

TO: Personnel Board  
FROM: William Wick, Human Resources Analyst  
DATE: September 5, 2023  
SUBJECT: Arborist 1 and Arborist 2

On February 6, 2023, a request was submitted to Human Resources by Forestry staff to study the Arborist classification due to changes in duties and responsibilities that have occurred since the creation of the classification. After reviewing the information provided by a group of Arborists, and having met with Forestry Operations Supervisor Craig Klinke, City Forester Ian Brown, and Streets Superintendent Charlie Romines, I recommend the following:

- Recreate the classification of Arborist 1 in Compensation Group 16, Range 11;
- Recreate the classification of Arborist 2 in CG 16/R13;
- Reallocate current Arborist 1 employees to CG16/R11; and
- Reallocate current Arborist 2 employees to CG16/R13.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), "Arborists provide professional tree care. They use sophisticated techniques to ascend trees, prune and remove dead or excess branches, and lower them to the ground. It can be dangerous work, so safety precautions are paramount. Arborists also plant trees and shrubs and spray them to manage diseases and insects." In 2017, the State of Wisconsin developed a first-in-the-nation Arborist Apprenticeship Program that recognizes Arborist as a skilled trade. The City classifies other skilled trades in CG71 – these include the classifications of Painter, Painter Leadworker, Carpenter, Electrician, Plumber, and Building and Trades Foreperson. Skilled trades require specialized skill, which is typically acquired through a technical or trade school, apprenticeship, or some combination thereof. The Arborist Apprenticeship Program through the DWD takes approximately three years to complete and requires 6,000 hours of on-the-job time, 440 hours of related instruction time, plus additional training to obtain First Aid and CPR certifications and State of Wisconsin Pesticide Applicator certification.

The classification specification for Arborist 1 describes the work as:

**. . . responsible skilled manual work in the care and maintenance of City trees and shrubs. The work includes the pruning, repairing, spraying and removal of trees; the preparation and planting of new trees; and the maintenance of related equipment.**

This is not intended to be a progression series. Rather, positions at the Arborist 1 and Arborist 2 levels are dependent on the needs of the Parks Division and will be posted and filled through competition. . . Work is performed under the general leadership of an Arborist 2 with **overall supervision received from a Tree Trimmer Foreperson.** [emphasis added]

The classification specification for Arborist 2 describes the work as:

**. . . responsible skilled manual and lead work in directing a crew in the performance of activities relating to the care and maintenance of City trees and shrubs. Work is performed under the general supervision of a Tree Trimmer Foreperson and involves the exercise of independent judgment and discretion in completing assigned projects.** [emphasis added]

In comparison, the classification specification for Painter describes the work as:

**. . . skilled journey level painting work involving all phases of the preparation and painting of public facilities.** Work is performed with a **high degree of independence** (based on work orders and/or oral instructions). Employees are expected to **exercise judgment and initiative** in completing assignments. [emphasis added]

Painter is classified in CG71/R01. In terms of compensation, this is close to CG16/R12, in which Arborist 2 is currently classified. The Painter classification appears to require greater independence of function than the Arborist 1 classification, but the Painter classification does not require the performance of leadworker responsibilities that is required of the Arborist 2 classification

Additionally, the classification specification for Painter Leadworker describes the work as:

**. . . skilled leadership work in coordinating and participating in the preparation and painting of public facilities.** This class is distinguished by **leadership responsibility associated with the planning, coordination and oversight of assigned painting projects involving subordinate journey level painters.** Under general supervision, the employee **exercises considerable judgment in meeting program objectives.** [emphasis added]

Painter Leadworker is classified in CG71/R02; and in terms of compensation, this falls between CG16/R13 and CG16/R14. The leadworker requirements of the Painter Leadworker Classification appear to align with the leadworker requirements of the Arborist 2 classification.

Arborists are skilled workers, as recognized by the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. This recognition formally occurred in 2017, well past the last time the City's Arborist classifications were last studied. Recreating the classification of Arborist 1 in CG16, R11 and Arborist 2 in CG16, R13 properly recognizes the training and experience required to perform the work and improves internal equity in comparison to other skilled trade classifications within the City. Placement of these classifications within the aforementioned ranges best serves to limit compression in relation to other existing classifications that have higher education/training and/or experience requirements.

The International Society of Arborists (ISA) is a 501(c) nonprofit organization registered in the state of Illinois that is recognized as the global source for arboricultural information and knowledge, and provides professional development opportunities within the field of arboriculture. ISA offers a Certified Arborist credential that is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) National Accreditation Board (NAB) for meeting or exceeding International Standard for Organization (ISO) 17024 standards for certification bodies. ISA 17024 is a global standard that sets out the requirements for the competence of personnel certification bodies and the certification of individuals. Both City Forester Ian Brown and Streets Superintendent Charlie Romines recognize the value to the City of having ISA Certified Arborists on staff, as it reflects an objective standard of expertise that is respected by the residents they serve. While Human Resources and Streets/Forestry would like to properly compensate Arborists who have attained the ISA Certified Arborist credential, we are still evaluating the most appropriate way to address that compensation and do not feel the creation of Certified Arborist classifications is warranted at this time.

In order to appropriately recognize the skilled work performed by Arborists, I recommend that Arborist 1 be reclassified to CG16/R11, that Arborist 2 be reclassified to CG16/R13, and that all

current City Arborists be reallocated to the new range that aligns with their classification of Arborist 1 or 2.

We have prepared the necessary resolutions to implement this recommendation.

Effective Date: 2/19/2023

Compensation Group/ Range	2023 Annual Minimum (Step 1)	2023 Annual Maximum (Step 5)	2023 Annual Maximum (+12% longevity)
16/10	\$54,433.08	\$60,926.84	\$68,238.04
16/11	\$56,192.24	\$62,662.86	\$70,182.32
16/12	\$57,767.32	\$64,085.06	\$71,775.34
16/13	\$59,345.78	\$66,136.46	\$74,072.96

Cc: Charlie Romines, Streets Superintendent  
Ian Brown, City Forester  
Craig Klinke, Forestry Operations Supervisor  
Arborists  
Gregg Gotzion, Local 6000 President  
Erin Hillson, Human Resources Director  
Emaan Abdel-Halim, HR Services Manager