

EARNING A CGFM CERTIFICATION IS AN INVESTMENT IN YOUR FUTURE

Recent college graduates are finding that the Certified Government Financial Management (CGFM) certification is a designation that has helped them early in their financial management careers. Stephanie Davis, a fiscal data analyst with a local government in Virginia, chose to earn her CGFM after completing her advanced degree. Because she's young and doesn't have years of work experience, Ms. Davis wanted "something to help me stand out" and in the process she gained the personal satisfaction of "having those initials behind my name."

Michael Herrera, CGFM, CPA, another recent college graduate, audits local governments for Heinfeld Meech and Co., a small private firm in Tucson, AZ. Mr. Herrera found that earning the CGFM gave him the ability to see the big picture. "I see...young folks who come out of college ...know the building blocks, but not how to put them all together."

Again and again public accounting firms are commenting on the value of CGFM certification for their government division employees. Gregory Bussink, CGFM, a senior partner at Clifton Gunderson LLP and an auditor of state and local governments, represents the growing number of private companies that are contracted by governments to do financial work. Because the CGFM certification is becoming more well-known in government circles, Mr. Bussink wanted "to get in and be part of that group, show that I've earned the credential and be a peer with my government counterparts."

Another government contractor who competes with the Big Four for government contracts, said "If we can really stand out and say we've got CPAs and CGFMs at a young age, it tells them, we know government, we know their environment."

Often the private firms will pay for the preparatory courses and exam fees. Many government organizations will offer a similar benefit. Recently, the Office of the Inspector General of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved a Professional Certification Policy that pays for review courses and examination fees after a year's employment. Some government agencies offer an award for earning a professional certification; others offer a salary increase for an earned certification. Some state governments, such as Washington and Idaho, now recognize the CGFM in place of job experience. Also, the organizations often pay for the Certified Professional Education (CPE) required to maintain the professional certification.

As John Reisinger, a recent CGFM holder, at of the Social Security Administration, said: "While there is no direct pay incentive to obtaining the certification, I believe it may be helpful when pursuing promotional opportunities – it can't hurt."

Whether you chose to begin your career in the private or government sector, you can, and probably will, discover opportunities that will allow you to move between the public and private sector. Be prepared – supplement your college degree with a credential that will facilitate those opportunities during your professional career!

EARN YOUR CGFM NOW! For more information visit our website at www.agacgfm.org or call us at 1.800.AGA.7211 today.