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## **Demand for Certified Bookkeepers Outpaces Supply**

ROCKVILLE, Md., April 26 — When the nation's first bookkeepers were certified by the American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers back in 1998, the question was, will employers want them? In 2005, the question has become, can employers find enough of them?

Ten thousand bookkeepers have registered for certification and another 15,000 have asked for information about how to become certified, according to AIPB Co-President Steve Sahlein ([www.aipb.org](http://www.aipb.org)).

"But that still may not be enough for businesses and CPA firms looking for Certified Bookkeepers," says Sahlein.

When Beach, Fleischman & Co., P.C., Tucson, AZ, southern Arizona's largest CPA firm, needed a bookkeeper, Human Resources Director Chris Brademas learned of the Certified Bookkeeper program. "I knew that a CB would fit in with our firm's emphasis on highly trained professionals," she says. But a job posting indicating "Certified Bookkeeper highly preferred" did not bring her any CB applicants. Determined to find a CB, she called nearby Pima Community College and hired a student who was taking the college's CB preparatory course.

Employment agencies generally find that Certified Bookkeepers have a tremendous advantage competing for top-paying jobs, according to Stan Hartman, who manages AIPB's job placement Web site. "Employers will pay more for bookkeepers who have proven their technical knowledge in a national exam," he says. "Many bookkeepers may have only on-the-job training."

But a shortage for employers and CPA firms is a sellers' market for Certified Bookkeepers.

For example, Kelly Ritts, CB, Nashville, TN, sent out six resumes, got five interviews and was offered three of the jobs, "all because I was certified," she says.

Brenda Lee Shelt, CB, Kalispell, Montana, was disappointed when she realized that her Associate's Degree in accounting would not even get her an interview at the CPA firm she wanted to work for. But when she became a Certified Bookkeeper, that same firm hired her on the spot at 50% more than the going rate for Associate's Degrees, with a promise to renegotiate her salary after 3 months.

Over 100 colleges and universities offer a preparatory course for certification and another 150 offer a course online (<http://www.gatlineducation.com>). But according to Sahlein, most bookkeepers find it more convenient to prepare for certification on their own.

"The good news for employers," Sahlein says, "is that between the increased demand for Certified Bookkeepers and the Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook predicting that the best jobs will go to Certified Bookkeepers, we expect to see a lot more CBs in the near future."