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## A CHAMPION: WHY THE HELL NOT?

**SOPIA EMPEL, CRM**

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Naturalist John Muir once said, “When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.” Well, here’s a similar chance to make a difference. Become a “champion” of research and education at the chapter level, and ultimately help affect the field of records and information management. The ARMA International Education Foundation (AIEF) is looking for one member from each chapter to become a Chapter Champion.

A Chapter Champion is a voluntary role that educates members at the local level about AIEF research projects and scholarship programs. As a critical link between the AIEF and chapter members, a Chapter Champion generates excitement for the Foundation’s activities, such as building its endowment. The endowment funds initiatives and strategic goals, as well as the Foundation’s operations.

A Chapter Champion should be passionate about their profession, willing to promote the AIEF, and enthusiastic and willing enough to inspire fellow colleagues. The role is flexible with no set hours, and it is fully-supported by AIEF. The benefits to the profession and the AIEF are obvious, but the paybacks of being a Chapter Champion, maybe not so much.

According to World Volunteer Web ([www.worldvolunteerweb.org](http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org)), volunteering impacts not only the organization, but the volunteer too. Volunteers learn new skills, become part of the community, and feel a sense of achievement. Volunteers send a message to both colleagues and employers that they are passionate about what they do and can balance work and extra-curricular activities.

In fact, a survey sponsored by Reed Executive revealed some startling statistics about volunteering: 73% of employers were more likely to hire a candidate with volunteer experience than one without any; 94% of employers believe that volunteering adds skills; and 94% of hired candidates believe their volunteer experiences helped them get the job.

Why not become a Chapter Champion? In his best-selling book *4-Hour Workweek*, Timothy Ferris asks, “That’s precisely the question everyone should be asking—why the hell not?” If you are interested in applying to be a Chapter Champion, contact the AIEF at the following address:

[Admin@ArmaEdFoundation.org](mailto:Admin@ArmaEdFoundation.org).

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## YES, I WANT TO BE A CRM: WHAT NOW?

**BY SOPIA EMPEL, CRM**

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Finishing is never easy, and sometimes getting started is even harder. How true this is for CRM certification! Like everything else, breaking the CRM application process down into smaller chunks makes it more doable, and certainly less overwhelming.

Once you’ve decided, “Yes, I want to be a CRM,” then you need to follow a few easy steps to get started. First, check if you qualify as a potential candidate based on your work experience and education. Review “Qualifications” (section 1, page 4) in the ICRM handbook (<http://www.icrm.org/icrm-handbook/>) to see how prospective candidates are evaluated.

If you determine that you qualify, then fill out an application either online or by mail (<http://www.icrm.org/applying-for-the-exam/>). The application is only two pages long and asks for demographic, work experience, education, employment, and “truth” certification information. The most complicated entry on the application is a

“minimum 100 characters” description of how your work experience qualifies you for certification.

Thirdly, gather “external written verification signed by the employer” of the work experience you are claiming. This can be either a certified job description or a letter. “Documenting Professional Work Experience” (section 1, page 13) of the ICRM handbook lists how to demonstrate eligibility. Use one of the sample employer letters (section 1, 23-24) to draft a similar letter. Then give the draft to the person who will verify your work experience and ask them to review, edit, and sign it when complete. Alternatively, you can provide a certified job description, instead of the letter.

Finally, submit your application, school transcripts or copies of diplomas, your external work verification letter or certified job description, and a \$100 application fee to the ICRM. Do not include any extra materials such as resumes or awards, since they will not be reviewed (section 1, page 8). That’s it. It’s that easy. Instead of just wishing you were a CRM, you’ve taken the first step to accomplish CRM certification.

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## ABOUT THESE ARTICLES

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These reoccurring short articles are part of a series devoted in 2012 - 2013 to two very worthy organizations: ARMA International Education Foundation (AIEF) and Institute of Certified Records Managers (ICRM).

The articles represent the author's views entirely and do not reflect the opinions or views of any organization. They are written and made available as a service to the profession by the author.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Sofia is a past recipient of the AIEF's Mavis Eppes, FAI Excellence in Records Management Scholarship and participates in ICRM activities as a grader, mentor, and workshop instructor. Sofia can be reached at [sofiaempel@infoCentricStrategies.com](mailto:sofiaempel@infoCentricStrategies.com).