

City of Sebastopol Job Description

Job Title: Accountant
Division: Miscellaneous
Department: Administrative Services
Location: City Hall
Shift: Daytime
Reports To: Administrative Services Director
Prepared By: Ana Kwong
Approved By: City Council
Approved Date: 2/21/2023
FLSA Status: Nonexempt

SUMMARY

Under general supervision, this position performs routine and a variety of complex and technical financial accounting and program support duties in the areas of utility billing, bank reconciliation, accounts payable, accounts receivable, cash receipts, purchasing, project accounting, fixed assets, and general ledger. May be assigned to perform all functions related to and serve as a City resource for one or more accounting related programs administration.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is a professional level position that requires excellent communication skills and the ability to excel in a dynamic and progressive work environment. While this position may overlap with the Accountant/Analyst, they focus on different areas of money management. The incumbents perform the full range of technical accounting duties requiring knowledge of basic principles and methods of one or more designated accounting fields. The Accountant is expected to work independently and exercise judgment and initiative to interpret and process financial data, records, and transactions, and resolve technical accounting problems. Work may include a wide variety of processes and accounts with varying degrees of complexity and responsibility. It is distinguished from administrative positions by the need to understand and apply accounting theories, principles, terms, and practices in the preparation and evaluation of fiscal records, transactions, and reports.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

The Accountant works under general supervision from the Administrative Services Director.

TYPICAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES include but are not limit to the following:

- Participate in maintaining the City's General Ledger and verify funds, including setting up accounts and preparing and processing standard monthly and special journal entries; review entries for accuracy of account numbers; answer staff and department questions about appropriate accounts for charges of expenses; analyze, verify, and reconcile accounts and records and processes adjusting entries; perform the reconciliation of City bank accounts and the resolution of discrepancies.
- Prepare, file, and submit various schedules, allocations, requests for reimbursement, and reports to internal customers and local, state, and federal agencies; access, analyze, and reconcile data from a variety of sources; prepare special reports for management; maintain encumbrance and retention schedules; prepare reconciliations for periodic auditing and year-end processing; answer questions about processes and procedures to employees, supervisors, and managers.

- Organize and maintain various files, forms, and other financial documents; assist in the maintenance and security of cash and financial records.
- Participate in month-end and annual close of the City's financial records; review and analyze relevant spreadsheets and the accuracy and appropriateness of adjusting and closing entries; provide assistance during the annual audit by the City's outside auditors.
- May assist in the development and preparation of all citywide budgets, providing information, projecting budget expenditures, and performing financial analyses. Publish the approved budget and distribute to City Council, City Manager, Departments, and the general public.
- Prepare monthly and annual financial reports.
- Participate in debt service accounting for the City's bonds, including accruals for payment of principal and interest and the reconciliation of accounts.
- Provide support in maintaining and ensuring citywide adherence to internal control procedures and accounting standards.
- Review cash receipts for various programs ensuring receipts balance; processes Finance receipts (cash, checks, credit cards, and EFT payments; and may prepare bank deposits.)
- Assist in maintaining and updating the inventory on all City fixed assets and the systems and reports connected with fixed assets.
- Assist in processing and maintaining citywide developer deposits on a regular and timely basis. Identify and report any negative balance conditions to the appropriate department for resolution. Follow up and reports on status of resolution efforts.
- Provide information and assistance to departments on accounting and financial reporting issues.
- Assist in the resolution of computer and systems related problems.
- Prepare a variety of special financial reports as needed and perform research studies, account analysis and special projects as assigned by management.
- Evaluate current procedures and provide recommendations to supervisor. Manage municipal water and sewer billing process and business license questions for the public.
- Serve as a backup when required on City phones and at the public counter; make effective referrals when indicated to appropriate City departments and other agencies.
- Respond to Public Record Requests.
- Provide courteous, accurate, and helpful customer service to internal and external customers in assigned functional area; make effective and timely referrals to appropriate personnel for questions outside your functional area.
- Be a resource to employees for assigned finance system: payroll, payables, receivables, fee calculation; provide technical assistance and guidance to City staff and public customers.
- Maintain a variety of lists, data, and systems (e.g., parcel, customer, employee, fee, vendor) interface with employees, supervisors, vendors, customers, property owners and respond to inquiries from same.
- Research and follow up on inaccurate data, submit reports to appropriate Department, supervisor, or agency; prepare and mail necessary courtesy change notices.
- Assist in the implementation and upgrades of accounting related software and development of related procedures.
- Provide back-up for other assignments within the Finance division as needed, (e.g., backup for the Utility Billing Program or public phones and counter.
- Assist with periodic updates and upgrades to the City's financial software.
- Understand and conform with the City's Policies and Procedures.
- Understand and conform with the City's Safety Program.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

To perform the job successfully, an individual must be able to have the following:

Knowledge of:

- Principles and practices of general, fund, and governmental accounting including financial statement preparation and methods of financial control and reporting.
- Principles and practices of cost accounting; internal control and audit principles and practices.
- Laws and regulations relating to the financial administration of public agencies.
- City functions, including grant-supported programs, capital improvement projects, and associated financial management and reporting issues.
- Monitors and reports on status of federal, state, and local grants, reviews grant regulations and policies, grant contracts, amendments, and other documents to ensure compliance.
- Principles and practices of information technology particularly related to the processing of accounting and financial information; the operations, requirements, and account codes of the City's general ledger system.
- City personnel rules, policies, and labor contract provisions; principles and practices of effective supervision.
- Familiar with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Pronouncements.
- Principles and practices of basic City government organization and procedural processes.
- Technical knowledge, computer skills and other expertise needed for the specialized area of assignment.
- Principles and practices of public relations and internal/external customer service techniques.
- Relevant local, State, and Federal laws, rules and regulations related to area of assignment.

Ability to:

- Operate computer and spreadsheet software.
- Analyze and make-sound recommendations on complex financial data and operations.
- Understand, interpret, explain, and apply City, State, and Federal laws regulating City financial accounting, reporting and recordkeeping.
- Understand and accurately use the City's Chart of Accounts, financial accounting system, understanding of fund accounting, and maintenance and reconciliation of general ledger accounts.
- Develop and implement financial procedures and controls.
- Perform complicated mathematical calculations and analyses.
- Prepare clear, concise, and comprehensive financial statements, reports, and written materials.
- Exercise sound independent judgment within general policy guidelines.
- Function appropriately in stressful times.
- Complete assignments in an accurate manner on a timely basis.
- Plan and evaluate financial procedures and systems and make sound recommendations for improvement.
- Attend state, regional, or local meetings and training opportunities as deemed necessary.
- Use sound judgment in recognizing scope of authority.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.
- Work with various cultural and ethnic groups in a tactful, and effective manner.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing.

EDUCATION and EXPERIENCE

Any combination of education, experience, and training that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities required for this position is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Equivalent to a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in accounting, finance, business administration or a related field; and three years of professional accounting experience; municipal accounting experience preferred; or equivalent combination of education and experience.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Ability to read, analyze, and interpret general business periodicals, professional journals, technical procedures, or governmental regulations. Ability to write reports, business correspondence, and procedure manuals. Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from groups of managers, clients, customers, and the general public.

MATHEMATICAL SKILLS

Ability to calculate figures and amounts such as discounts, interest, commissions, proportions, percentages, area, circumference, and volume. Ability to apply concepts of basic algebra and geometry.

REASONING ABILITY

Ability to solve practical problems and deal with a variety of concrete variables in situations where only limited standardization exists. Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.

CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, REGISTRATIONS

The ability to transport oneself from one work location to another in a timely manner as required for meetings, duties, and responsibilities.

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of methods, practices and terminology used in financial and statistical work, to include some knowledge of cost and budgetary accounting principles. Ability to set up and revise account or statistical record keeping procedures and records; to review, code, post, adjust and summarize fiscal transactions or statistical data; maintain and reconcile control records and prepare final reports and statements. Ability to operate a typewriter, calculator, and computer-based word processing, spreadsheet, and financial programs.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

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

Work is performed in an office environment, and the incumbent is frequently required to sit for an extended period of time. The incumbent is occasionally required to stand; walk; use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools, or controls; reach with hands and arms; climb or balance; stoop, kneel, or crouch; and talk and hear. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to twenty-five (25) pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, peripheral vision, and the ability to adjust focus.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

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

Work is performed in an office environment where the noise level is usually moderate.