The construction industry has been battling a skilled labor shortage for many years and continues to struggle to find a solution. The problem affects not only field personnel, but also professional staff. The demand for experienced professionals has never been higher, and the cost of losing valuable employees can be overwhelming. To combat this challenge, companies must take a proactive approach to fully train and enhance the knowledge of their current staff.

To help address this need and encourage more young professionals to both develop industry-specific knowledge and remain in construction careers, the ICCIFP has implemented a significant change to its exam eligibility effective October 1. Under the new eligibility rules, you can now sit for the exam before you have earned the necessary experience to become a CCIFP – similar to the CPA exam. However, the current required minimum level of experience is still a requirement to become a CCIFP. A full summary of the changes and new eligibility requirements is available at www.iccifp.org/eligibility.

These changes are beneficial for several reasons. First, CCIFP exam preparation is a powerful professional development tool for gaining industry-specific knowledge, whether you’re new to a professional career or just new to the industry. Many people leave the industry before earning the minimum hours necessary for certification. Passing the exam not only equips an employee for a career in construction, but it also provides an incentive for a long-term career in the industry.

Second, those in the field of public accounting will find value in the ability to hire a candidate who has completed school and passed the CPA exam, and then continue to encourage his or her interest in construction accounting. Such a candidate is likely to obtain the required hours for the CCIFP certification more rapidly if prepared for specialization earlier in his or her career.

Hiring certified industry professionals provides great value to firms that want to grow or maintain their industry presence, serves as an excellent addition to professional development plans, and helps create a culture of excellence.

Finally, one of the ICCIFP’s goals is to recruit a greater number of Millennials for careers in construction. Currently, many do not consider careers in construction at all – or at least not for the long-term.

Historically, many potential candidates have considered taking the exam only to be dissuaded by the need to first complete the experience requirement. We believe applying exam eligibility differently moving forward is one important way we can incentivize Millennials to stay within the construction industry.

While salary and benefits might be the deciding factor for many, an employer that provides opportunity for both professional and personal growth is just as important to both seasoned and new professionals. Encouraging your employees to obtain the industry’s only ANSI-accredited designation specifically for CFMs remains the one of the best avenues to keep your staff intact and provide the skilled labor your company needs to grow.

Invest in your staff today – you can’t afford to find out they are leaving tomorrow.