

Website of the Month: American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers

By Susan B. Anders

The resources on the American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers (www.aipb.org) website will be of interest to bookkeepers as well as their employers. The website's purpose is clear, straightforward, and reflects well on the AIPB. Most resources are available free to all visitors.

This neatly organized website is separated into five main sections: membership benefits, certification program, jobs site, continuing education, and members only. All are easily located via large index buttons on each main page. The index also connects to a free bookkeeper hiring test and more than 150 useful accounting and tax links.

The website uses minimal graphics, and navigation is easy. Subsidiary webpages provide obvious links to take the user to more detailed information.

Resources for Professional Bookkeepers

CPAs who work with professional bookkeepers will be interested in learning about the AIPB and the resources that can help bookkeepers improve their professional skills and recognition. AIPB membership includes a monthly newsletter with technical tips and techniques, a free answer line for accounting and payroll help, and continuing education. Employers may also be interested in the free bookkeeper hiring test that can be ordered through the website.

Certification and Continuing Education

The AIPB certification program for professional bookkeepers includes an experience requirement, a national examination, and a code of ethics. The website offers a free booklet about the certification program that can be downloaded or ordered for mail delivery. The certification exam is available at Sylvan testing centers.

Fourteen different continuing education courses are available for bookkeepers, covering taxation, accounting information processing, payroll, financial statement analysis, and collections. Courses can be ordered from the website, although they do not appear to be available online. However, several of the courses offer free samples of selected course materials, which can be downloaded as PDF files. Additionally, detailed tables of contents provide an outline of the topics covered in each course.

Jobs Site

The jobs site section of the website offers resources for both job seekers and employers. The main page provides links to pop-up screens with job descriptions for several categories: certified bookkeeper, full-charge bookkeeper, bookkeeper, assistant bookkeeper, and freelance bookkeeper. New users may want to familiarize themselves with these descriptions before proceeding further. Employers can search resumes and bookkeepers can search job listings

without registration or AIPB membership.

An excellent feature is the standardized format for "job benefits and options" and "candidate qualifications" found on both the position pages and resume pages. Employers and candidates can check the required or desired descriptions. For example, job benefits and options include health/dental benefits or paid holidays, vacations, and sick leave. Candidate qualifications include hands-on experience with Excel, or the ability to prepare depreciation schedules.

The website provides links for potential employers and candidates to contact each other. Registration is required for posting positions or resumes. Job seekers can post a resume online on the website or can copy and paste their resume in drop-down boxes on the application screen, then submit their application to the employer.

Accounting, Bookkeeping, and Tax Links

The website's many links to accounting and tax sites are organized under a number of logical, easily understood headings. Under each heading, topics are listed alphabetically. The links are practical and basic, and useful for bookkeepers, new staff accountants, and even experienced accountants new to the Internet.

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