

TO: Finance Committee
FROM: Victoria Larson, Human Resources
DATE: June 29, 2022
SUBJECT: Public Information Officer 1 - Common Council Office

At the request of the Common Council Chief of Staff Karen Kapusta-Pofahl, I studied the new position approved in the Common Council's 2022 budget identified as 'Community Engagement Specialist'. In 2021, the Common Council extensively discussed the creation of this new position with the consultation of Human Resources. These discussions and legislative actions developed the position description which outlines duties and responsibilities as well as the training and experience needed to qualify for this important role. Based on my work with the Common Council, review of the position description and related classifications, I recommend the new position in the 2022 Common Council operating budget identified as 'Community Engagement Specialist' be classified as a Public Information Officer 1 in CG 18, Range 8.

For the purpose of classification placement I reviewed both the Public Information Officer (PIO) 1-2 classification series in CG18, R8 & R10, respectively; and the newly created Community Relations Specialist classification in CG18, R4. Through my review, I determined the outlined position description stated job duties and the training and experience with higher expectations than what is expected of a Community Relations Specialist.

The general description for the Community Relations Specialist classification states the following:

This is **professional communications and public relations work** on behalf of a City of Madison Department or Division. The work involves **designing and producing public information, social media, educational, and internal communications materials and activities** for a Department/Division under the general supervision of higher level professional staff. Duties include **public relations, public contact and customer service, social media, and maintaining internal/external communications and materials** for a Department/Division. Work involves considerable judgment and discretion with relation to customer service and technical support within a Department/Division.[emphasis added]

While the general description for the PIO 1 classification states the following:

This is responsible **professional public relations work** in **developing and implementing a comprehensive Public Information Program** on behalf of a specific city agency. This position **coordinates all media relations, and prepares and disseminates appropriate public information** regarding departmental activities, events and operations **to both respond to the public interest and promote departmental objectives**. Under the supervision of a higher-level manager or the agency head, this work involves considerable judgment and discretion in identifying, recommending, implementing, and evaluating public and internal information programs. [emphasis added]

The Common Council's 'Community Engagement Specialist' position description indicates the need to plan, coordinate and implement a comprehensive communications program similar to the PIO classification. Both the PIO classification and the 'Community Engagement Specialist' also require

considerable judgment and discretion when working on communication programs. In addition, the Community Relations Specialist classification simply outlines supervision by a higher-level staff. While, the PIO classification indicates supervision occurs by a higher-level manager or the agency head. The Common Council Chief of Staff will serve as the supervisor to the new position for the Common Council office. These points indicate a greater responsibility for all aspects of a communication program for the Common Council office similar to the expectations of a PIO. The PIO and 'Community Engagement Specialist' also have similar supervision structure which allows for a direct line of communication with the top decision makers within a department.

It is important to note the higher level job responsibilities outlined in the 'Community Engagement Specialist's' position description more closely aligns with the PIO classification. Sixty percent (60%) of positional time will be spend working directly with Alders, the Common Council Chief of Staff, the Mayor's Office and other City staff to develop communication strategies to determine engagement needs, increase public engagement, generate awareness of City services and constituent needs, and promote citywide accomplishments. These responsibilities will include working with City leaders to implement a citywide strategic communication plan. This includes the ability to work collaboratively with other related city staff to revise existing community engagement strategies. Such duties are beyond the scope outlined in the Community Relations Specialist classification; and requires considerably more collaboration and the ability to work across an entire government structure. This position will require a greater understanding on how to facilitate cross functional teams and therefore has a broader scope.

Finally, the training and experience expected of the new position is similar to what is expected at the PIO 1 level. The Community Relations Specialist classification only requires one year of work experience in a related field and a related degree. Both the 'Community Engagement Specialist' and PIO 1 require three years of work experience in a related field and a related degree. The Common Council President's workgroup which discussed this position expressed it was important for this new position to have multiple years of experience. This experience expectation falls in line with the higher-level work tasks and reporting structure of the 'Community Engagement Specialist'.

I also reviewed the PIO 2 classification and this option was discussed as part of the President's workgroup. Since this is a new position for the Council Office, I advised the Council to consider hiring at a PIO 1 level at this point. This recommendation allows for the time to observe the types of projects, independent judgement, and discretion needed to complete this role. I recommend the work performance of the individual in this new position is assessed after one to two years in order to determine if the role should progress beyond the PIO 1 level. This allows time for the Common Council and Chief of Staff to assess the work and potentially give advancement opportunity for the individual hired into this new position.

Based on my review of this position against the proposed class specification and other classification throughout the City, I have determined that the new position in the 2022 Common Council operating budget be recreated as a Public Information Officer 1 in CG 18, Range 8.

The necessary resolution to implement this recommendation has been drafted.

Editor's Note:

Compensation Group/Range	2022 Annual Minimum (Step 1)	2022 Annual Maximum (Step 5)	2022 Annual Maximum (+12% Longevity)
18/4	\$58,084.26	\$66,981.46	\$75,019.36
18/8	\$66,981.46	\$79,484.34	\$89,022.44

Cc: Karen Kapusta-Pofahl, Common Council Chief of Staff
Harper Donahue, Human Resources Director