



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Proposed Staffing for City Councilmembers

- 1) Motion Directing Staff
- 2) Resolution of Appropriation for Funding One Hourly Employee

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Action Item

Approved for 12/17/2024 calendar

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City Council directed staff to investigate staffing options for Councilmembers. An analysis of twelve California cities shows diverse job titles, duties, and reporting structures for Council assistants. Key responsibilities of these roles include administrative support, constituent and community relations, public education and media management and policy research. Staffing models range from shared support for all Councilmembers to dedicated staff for each Council member. Considerations include staffing costs, supervision, office space, labor standards, and training requirements. To initiate this program, staff is recommending the hiring of one hourly employee with a reassessment to be conducted in six to twelve months.

RECOMMENDATION

Council to initiate this program by approving the hiring of one hourly employee.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Background

The City Council directed staff to investigate staffing options for Councilmembers during the FY 2024-25 Budget Study Session. The Council briefly discussed the possibility of adding staffing support for council members and provided initial feedback and preferences as summarized below:

- Examples from other cities were presented, showing various staffing models and salary ranges. Concerns were raised about the relevance of these comparisons, particularly the inclusion of larger cities like San Jose.
- Some preferred a part-time or hourly model to minimize costs, with suggestions for salaries starting at \$30–\$35/hour or capping costs at \$40,000 annually per council member. Other salary suggestions mentioned was minimum wage.
- There was interest in creating opportunities for students, recent graduates, or retirees, with one envisioning the role like a paid internship.
- A couple Council members emphasized that these positions should report directly to council members, not the city manager.
- Direction was given to staff to return with a more detailed report that includes options for roles, responsibilities, and salary structures.
- Overall, there was cautious support for exploring the idea, but council members expressed a need for a cost-effective and flexible approach, aligning with their individual needs and budget considerations.

Analysis & Research

Staff conducted research on twelve California cities (Calabasas, Carson, Chino, Compton, El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Irvine, Pasadena, Pomona, San Jose, South El Monte) that employ Council assistants or similar classifications. These cities were selected based on the availability of Council staffing to ensure relevant comparisons. Since not all cities comparable in size to Glendale have Council assistants, the scope of research was broadened to include cities with such positions. This approach allowed staff to analyze job duties and compensation to provide Council with the requested data. The research examined job duties, reporting structures, and compensation, summarized in this report.

Classification and Compensation Ranges

The following is a list of the various titles/classifications that support councilmembers in the researched cities:

1. Assistant to City Council
2. City Council District Liaison
3. Council Aide
4. Council Assistant
5. Council Chief of Staff
6. Council Community Relations Coordinator
7. Council Executive Assistant
8. Council Field Manager
9. Council Liaison
10. Executive Assistant to the Mayor/Council
11. Principal Council Executive Assistant
12. Senior Council Assistant

These titles range from entry level up to senior management and compensation across these roles ranges from \$88,000 to \$165,000 annually, inclusive of benefits.

Summary of Job Responsibilities

While titles and duties of Council staffing differ between the researched cities, four main categories emerged as summarized below:

1. Administrative, Scheduling & Event Planning
Council staff coordinate and schedule appointments, meetings, and events. They arrange travel accommodations for Council members. They prepare staff reports, records, and necessary documents for council meetings. They may also coordinate, plan or execute special events on behalf of the Council.
2. Constituent and Community Relations
Council staff act as the primary liaisons between city council members and the community. They handle complaints, reports, and inquiries from constituents through various communication channels, including in-person meetings, telephone, and email. They attend city and community-related meetings and events, representing the Council when members are unavailable. Council staff are responsible for building and maintaining relationships with community members, organizations, neighborhoods, and businesses, fostering open lines of communication and ensuring the Council's presence in the community.

3. Public Education and Media Management

Council staff are responsible for preparing news releases and press conferences. They are also tasked with effectively communicating with the media and the public. They obtain and distribute information to and from the constituents through various letters, reports, and other modes of public communication. Council staff also create and develop newsletters, flyers, and all other printed media information. They also manage the council's social media accounts and may assist in preparing speeches/talking points.

4. Policy and Research Analysis

Council staff collect information for the city council's policy plans through research and legislative analysis. They may gather this data through correspondence with the community, other elected officials, or surveys. Council staff may offer their knowledge of Federal, State, and local regulations to advise the council in their decision-making and assist in developing and implementing public policy. They may also draft resolutions, requests, and memoranda as needed.

It is important to note that Council staff cannot work on political campaigns.

Dedicated vs. Shared Staff

A range of staffing options were observed in the researched cities. Variations of staffing configurations included:

- A single dedicated staff member for all Councilmembers.
- Multiple shared staff for all Councilmembers.
- Dedicated staff for each Councilmember and/or the Mayor.

Reporting Structure

Based on the cities researched, Council assistants/aides report to management in the following offices/departments:

- City Manager's Office
- City Clerk's Office
- Directly to Councilmembers

Direct reporting to Councilmembers can increase administrative burdens, as Councilmembers would be responsible for hiring, training, evaluating, disciplining and if necessary, terminating. This concern is more challenging and can cause conflicts where staff need to report to multiple Councilmembers. Directly reporting to Councilmembers also raises the risk of staff misrepresenting their own will as that of Councilmembers, leading to potential miscommunication and misalignment with official positions.

Pasadena's Approach

Pasadena has Council Districts and Pasadena's City Charter mandates staff report to the City Manager, City Attorney, or City Clerk, who are all appointed by the City Council. Council District Liaisons, formerly titled Field Representatives, receive task direction from Councilmembers but administrative oversight from the City Clerk given the Charter requirement.

Other Considerations

In addition to costs, Council should consider the following factors:

Office Space

Council carefully considers the number of dedicated staff positions to be allocated in the Management Services Office, considering the current limitations of the available space.

Work Hours

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a U.S. law that sets rules about pay, work hours, and overtime. It ensures employees get paid extra (overtime pay) if they work more than 40 hours a week. If an hourly (non-exempt) employee, conducts any work outside of normal hours (like answering emails or calls, attending events or managing social media accounts) this can count as overtime and must be paid.

Confidentiality/Access to sensitive City information

Councilmembers routinely have access to sensitive and/or confidential information. In some cities, the Council staff have access to Council emails. As interpreted by the California Attorney General, the Brown Act prohibits Council aides/staff from attending closed session. Access to closed session material, attorney-client information, and other confidential information will have to be restricted.

Training

Onboarding and training new staff are a significant investment of time and resources. Student internships can become counterproductive investments if the rotation between interns lasts less than six months. There may not be enough time for the intern to fully utilize their training and contribute meaningfully to the organization unless the internship is sufficiently long.

Sacramento City Hall Internship Program

City Council requested that staff also research and provide information on Sacramento's City Hall Internship Program.

The Sacramento Summer City Hall Internship is a six-week interactive program designed for high school freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. It aims to empower students with civic engagement skills and the ability to impact their communities. The program consists of classroom instruction four days a week for five hours with additional components such as career exploration, financial literacy, and personal wellness. Afternoons are reserved for internships with city offices and community organizations.

This program differs from dedicated Council staffing in that it emphasizes skill building in youth rather than professional administrative support for councilmembers. It is short-term (six-weeks) and educational in nature. Internship assignments in the program are temporary and primarily engage in group projects rather than dedicated assistance with projects. Participants receive a stipend rather than salary.

Options for Council Consideration

To launch this program, staff recommends hiring one hourly employee to support the full Council, working 40 hours per week and reassess needs in six to twelve months. To alleviate the administrative burden on Council, administrative supervision, (e.g. payroll, evaluations, etc.) will be conducted by a staff member from the City Manager's Office and direction of tasks can come from Councilmembers.

Two existing City classifications with varying responsibilities, education, experience, and compensation have been provided for Council consideration:

- **Administrative Intern** role involves learning departmental functions through administrative support, requiring college senior or graduate-level education but no specific prior experience, with pay ranging from \$17 to \$19 per hour. Full job description included in Exhibit 1.
- **Assistant to City Council** provides administrative support to council members and management staff, ideally holding an Associate's Degree and having at least two years of relevant secretarial experience, with an hourly rate of \$26 to \$34. Full job description included in Exhibit 1.

Title	Job Definition	Education	Experience	Hourly Rate Range
Administrative Intern	Under close supervision, performs a wide variety of administrative support work in the unit assigned to become familiar with the overall functions of the Department or Section.	Must be a senior or graduate student in a college or university with specialization in a field related to a specific training position. Junior level in college is acceptable only if an individual at this level has exceptional qualifications in the specific field related to the division.	No specific requirement	\$17 to \$19
Assistant to City Council	Under general supervision is responsible for providing a broad spectrum of administrative support to the City Council and other Management Services Department staff.	An Associate's Degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, or a related field is highly desirable.	Two years of recent moderately difficult secretarial experience is required. Experience working with elected and/or appointed public sector officials is highly desirable. Experience working in the public sector is highly desirable.	\$26 to \$34

Role of Existing Administrative Staff

Two Executive Assistants currently work in the City Manager's Office who provide highly skilled administrative support to the Council and City Manager. With the potential addition of Council staff, some of the administrative, scheduling, and constituent relations tasks may be shared, enabling the Executive Assistants to focus more directly on supporting the City Manager who does not currently have dedicated administrative assistance.

FISCAL IMPACT

The annual cost to hire one full-time (40 hours per week) hourly is \$104,000. The cost for the remainder of the fiscal year (January to June 2025) is \$52,000, which was not included as a part of the Management Services FY 2024-25 adopted budget. Thus, staff is seeking approval of a resolution of appropriation from the General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance. The appropriation request is outlined below:

One Hourly Employee (40 Hours Per Week)

Requesting Appropriation			
Amount	From Account	To Account	Funding Source
\$52,000	GL: 25300-1010-000	GL: 41300-1010-MSD-6504-P0000-	General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

N/A

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council may note and file this report.
2. Council may provide further direction to staff.
3. Council can ask staff to conduct additional research.
4. Council may defer the decision on adding Council staffing to when the Charter Review Committee presents its recommendations on Council Districts.
5. Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Submitted by:

Elena Bolbolian, Chief Innovation Officer

Prepared by:

Elena Bolbolian, Chief Innovation Officer

Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Job Descriptions