

Diane Dudley, a partner in the Washington, D.C., office of KPMG LLP, believes the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) designation gives KPMG a tremendous "résumé boost."

Dudley, a CGFM herself, said the CGFM adds to KPMG's capabilities because it takes a broad-based knowledge of budget, financial, and auditing information to master the certification.

The credential differentiates KPMG's staff from its competitors'.

"Until we had the CGFM, there wasn't a distinguishing mark to place on our employee résumés," she said. "Most public accounting firms have many CPAs, but in this government industry that my practice focuses on, the CGFM credential is a real qualification boost."

She said federal officials, who seek out KPMG for accounting, audit, and consulting services, are requesting CGFMs more often. The rapidly changing government environment has made the certification that much more important, she said.

In the Washington, D.C., office of KPMG, all partners and directors in the governmental accounting and auditing practice are CGFMs. Half of all KPMG managers in that group are CGFMs as well.

"We have noticed that the individuals on our staff with the CGFM are those who are most interested in this government industry, and they are our top performers," Dudley said.

Although KPMG is not directly involved in holding the government accountable, its professionals aim to provide the best accounting, auditing and consulting services to its clients. Employees of government entities with the CGFM designation also have an edge. Dudley said the CGFM makes better government financial managers. "The CGFM designation demonstrates better financial management skills in the government workforce and this will lead to improved government accountability," she said. "This certification should be the industry standard for government financial management professionals."

She suggested more promotion to get the word out about the value of the CGFM. One way is to encourage government officials and the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Council to state definitively that the CGFM is the preferred credential.

Another idea is to increase awareness at the undergraduate and graduate levels and work to change the perception that governmental accounting is not as attractive as working in the private sector.

Not only does the federal government seek the CGFM designation, but it carries clout within KPMG as well.

"When we are hiring and we notice the CGFM next to a candidate's name, we are more likely to offer them an interview," Dudley said. "We have not made the CGFM a requirement for hiring or promotion, but if you have the CGFM, it demonstrates to us the type of initiative that will make you successful in this practice."