



**JULY 2012**  
**FLSA: EXEMPT**

## **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT**

*This class specification indicates, in general terms, the type and level of work performed as well as the responsibilities of employees in this classification. The job functions described are not to be interpreted as being all-inclusive to any specific employee.*

### **DEFINITION**

Under general direction, performs a wide variety of complex professional accounting duties requiring advanced experience, knowledge, and competency; maintains general ledger accounts including assets, liabilities, equity, revenue, and expenses; prepares monthly, quarterly, and annual financial reports; supports debt service management, and administers liability claims; provides technical accounting assistance to other departments; provides interpretation of accounts, methods, and financial records; and performs related work as required.

### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED**

Receives general direction from assigned supervisory and/or management staff. Exercises no direct supervision of staff. May exercise functional and technical leadership in assigned workgroups or teams and coach and/or mentor less experienced staff.

### **CLASS CHARACTERISTICS**

This is the advanced journey-level class within the Accountant series. Employees perform the most difficult and responsible assignments, projects, analyses, and programs assigned to classes within this series requiring advanced knowledge of the concepts, practices, procedures, and policies of public sector accounting. Employees at this level are required to be fully trained in all procedures related to assigned area(s) of responsibility and provide leadership to less experienced staff. Responsibilities may include the oversight of programs and/or projects and leads by example. Assignments at this level have significant impact on the District's operations and require broad knowledge of accounting/finance standards and best practices with an in-depth knowledge relative to specialty area. This class is distinguished from the Accounting Supervisor in that the latter is responsible for planning, organizing, and coordinating all programs, projects, and activities of a work section and for the full supervision of assigned professional, technical, and administrative support staff.

### **EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS** (Illustrative Only)

*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.*

- Maintains general ledger accounts including assets, liabilities, equity, revenue, and expenses; prepares monthly, quarterly, and annual journal entries and reconciliations of activity to the general ledger.
- Performs general ledger analysis including analyses of quarterly expenses; reconciles various asset, liability, and expense accounts in the general ledger.
- Prepares monthly, quarterly, and annual financial reports; participates in the preparation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report; prepares the State Controller's Report.
- Coordinates external audit activities; serves as liaison between external auditors and District staff;

- prepares annual schedules for external auditors and respond to questions.
- Compiles data for and prepare budget estimates for the current year; makes recommendations for the new year.
- Performs debt service management duties; prepares monthly charts, reconciles trade confirmations, and maintains daily and weekly interest rate databases.
- Administers the District's risk management liability claims; prepares payment vouchers related to debt service and liability claims; maintains accurate files to support debt service, and risk management operations.
- Responds to requests for information regarding sewer service and permit fees; reviews appeals for refund of sewer service and permit fees; analyzes information and provide recommendation for adjustments.
- Accounts for revenue brought into the District including placement of current fees on property tax bills; evaluates and makes recommendations on new revenue sources or changes in existing revenue structures.
- Provides technical accounting assistance to other departments; researches inquiries; prepares reports to monitor project expenses.
- Attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of new trends and innovations in the field of financial management and accounting.
- When assigned to programs and/or projects, provides leadership and guidance to others. As a program and/or project leader, may direct, assign, train, monitor and review the work activities of team members; determines work priorities; oversees quality and quantity of work performed and ensures adherence to established procedures by instructing employees accordingly; is a reference to employees by possessing specialized skills; develops and implements work improvements.
- Performs related duties as required.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Knowledge of:**

- Generally accepted principles, practices, and methods of public and governmental accounting and financing.
- Methods and techniques of accounting and general ledger maintenance.
- General principles and practices of data processing and its applicability to accounting and municipal operations.
- Advanced principles and applications of critical thinking and analysis.
- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, regulatory codes, ordinances, and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
- Recent and on-going developments, current literature, and sources of information related to the operations of the assigned programs.
- Principles and practices of business organization and public administration.
- Modern and complex principles and practices of financial record keeping and reporting.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work, including word processing, database, and spreadsheet applications.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Basic principles and practices of employee supervision.
- Techniques for effectively representing the District in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, educational, regulatory, and legislative organizations.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and District staff.

### **Ability to:**

- Plan, schedule, assign, and oversee activities of assigned workgroups or teams.

- Oversee programs and/or projects and by example promote the individual professional growth and development of less experienced staff.
- Resolve conflict through workable solutions and alternative approaches.
- Inspect the work of others and maintain established quality control standards.
- Train others on proper work procedures and lead by example.
- Demonstrate safe work practices and procedures in the workplace.
- Apply critical thinking and analysis to a broad range of situations.
- Identify and implement effective course of action to complete assigned work.
- Perform the most complex accounting work in support of the maintenance of the general accounting, budget, and cost systems of the District.
- Provide specialized or general analysis support in various accounting functions.
- Analyze financial data and draw sound conclusions.
- Prepare clear, complete, and concise financial statements and reports.
- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with Federal, State, and local policies, procedures, laws, rules, and regulations.
- Identify problems, research and analyze relevant information, develop and present recommendations and justification for solution.
- Make accurate arithmetic, financial, and statistical computations.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, record-keeping, and tracking systems.
- Maintain general ledger accounts and prepare appropriate journal entries.
- Perform general ledger analysis.
- Administer the District's risk management liability claims.
- Analyze trends in revenues and expenditures to determine future problems or opportunities facing District operations.
- Respond to requests and inquiries from the general public.
- Operate office equipment including computers and supporting word processing, spreadsheet, and database applications.
- Provide assistance to higher level accounting staff in various aspects of the accounting function.
- Maintain current and accurate financial records and files.
- Maintain confidentiality and be discreet in handling and processing confidential information and data.
- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical time deadlines.
- Use critical thinking techniques and advanced methods in reaching independent decisions.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and harmonious working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

**Employment Standards:**

Any combination of education and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities may be qualifying as determined by OCSD.

1. Possession of a bachelor's degree from a college or university which is accredited by the US Department of Education, with major coursework in accounting, finance, business administration, or a related field; AND,
2. Five (5) years of increasingly responsible experience in accounting or financial management.

**Licenses and Certifications:**

Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Driver's License by time of appointment.

**Disaster Service Workers:**

All Orange County Sanitation District employees are designated Disaster Service Workers through state law (California Government Code Section 3100-3109). Employment with the Orange County Sanitation District requires the affirmation of a loyalty oath to this effect. Employees are required to complete all related training as assigned, and to return to work as ordered in the event of an emergency.

### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; 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 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 weighing up to 25 pounds.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS**

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.