

THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES



CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

## CLASS SPECIFICATION

8/22/02

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT, 1525

**Summary of Duties:** Supervises accounting work such as the analysis, preparation, maintenance, or evaluation of financial records and reports in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP); personally performs the more complex and difficult accounting analyses and reports; or directs or assists in directing the accounting and auditing work of a large City department or major unit of the central accounting and auditing office of the City; applies sound supervisory principles and techniques in building and maintaining an effective work force; fulfills affirmative action responsibilities; and does related work.

**Distinguishing Features:** A Principal Accountant may direct or assist in directing the work of a large accounting division, with satisfactory performance requiring a knowledge of the financial structure and accounting system of the City and the ability to devise and install budgetary, cost, and other accounting systems. An employee of this class may have full accounting responsibility including payroll or serve as assistant in large departments, or supervise a specialized accounting section in the Department of Public Works, or an accounting or auditing unit in the Office of the Controller. A Principal Accountant normally has greater and more diversified administrative responsibilities than a Senior Accountant, and less than positions at the Departmental Chief Accountant level.

Incumbents are responsible for insuring that work complies with the pronouncements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).

### **Example of Duties:**

- Directs the work of a departmental accounting division in maintaining cost and budget accounts;
- Directs the maintenance and posting of subsidiary and control ledgers and the classification of accounting documents;
- Directs the accounting for collection of fees and charges including grants and other billings, the audit of cash receipt records, and the keeping of revenue accounts;
- Prepares reports of the condition of all general and special funds;
- Develops and refines general and cost accounting procedures;
- Prepares or supervises the preparation of financial and cost analyses and recommendations for the formulation of financial policies, studies for management to respond to inquiries about accounting or financial matters, and reports, statements and budget estimates;
- Adapts accounting activities and procedures to computer applications;
- May act as chief accounting employee;
- Directs department accounting staff responsible for preparing payroll work sheets and

- maintaining related sick, vacation and other records for civilian and uniformed personnel;
- Supervises the maintenance of emergency and scheduled overtime records and payroll variation files;
  - Supervises the post-audit of salary records;
  - As chief accounting employee, certifies to the Controller the accuracy of payroll records;
  - Assigns and reviews post-audits of accounts of City departments and of the property tax records;
  - Follows up on recommendations made in audit reports;
  - Supervises the audit of matured bonds and interest coupons presented for payment;
  - Supervises the preparation of statements showing cash receipts and disbursements;
  - Verifies the correctness of balances of cash and investments of various trust and investment funds of the City;
  - Reconciles fund balances of City departments with those of the Controller;
  - Prepares balance sheets and income and disbursement statements for the annual report of the City;
  - Supervises and personally makes analyses and recommendations related to Council actions, administrative directives, contractual agreements, and the development of new or revised accounting procedures, records and cost systems;
  - Prepares and coordinates the preparation of reports to the State Controller regarding the Annual Report for Public Retirement Systems and the expenditure of State funds for the construction and maintenance of highways, streets, bridges or for other purposes;
  - Directs staff engaged in auditing returns and accounts of business firms to secure payment of business taxes and permit fees;
  - Advises taxpayers regarding the application and interpretation of tax and permit ordinances;
  - Supervises the auditing of claims and authorizations for refunds;
  - Advises escrow holders regarding taxes due the City and issues releases in connection with escrows;
  - Makes recommendations regarding forms, procedures, rules, and regulations for use under provisions of tax and permit ordinances;
  - Communicate equal employment/affirmative action information to employees;
  - Apply job-related criteria in selecting, orienting, assigning, training, counseling, evaluating and disciplining subordinates;
  - Assist employees in preparing for promotion as described in the City's Affirmative Action Program;
  - May occasionally be assigned to other duties for training purposes or to meet technological changes or emergencies.

### **Qualifications**

#### **Knowledge of:**

- Theory and practice of governmental and commercial accounting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP);
- Requirements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and the

- Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB);
- Internal Control Certification Program (ICCP) and Single Audit requirement;
  - Cost accounting methods and procedures;
  - Auditing principles and practices in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS);
  - Laws and ordinances relating to the financial administration of City government;
  - Accounting, payroll, and the procurement systems and financial structure of the City;
  - Fair Labor Standards Act requirements that apply to City payroll preparation;
  - Supervisory responsibility for equal employment opportunity and affirmative action as set forth in the City's Affirmative Action Program;
  - Memorandums of understanding as they apply to subordinate personnel and as necessary for supervision of payroll preparation;
  - Principles and practices of public finance administration;
  - Office practices and procedures;
  - Rules, regulations, laws, and ordinances relating to City business taxes and permits;
  - Computer and software applications as they apply to accounting operations;
  - Supervisory principles and practices, including planning, delegating and controlling the work of subordinates;
  - Techniques of training, instructing and evaluation of subordinate work performance;
  - Techniques for counseling, disciplining, and motivating subordinate personnel;
  - Effective safety principles and practices;
  - Procedures for grievance handling;
  - City personnel rules, policies and procedures.

Ability to:

- Prepare or analyze and verify routine financial documents, statements, and reports;
- Operate calculating machines and make rapid, accurate computations;
- Deal with others with tact and good judgment;
- Plan and conduct internal and external audits of accounting records;
- Prepare complex financial statements and reports;
- Plan and supervise the work of professional and clerical accounting personnel;
- Establish and maintain a work environment to enhance both employee morale and productivity;
- Devise, install, and supervise the operation of general, budgetary, and cost accounting systems;
- Prepare comprehensive reports and analyses of financial activities of governmental units.

**Requirements:** Two years of professional accounting or auditing experience with the City of Los Angeles in a class at least at the level of Senior Accountant is required.

**License:** A valid California drivers' license may be required.

Persons with disabilities may be able to perform the essential duties of this class with reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation will be evaluated on an individual basis and depend, in part, on the specific requirements for the job, the limitations related to the disability, and the ability of the hiring department to reasonably accommodate the limitations.

**As provided in Civil Service Commission Rule 2.5 and Section 4.55 of the Administrative Code, this specification is descriptive, explanatory and not restrictive. It is not intended to declare what all of the duties, responsibilities, and required qualifications of any position shall be.**