

Oregon State Auditor John Radford, CGFM, believes that the government financial management profession has changed so much that credentials such as the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) are a must.

"In today's complex and changing world, a professional certification provides prospective employers with a degree of confidence that candidates are prepared for the real world," he said. Radford's own agency has benefited from employees who have earned the CGFM designation. "They contribute more ideas, are more flexible, and have a broader understanding of financial management principles and practices," he said. "We have less on-the-job learning and more favorable business results."

That's why the controller's office encourages certification for the professional accounting staff, with the CGFM held in equal regard to the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) designations.

While the state does not tie raises or promotions to the CGFM designation, the state will pay for training and other expenses, subject of course to the available budget.

Radford likes how the CGFM not only requires a broad base of financial management knowledge, but also continuing professional education so employees can keep up with the latest innovations in the field. He thinks it also aids in making governments more accountable.

That's because the CGFM designation helps strengthen the resolve and vision of those in the financial management community, he said, and helps them keep their focus on accountability. Even so, he thinks the number of CGFMs within the top ranks of financial managers in Oregon state government are very low – perhaps only 1 or 2 percent.

One way to get the word out about the CGFM Program could be through the business and public administration programs at various colleges and university systems. He said there may be opportunities for joint partnerships there.

Earning the CGFM has also helped Radford's own career because it demonstrates a commitment to leadership and a high level of confidence and reliability.

"It shows up front a commitment to personal integrity and ethical standards," he said.