



Principal Accountant

SUMMARY

Under general direction, performs highly complex and specialized professional accounting work, including analysis, reconciliation, and oversight of fiscal records and reports. Leads and reviews the work of other professional and technical accounting staff; supports departmental goals through advanced financial reporting, compliance assurance, and process improvements. Coordinates external audits and assists with the development of the Town's budget and financial systems. Serves as a key technical resource for complex accounting functions and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives direct or general supervision from the Director of Finance. May exercise general and direct supervision over lower-level accounting staff.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS -- *Essential functions, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, may include any of the following representative duties, knowledge, and skills. This list is ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY and is not a comprehensive listing of all functions and duties performed by incumbents of this class. Employees are required to be in attendance and prepared to begin work at their assigned work location on the specified days and hours. Factors such as regular attendance at the job are not routinely listed in job descriptions but are an essential function. Management reserves the right to add, modify, change or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job. Essential duties and responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- Prepare and analyze financial statements, ensuring accuracy and compliance with GAAP and other relevant standards. Maintain the general ledger, ensuring accuracy and completeness of financial transactions. Develops and maintains accounting procedures and internal controls to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and standards (e.g., GAAP, GASB).
- Supervise junior accountants, providing guidance and support on accounting tasks and processes. Coordinates annual, special and internal audits; serves as liaison to external auditors and provides detailed documentation and analysis.
- Manage the month-end closing processes, including journal entries, reconciliations, and variance analysis.
- Perform and review account reconciliations including, but not limited to: bank reconciliations, balance sheet reconciliations, receivable reconciliations.
- Participates in the preparation of the Town's budget, including revenue projections, expenditure forecasting, and fund analysis.
- Prepares detailed analytical reports, charts, and other documentation to support financial decision-making by management.
- Monitors accounting system performance; recommends and implements process improvements.
- Participates in the development and maintenance of policies, procedures, and controls related to accounting functions.

- Assists in overseeing payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and bank reconciliation processes.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is the lead-level classification in the professional accounting series, functioning as a bridge between the Senior Accountant and the Finance Manager. The Principal Accountant performs advanced technical work with greater independence and accountability, serves as a subject matter expert, and may provide day-to-day oversight and guidance to accounting staff. While not a department manager, the position supports operational leadership through project management, procedural development, and audit coordination.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education, Training, and Experience Guidelines

An equivalent combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities may be considered. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Equivalent to a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in accounting, finance, business administration, or a related field, and five (5) years of progressively responsible professional accounting experience, including at least one (1) year of lead or supervisory experience in a public sector setting.

LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Valid California class C driver's license with a satisfactory driving record.
- CPA license is highly desirable.

Knowledge of:

- Advanced principles and practices of governmental accounting and public finance.
- Accounting standards, practices, and compliance (GAAP, GASB).
- Budget preparation, fiscal reporting, and financial analysis.
- Internal controls, auditing principles, and procedures.
- Principles of lead supervision and training.
- Automated financial systems and spreadsheet/database software (e.g., Excel, ERP systems).
- Applicable laws, codes, and regulations related to municipal finance.

Ability to:

- Perform complex professional accounting tasks with a high degree of accuracy and independence.
- Lead, train, and review the work of staff; serve as a resource on technical accounting issues.
- Interpret and apply federal, state, and local regulations.
- Prepare clear and accurate reports, statements, and documentation.
- Analyze financial data and develop logical conclusions and recommendations.
- Prioritize work effectively under deadlines and with competing demands.
- Communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, auditors, and other stakeholders.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various City and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing in work areas and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter and retrieve data using a computer keyboard, typewriter keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects necessary to perform job functions.

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

**FLSA designations cannot be assigned to a class. An employer must show that each employee meets every requirement of the claimed exemption. The FLSA designation listed above is for general administrative guidelines.*