website (Chair: [Kenley Finlayson](#))