

TO: Personnel Board
FROM: William Wick, Human Resources Analyst
DATE: September 5, 2023
SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Specialist series

At the request of Employee Assistance Program Manager Arlyn Gonzalez, I have studied the positions of Employee Assistance (EA) Specialist 1 in CG 18, Range 06 and Employee Assistance Specialist 2 in CG 18, Range 08 (position #4378, currently underfilled by Mary Eldridge as an EA Specialist 1; and vacant position #4766). After reviewing the position descriptions and information provided by the Program Manager, and having interviewed the Program Manager, I recommend the following:

- Retain the Employee Assistance Specialist 1 classification in CG18/R06 for Employee Assistance Specialists who have not yet obtained the Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) designation;
- Retain the Employee Assistance Specialist 2 classification in CG18/R08 for Employee Assistance Specialists who have obtained the LCSW designation, but lack the requisite experience to be hired/promoted into a newly created Employee Assistance Specialist 3 classification;
- Create a new classification of Employee Assistance Specialist 3 in CG18/R10; and
- Reallocate employee Mary Eldridge to Employee Assistance Specialist 2.

The Employee Assistance profession is a specialty area of mental health that focuses on behavioral health in the workplace. As the profession has grown and become more specialized over the past few decades, the requirements to practice in the industry have also changed. While a bachelor's degree in a mental health field was previously sufficient to practice clinically, that is no longer the case, as the requirement has increased to a master's degree and obtainment of a certification that validates the master's level education. The knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform clinical work, such as counseling and risk assessment, under an Employee Assistance Program is now demonstrated by the attainment of a related master's degree and a clinical license. Licensure requires the completion of 3,000 hours of direct and indirect practice with clients.

The classification specification for Employee Assistance Specialist 1 describes the work as:

... responsible professional work, in conjunction with the EAP Coordinator to maintain the City's EAP/CISM programs for all City Departments and Divisions. Under the supervision of the EAP Coordinator, employees **provide services and consultation** with management, labor relations, training, and related organizational areas **in building ongoing support for EAP** utilization at every operating level. Incumbents **provide intervention and direct services to employees** at all levels as well as family members.

This series is structured so that the **Employee Assistance Specialist 1 will advance to the 2 level as a function of increased skill and independence**, as well as familiarity with City departments/divisions, and the City's external EAP provider, **generally after approximately 2 years**. [emphasis added]

The classification specification for Employee Assistance Specialist 2 describes the work as:

... the **objective level of the EA Specialist progression series**. Under general supervision, the employee will be **expected to independently provide services and referrals** as appropriate to employees and family members. The employee will have **more independent responsibility for coordinating volunteer activities and developing training**. [emphasis added]

Current minimum qualifications for EA Specialist 1 are “Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work, Counseling, Psychology, Industrial Psychology, Sociology, or other related field” and for EA Specialist 2 are “Two years directly related professional experience in providing professional EAP services to employees, similar to that gained as an EAP Specialist 1 with the City of Madison. Such experience will normally have been gained after graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work, Counseling, Psychology, Industrial Psychology, Sociology, or other related field.”

Guidance from the National Association of Social Work (NASW) indicates that, in most cases, clinical social workers are required to have the following credentials:

- Master’s degree from a social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education
- Minimum of two years or 3,000 hours of post-master’s degree experience in a supervised clinical setting
- A clinical license in the state of practice

Wisconsin requires LCSW applicants to accrue 3,000 hours of post-master's experience within two years. This must be done under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker. Of these 3,000 hours, 1,000 hours must consist of face-to-face clinical social work with clients.

While not all work performed by the City’s Employee Assistance Specialists is clinical in nature, there is a need for some clinical work to be performed. Ensuring that EA Specialists meet NASW and Wisconsin credentialing requirements serves to limit liability in clinical practice.

Maintaining the EA Specialist 1 and EA Specialist 2 classifications in CG18/06 and CG18/08, respectively, would allow for 1) a candidate with the requisite degree, but no license, to be hired as at the 1 level in order to gain the additional experience needed to obtain the license; and 2) a candidate with the requisite degree and license, but lacking the work experience to be hired as an EA Specialist 2 level. The new classification of EA Specialist 3 would more appropriately recognize the education, training, and work experience requisite to perform the full scope of Employee Assistance Specialist work, including support of critical incident and workplace crisis response, which is considered as clinical practice.

For the reasons detailed in this memo, I recommend the creation of a new classification of Employee Assistance Specialist 3 in CG 18, Range 10 and further recommend that employee Mary Eldridge be reclassified from Employee Assistance Specialist 1 to Employee Assistant Specialist 2, based upon the updated minimum qualifications for those respective classifications.

We have prepared the necessary Resolutions to implement this recommendation.

Effective Date: 11/27/2022

Compensation Group Range	2023 Annual Minimum (Step 1)	2023 Annual Maximum (Step 5)	2023 Annual Maximum (+ 12% Longevity)
18/06	\$64,246.78	\$75,645.96	\$84,723.60
18/08	\$69,687.28	\$82,695.34	\$92,618.76
18/10	\$75,645.96	\$90,912.64	\$101,822.24

Cc: Erin Hillson, Human Resources Director
Emaan Abdel-Halim, HR Services Manager
Arlyn Gonzalez, EAP Program Manager
Mary Eldridge, Employee Assistance Specialist 1