

CGFM—"It's obtainable, and right on target"

To show how the CGFM has made a difference for those who have been certified, AGA offers these personal insights into the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) Program.

Lt. Col. Milton F. Barr, Logistics and Budgeting officer with the Missouri National Guard, said the CGFM designation gave him more confidence on the job. "There was a great satisfaction in achieving this accreditation and I finally feel like I've met the objectives in the AGA Code of Ethics," he said.

His remarks should resonate with those government financial managers who are deciding whether to take the CGFM Examinations. The confidence and job satisfaction Barr has gained from achieving the CGFM accreditation should answer the question—why CGFM?

Barr is a career Army National Guard military officer who earned a bachelor's degree in business from Central Missouri State University and a master's degree in business administration from William Woods University. Barr is also a member of AGA's Mid-Missouri Chapter.

After being introduced to the CGFM Exams two years ago by an article in Government Executive magazine, Barr decided to pursue this professional accreditation. "It became a gauntlet," he said. "I charged ahead, made a timeline and lined up the activities." The rigorous certification process requires that each candidate pass three separate examinations, and Barr understood the challenges that lay ahead.

Barr used a tried-and-true study system that offered enormous advantages when preparing for each exam. "I constantly used AGA's resources," he said. The website materials worked well for him once he structured his notes and study book properly. He also worked closely with Michele Dunlap, AGA's Certification Program administrator.

"Michele gave great pointers that steered me in the right direction for networking with other CGFMs," he said. One of Dunlap's priorities in the CGFM Program is to put candidates in touch with the CGFMs who can help them understand how to earn the accreditation.

Another aide in Barr's quest for the CGFM were the courses offered by Management Concepts. These courses encouraged students to think outside their typical realm in government financial management. "Management Concepts' instructors were able to lead the class to find and study the best materials available for passing the CGFM Exams," he said.

"Remember, the main thing for government financial managers to know is that you can never have too much education," Barr said. He explained that there is a point when all managers need to seek professional accreditation and his experiences with the CGFM have convinced him of this. Barr said that his experience has prompted his department to discuss making the CGFM the recommended training program for some up-and-coming positions.

Barr's reasoning to pursue the CGFM designation? "It's obtainable, and it's right on target."