

**CLASS SPECIFICATION
Principal Accountant**

GENERAL PURPOSE

Under general direction, manages, oversees and performs professional accounting duties in the analysis, preparation and maintenance of financial records and reports; makes complex and difficult accounting analyses; and performs related duties as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Principal Accountant is responsible for providing direction and supervision for professional accounting and accounting support staff and performs diverse and specialized accounting work which is complex and involves significant accountability and decision-making responsibility. Assignments are broad in scope and allow for a high degree of administrative discretion in their execution.

Principal Accountant is distinguished from Accounting Supervisor in that an employee in the former class supervises the work of other professional accounting employees and is responsible for assigning and managing the work of the Accounting section of the Finance department.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to this class.

1. Plans, organizes, controls, manages and evaluates the work of the Accounting division of the Finance Department; with subordinate supervisors and staff, participates in establishing operational plans and initiatives to meet department goals and objectives; implements departmental plans, work programs, processes, procedures and policies required to achieve overall department performance results; coordinates and integrates department functions and responsibilities to achieve optimal efficiency and effectiveness; participates in developing and monitoring performance against the annual departmental budget.
2. Plans and evaluates the performance of assigned staff; establishes performance requirements and personal development targets; monitors performance and provides coaching for performance improvement and development; provides or recommends compensation and other rewards to recognize performance; takes disciplinary action, up to and including termination, to address performance deficiencies, subject to management concurrence, in accordance with the City's human resources policies and procedures and labor contract provisions.
3. Provides day-to-day leadership and works with staff to ensure a high performance, customer service-oriented work environment which supports achieving City objectives and service expectations; provides leadership and participates in programs and activities that promote a positive employee relations environment.

4. Manages, oversees, participates in and reviews the work of employees preparing monthly and annual financial statements and schedules; supervises and participates in preparation of periodic financial reports to the City Council, City Manager and City departments; supervises monthly closing of the General Ledger and reviews financial reports prior to posting on the City's intranet; reviews revenue and expenditure reports for discrepancies and identifies the appropriate solution; prepares monthly addendums to the Warrant Report as required by the City Council.
5. Manages, participates in and approves the work of employees preparing and processing accounting transactions, making journal entries and reconciling general ledger and subsidiary records and accounts and maintaining accounting records and reports; performs the more complex and difficult accounting functions; reviews, approves and posts the more complex journal entries; sets up new funds, business units and object accounts in the financial system; copies balance sheet, revenue or expenditure object accounts to various business units as appropriate; reviews weekly auto pay registers for accuracy; conducts random surveys of processed accounts payable vouchers for ensure staff adherence to agreed-upon performance measurement standards.
6. Assists in developing the annual City budget; assists in preparing the preliminary budget book for submission to the City Council; assists in the review and preparation of revenue projections and budget estimates; compiles, reviews, analyzes, prepares and updates a variety of complex budget schedules; reviews the accuracy of data flows from linked schedules; prepares budget appropriation adjustments resulting from City Council actions.
7. Assists with the City's annual external audit and other special audits; works with external auditors and City staff to ensure responses are complete, well documented and provided in a timely manner to facilitate efficient audit completion; prepares capital asset audit schedules.
8. Establishes and maintains internal control procedures and ensures that accounting standards are met.

OTHER DUTIES

1. Provides professional assistance and support to staff and management on City accounting and auditing policies, procedures, standards and requirements.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

1. Principles and practices of general, fund and governmental accounting including financial statement preparation and methods of financial control and reporting.
2. Principles and practices of cost accounting.
3. Internal control and audit principles and practices.
4. GAAP, GASB and GFOA Accounting Standards and requirements applicable to City operations and funding sources.
5. Principles and practices of municipal budgeting.

6. Federal, state and local laws, regulations and court decisions applicable to assigned areas of responsibility.
7. City functions and associated financial management and reporting issues.
8. Principles and practices of business data processing particularly related to the processing of accounting and financial information.
9. The operations, requirements and coding structure for the City's automated general ledger system.
10. Principles and practices of public administration, including purchasing and contracting and the maintenance of public records.
11. Principles and practices of sound business communication.
12. Principles and practices of effective management and supervision.
13. City human resources policies and procedures and labor contract provisions.

Ability to:

1. Plan and evaluate financial programs and make sound recommendations for improvement.
2. Operate a computer and spreadsheet software.
3. Analyze and make sound recommendations on complex financial data and operations.
4. Understand, interpret, explain and apply City, state, and federal laws regulating City financial accounting, reporting and recordkeeping.
5. Develop and implement financial procedures and controls.
6. Perform complicated mathematical calculations and analyses.
7. Present proposals and recommendations clearly, logically and persuasively.
8. Prepare clear, concise and comprehensive financial statements, reports, studies and other written materials.
9. Exercise sound, expert independent judgment within general policy guidelines.
10. Exercise tact and diplomacy in dealing with sensitive and complex issues and situations.
11. Establish and maintaining effective working relationships with City management, members of the City Council, staff, outside auditors and others encountered in the course of work.

Education, Training and Experience:

A typical way of obtaining the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined above is graduation from a recognized four-year college or university with a major in accounting, finance, business administration or a closely related field; and at least six years of progressively responsible

professional accounting experience, at least two of which were in a supervisory or lead capacity; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Licenses; Certificates; Special Requirements:

A valid California driver's license and the ability to maintain insurability under the City's vehicle insurance policy.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEMANDS

The physical and mental demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this class. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Physical Demands

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to sit; talk or hear, both in person and by telephone; use hands to finger, handle and feel computers and standard business equipment; and reach with hands and arms. The employee is frequently required to stand and walk.

Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision and the ability to adjust focus.

Mental Demands

While performing the duties of this class, the incumbent is regularly required to use written and oral communication skills; read and interpret complex data, information and documents; analyze and solve complex problems; use math/mathematical reasoning; perform highly detailed work under changing, intensive deadlines, on multiple concurrent tasks; work with constant interruptions, and interact with City management, members of the City Council, staff, outside auditors and others encountered in the course of work.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this class. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

The employee works under typical office conditions, and the noise level is usually quiet.