

Next Ord:2074-24
Next Res:1140-24

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION AGENDA

April 3, 2024

6:00 PM

**Sedro-Woolley Municipal Building
Council Chambers
325 Metcalf Street**

- a. Call to Order**
- b. Pledge of Allegiance**
- c. Roll Call**
- d. Introduction of Special Guests and Presentation**
- e. Unfinished Business**

- 1. Human Resources Manager Position Request

- f. New Business**

- g. Public Comments**

Please keep comments to three minutes or less. Because State law prohibits the use of city facilities for the purpose of supporting or opposing a campaign or ballot proposition, we respectfully request that public comment not make reference to such matters.

Written comments will be accepted by letter or via email at finance@sedro-woolley.gov Attn: 'Public Comment.'

- h. Executive Session**

- 1. Discussion with Legal Counsel About Current or Potential Litigation (RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)).

- i. Adjournment**

Next Meeting(s) City Council - April 10, 2024

The City of Sedro-Woolley complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, age, disability, or sex. The City of Sedro-Woolley doesn't exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, age, disability, or sex.

The City of Sedro-Woolley also complies with applicable state laws and doesn't discriminate on the basis of creed, gender, gender expression or identity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

Join Zoom Meeting:

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+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

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Meeting ID: 917 8685 0179

Passcode: 091845



City Council Agenda Item

Agenda Item No.: e.1.

Date: April 3, 2024

From: Charlie Bush, City Administrator, Kelly Kohnken, Finance Director / City Clerk

Subject: Human Resources Manager Position Request

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Motion to include a Human Resources Manager position in the next 2024 budget amendment.

ISSUE:

Should the City create its first full-time human resources position?

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY INFORMATION:

Staff included a request to create a Human Resources (HR) Manager position (job description attached) in the most recent budget amendment approved by the City Council. The Council requested that the position be removed and that there be further discussion regarding the proposal. This evening's work session is dedicated to a deeper dive regarding the reasons for the proposal. Staff are requesting direction from Council on this topic to help us put together the next 2024 budget amendment. We recommend including this position in that amendment.

Staff did some additional research as a follow-up to the conversations had earlier in 2024 on this topic.

How many other cities of our size have a full-time HR position?

Of the 42 Washington cities with populations between 10,000 and 25,000, Sedro-Woolley is one of two that does not have either a human resources director/manager or a dedicated HR professional (HR analyst, specialist, coordinator, generalist). The other is Woodinville, but Woodinville does not offer as many services (no fire, police, or solid waste operations/staff) as Sedro-Woolley and, as a result, only has 44 employees. A sort of these same cities by their number of authorized full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) tells a similar story. Two detailed reports, one by population and one by FTE, are included in the attachments.

How many comparable cities have a City Administrator and a full-time HR professional?

In negotiations with the City's AFSCME labor group (primarily public works and city hall employees), we agreed on comparable cities. For the 2023 labor negotiations, the City and AFSCME agreed on the cities of Airway Heights, Anacortes, Ferndale, Lynden, Shelton, Stanwood, Yelm, and Town of Steilacoom. Of the eight comparable cities used for AFSCME labor negotiations, all but the Town of

Steilacoom (population 6,825) had a City Administrator, City Manager, or Admin Service Director and at least one full-time human resources professional. Other surrounding cities, not included in the AFSCME comparable cities, include Mount Vernon and Burlington, which also have a City Administrator and HR professionals. This report is also attached.

What is the appropriate amount of human resources staffing for an organization?

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), a member-based HR professionals organization with over 340,000 members (all sectors) in 180 countries, published an article in January 2024 covering recent research from ADP Research Institute regarding HR staffing (article is attached). Organizations of all kinds have been adding HR staff at a rate faster than their organizations are growing over the past few years. The average HR staff to employee ratio, according to SHRM's 2022 Human Capital Benchmark Report, is now 1.7 HR professionals per 100 employees. Using that metric, Sedro-Woolley should have 1.8 HR professionals on staff. The article further discusses the "sweet spot" for HR staffing at between 1.5 and 4.5 HR staff per 100 employees. It also talks about how employee turnover increases when there is less than one HR staff member per 200 employees.

Could the City contract with the private sector for human resources services?

We did not find any cities in our research that fully contracted, or even mostly contracted, for HR services. We posed this question to MRSC (our response received is attached). MRSC provided some cities from their past inquiries that have received some HR consulting services. All of the cities mentioned by MRSC, except for Duvall (population 8,530 with no fire department or solid waste operations, and just 56 authorized full-time equivalent employees), had full-time HR staff. Duvall's HR is handled by their City Administrator. The types of HR public sector consulting provided by MRSC and that we found centered around classification and compensation, Labor & Industries claims management, labor management, employee coaching, policy development, general consulting, HR advice and legal counsel, and outside facilitators for evaluations. We have used consultants for some of the same projects and tasks in the past and will need to continue to do so in the future. One firm, Archbright, does provide direct HR staffing support, but their focus appears to be short-term staffing, not staffing a permanent operation, and much of the work performed would be union work for us, requiring bargaining with our union for us to implement anything.

Risk Management

City Attorney Nikki Thompson will be joining this conversation to answer questions regarding risks when an organization is not appropriately staffed in the human resources area. A letter from our risk pool, Cities Insurance Authority of Washington (CIAW), regarding the important role of human resources leaders in organizations, is also attached. Personnel issues are one of the most litigated topics in local government.

Guest presenter and attendees

We thought that it might be helpful for you to hear from a public sector human resources professional about their role in their organization. Kathy White, Human Resources Manager at Skagit Public Utility District, will be joining the work session and providing a short presentation. We also invited our directors. Each provided their own thoughts on the need for a Human Resources Manager in the organization (see attachment) and will be available to answer questions. Finally, we invited our bargaining units, which also have a vested interest in seeing human resources staffing at an appropriate

level, to support productive labor relations and high workplace quality for their members.

What would the City Administrator do if he wasn't doing HR work?

As you might note with our comparable cities and other cities of our size having both administration and HR positions, managing a city is a job with full-time requirements. A list of some of the items that would fill the City Administrator's time, without HR as a large part of his duties, is attached, in addition to the code section that lists his job duties.

FISCAL IMPACT, IF APPROPRIATE:

The placeholder Human Resources Manager position is currently included in the non-represented salary schedule at grade 127. Step 1 annual salary is \$100,680 with estimated taxes and benefits of \$48,770, for a total 2024 salary and benefits of \$149,450.

The Human Resources Manager position would be funded by the General Fund. Expenditures in the General Fund generally benefit other city funds as well, specifically the utility funds (Sewer, Solid Waste, and Stormwater). For example, accounts payable and payroll positions are funded by the General Fund but also benefit the utility funds. The city uses an indirect cost allocation (IDCA) plan to allocate (move) expenditures from the General Fund to the utility funds. The IDCA allocates based on the last full year of actual expenditures, so the fiscal year 2024 allocation is based on 2022 actuals. If the Human Resources Manager position was filled in 2024, the expenditures would begin being included in the IDCA for 2026 (actual expenditures for 2024). Based on past allocation, we estimate approximately 40% of expenditures related to the Human Resources Manager position would be allocated to the utility funds. The net cost to the General Fund would be approximately \$89,670.

These amounts are estimates.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. COSW HR Manager
2. Human Resources Professionals WA Cities_by Population
3. Human Resources Professionals Wa Cities_by FTE
4. City Administrator_HR Comparables
5. SHRM Article - How Many HR Staff Members Is Best_
6. Your MRSC inquiry
7. Cities Mentioned by MRSC as Contracting Some HR Services
8. SW HR Letter CIAW
9. HR Manager Director Comments
10. City Administrator Expansion Areas
11. City Administrator Chapter 2.06

City of Sedro-Woolley

Position Description

Position: Human Resources Manager	Updated: 1/24/24
Department/Site: Executive	FLSA: Exempt
Evaluated by: City Administrator	Salary Grade: 127

Summary

Plans, directs, reviews, and integrates the human resources management for the City. Designs, organizes, and implements programs and services for recruitment, classification, compensation, benefits, employee/labor relations, personnel policies and procedures, employee development and training, safety, risk management and workers compensation.

Distinguishing Career Features

The Human Resources Manager is a management position, aligned with other division management support positions, requiring the ability to apply considerable professional-level training in modern human resources management. Advancement to this position would require compliance with the minimum qualifications listed below and demonstrated competency in human resources management and at working with external governing boards.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Directs, coordinates, and participates in the organization, staffing and operational activities for human resources including and not limited to policy, recruitment, classification and compensation, equal employment, training, and labor/employee relations.
- Organizes and directs activities connected with employment, recruitment, and candidate selection processes. Assures compliance with recruitment policies and procedures.
- Outreaches to external labor markets to identify candidates for employment. Coordinates and participates in reviews of applications, candidate interviews, verification of skills and abilities, references, and pre-employment testing.
- Develops training and development programs, conducts training needs assessments, and presents, facilitates, and arranges for training.
- Directs and participates in developing and implementing of goals, objectives, policies and priorities for human resource programs. Establishes departmental and subject matter standards for service. Designs and distributes communications to City staff.
- Consults with the City Administrator and department directors and division managers on organization and job design, career and succession planning, and staffing levels and mix.
- Consults with management and employees to resolve sensitive and significant personnel issues such as performance and communications difficulties, policy compliance, grievances, etc. Evaluates human relations and work-related problems, recommending optimal solutions.

- Develops, proposes, and administers the approved human resources budget. Forecasts additional funds needed for staffing, programs, and supplies.
- Serves as advisor to management and staff on matters such as performance management, skill development, quality of work life and morale, and other employee relation matters.
- Interprets and provides information and opinions on human resources policies, rules, regulations to the City Council and staff.
- Communicates salary and benefit programs to employees. Collects, analyzes, and prepares information for purposes of determining salary placement. Ensures that employees get timely service on benefits matters.
- Communicates, orients, and enforces personnel policies. Investigates incidents, accidents, and other job-related claims, conferring with managers and employees, and recommending actions.
- Serves as a management representative on the collective bargaining team. Participates in labor relations activities including preparation for disciplinary actions for represented employees.
- Manages the City's compliance with complex leave laws.
- Reviews claims against the City for human resources, risk, and safety issues, reviewing, and analyzing.
- Directs the City's safety and employee health/wellness programs. Ensuring that mandated safety and training issues of the City are being met.
- Serves on the City's Safety Committee as an advisor ensuring that safety and training issues of the City are being met.
- Performs other duties as assigned that support the overall objective of the position.

Qualifications

▪ Knowledge and Skills

The position requires specialized professional knowledge of the theories, principles, and methods for modern human resources in the areas of job classification, compensation, benefits, employment, conflict resolution, risk management, safety and training, and employee services. Requires in-depth knowledge of federal and state laws governing employment and other human resources functions. Requires special skill at facilitating small group processes, for resolving complex problems, and working with diverse groups (e.g., an advisory board, administrative, and work team). Requires well-developed written language skills to prepare complex reports and to draft policies and procedures. Requires sufficient math skills to compute sums, averages, ratios, products, and quotients. Requires skill in the use of computer aided office productivity applications and specialized business and human resource information system software. Requires well-developed human relations skills to communicate technical concepts to others often in formal presentation settings, conduct training, build an effective team, counsel employees, carry out negotiations, and resolve confrontation.

▪ **Abilities**

Requires the ability to carry out the objectives and duties of the position. Requires the ability to organize and implement recruitment programs and processes for all levels of positions. Requires the ability to research and oversee the employee benefits programs for the City. Must be able to analyze problems, prepare reports, and develop recommendations on personnel actions that are fair and in the best interest of the City. Requires the ability to develop and maintains systems that provide for proper documentation, evaluation, and control of personnel records. Requires the knowledge of and ability to serve as the City's risk, safety, and employee health director and work with insurers, the public, and attorneys on claims filed against the City. Requires the ability to supervise, train, evaluate and motivate staff in a manner that promotes skill development, high morale, and orientation toward service. Requires the ability to plan, organize, and prioritize complex and technical work processes in a high-volume environment in order to meet schedules and timelines. Requires the ability to communicate technical information and to interact with administrators, City Council, staff, and outside agencies. Requires the ability to work as a contributing member of a team, work productively and cooperatively with other teams and external customers, and convey a positive image of the City and its services.

▪ **Physical Abilities**

Requires sufficient visual acuity to recognize letters and numbers, auditory ability to hear and respond to in-person and phone conversations, and physical ability to give presentations to large audiences. Requires hand-eye-arm coordination to use a personal computer keyboard and to transcribe verbatim conversation. Requires ambulatory ability to move to various work locations.

▪ **Education and Experience**

The position requires a Bachelor's degree in human resources management, public administration or business and 5 years of progressively responsible human resources management experience. A Master's degree in human resources management may substitute for some experience. A Society for Human Resource Management Certification (SHRM-CP) is preferred, and otherwise required within 18 months of hire. The City will help to support the winning candidate's professional development, including SHRM certification.

▪ **Licenses and Certificates**

A valid driver's license.

Working Conditions

Work is performed indoors with minimal exposure to health and safety hazards.

This job/class description, describes the general nature of the work performed, representative duties as well as the typical qualifications needed for acceptable performance. It is not intended to be a complete list of all responsibilities, duties, work steps, and skills required of the job.



Human Resource Professionals in Washington Cities

SORT BY: POPULATION

The below information was pulled from the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) 2023 Salary and Benefits Survey. We pulled cities with populations between 10,000 and 25,000, totalling 42 cities/towns (including City of Sedro-Woolley). We reviewed the data for human resource position and reviewed websites or reached out to entities when information was not available through AWC.

Conclusion: Of the 42 Washington cities with populations between 10,000 and 25,000, Sedro-Woolley is one of two that does not have either a human resource director/manager or a dedicated HR professional (HR analyst, specialist, coordinator, generalist). Four other cities have HR director/managers that also work as the city clerks or deputy clerks.

Data not available through AWC, instead pulled from website and entity contacts

Organization	Population	Assessed value	Assessed value per capita	Regular levy amount	Sales tax revenue	Full-Time employees	Part-Time	Authorized FTEs	Job title 1	Job title 2	Job title 3	Notes
City of DuPont	10,180	2,213,541,968	217,440	1,982,121	1,557,853	68	4	76	HR Director		HR Analyst / SR HR Analyst	
City of Port Townsend	10,330	2,218,242,100	214,738	3,324,792	3,054,244	81	11	101	Human Resources Manager			
City of Snohomish	10,330	1,976,299,139	191,316	1,299,000	5,670,088	57	-	57	Human Resource Manager			
City of Shelton	10,420	937,444,461	89,966	2,212,547	2,968,997	92	2	94	Senior Human Resource Analyst	Human Resource Technician		
City of Yelm	10,770	1,225,883,801	113,824	1,559,024	3,146,990	68	-	72	Human Resource Specialist	Human Resources Director		
City of Sumner	10,800	4,283,202,012	396,593	4,258,173	9,149,857	119	3	127	Human Resources Manager			Per website Human Resource Manager Adrienne McNeilly.
City of Fife	11,150	3,196,778,714	286,707	3,529,703	12,017,964	118	39	132	Human Resources Director	Human Resources Analyst		
City of Airway Heights	11,280	846,290,758	75,026	1,468,367	2,830,700	73	83		HR Specialist			
City of Poulsbo	12,400	2,393,713,298	193,041	2,810,708	5,493,477	106	4	108	HR Manager			
City of Kelso	12,750	1,217,533,016	95,493	1,608,789	3,880,066	79	2	81	Administrative Programs Manager/Human Resources			
City of Sedro-Woolley	12,900	1,408,721,472	109,203	2,948,079	2,367,783	95	43	106.5	Accounting Clerk / HR Assistant			
City of Gig Harbor	13,060	3,900,971,821	298,696	3,208,700	8,953,080	108	2	120	Human Resources Director	HR Generalist		
City of Enumclaw	13,090	2,212,340,961	169,010	2,454,879	4,249,570	119	5	117	Human Resources Manager			
City of Liberty Lake	13,150	2,319,974,709	176,424	2,927,099	5,746,197	75	5		Human Resources Manager			
City of Cheney	13,160	855,755,127	65,027	2,529,221	1,996,188	92	6	93	Deputy Clerk/HR & Benefit Specialist			
City of Edgewood	13,590	2,734,641,110	201,225	2,131,619	1,985,903	29	-	29	City Clerk/HR Director			
City of Newcastle	13,610	4,476,359,526	328,902	5,970,355	1,859,808	26	1	27	City Clerk/ HR Director			
City of Lake Forest Park	13,660	4,042,996,814	295,973	3,388,584	1,685,723	47	10	50	Human Resources Director			
City of Woodinville	13,830	5,084,732,880	367,660	3,653,815	8,723,264	44	1	47				"The City of Woodinville does not have a dedicated HR professional. The HR duties are allocated between the Assistant to the City Manager and myself (Executive Assistant). However, I will be retiring at the end of the year and just had a meeting this morning about replacing my position with an HR Assistant." - Brensa Eriksen
City of East Wenatchee	14,210	1,574,347,337	110,792	1,857,311	4,890,597	51	1	53	Human Resource Generalist			
City of Snoqualmie	14,500	4,035,543,499	278,313	8,414,196	2,925,699	118	3	125	HR Analyst	Director of Finance & Human Resources		
City of Ridgefield	15,180	2,656,557,619	175,004	1,925,237	4,182,864	63	3	75	HR Coordinator	HR Analyst		
City of Ferndale	16,330	2,324,817,102	142,365	1,932,235	4,085,174	79	3	80	City Clerk/Human Resources Manager			
City of Lynden	16,520	2,563,276,903	155,162	3,637,386	3,729,689	91	3	97	Human Resource Director			
City of Sunnyside	16,530	1,057,486,191	63,974	2,476,462	3,731,205	124		145	Human Resources Generalist			
City of Aberdeen	17,080	1,330,694,169	77,909	3,134,644	5,270,575	181		188	Human Resources Director			
City of Port Orchard	17,480	2,503,880,075	143,243	3,182,907	7,783,763	87	3	100	Human Resources Director	Human Resources Specialist		
City of Washougal	17,490	2,719,425,503	155,485	4,971,846	3,242,757	78	-	81	HR Director/Risk Manager			
City of West Richland	17,840	1,912,835,792	107,222	2,724,041	2,107,440	91	1	94	HR Manager			

City of Anacortes	18,020	4,758,505,751	264,068	5,523,241	6,033,290	211	16	221	Human Resources Assistant	HR & LR Director		
City of Centralia	18,400	1,820,601,513	98,946	1,057,398	4,239,241	154	9	158	HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR/RISK MANAGER	PAYROLL/HR ANALYST	HR ASSISTANT	
City of Port Angeles	20,240	2,418,910,414	119,511	4,896,443	4,753,779	262	5	267	Human Resources Manager	HR Specialist		
City of Monroe	20,590	3,395,678,937	164,919	3,469,175	6,641,984	130	10	135	HR Director			
City of Ellensburg	20,900	2,096,467,949	100,309	3,413,985	6,242,500	157	13	213	Human Resources Director		Human Resources Specialist	
City of Mukilteo	21,590	6,009,246,123	278,335	5,763,077	3,400,761	121	7	138	Human Resources Manager			
City of Covington	21,600	3,650,151,172	168,988	3,055,360	6,424,299	61	5	82	Human Resources Manager			
City of Arlington	21,740	3,669,525,566	168,791	2,750,000	9,851,963	133	-	136	Human Resource Director	Human Resources/Deputy City Clerk		Per website, Human Resource Director Shawn Friang.
City of Battle Ground	21,910	3,024,694,829	138,051	3,684,016	5,496,386	90	1	95	Human Resources Manager			
City of Tukwila	22,780	7,986,365,586	350,587	17,242,581	20,429,656	288	60	310	Deputy Director Administrative Services/Chief People Officer	Sr. Human Resources Analyst		
City of Bonney Lake	23,250	4,111,070,430	176,820	3,467,720	8,208,245	137	5	155	Human Resources Manager	HR Generalist		
City of Mountlake Terrace	23,810	4,154,980,609	174,506	4,618,674	4,268,727	113	12	130	Human Resource Manager			Per the website Human Resources Manager Leslie Choate
City of Oak Harbor	24,780	2,526,249,219	101,947	4,605,453	5,031,754	133	4	168	Human Resources Director	HR Specialist-Payroll	Human Resources Analyst-Labor Relations	

Each year, AWC conducts a comprehensive survey of the salaries and benefits provided to employees in Washington's cities and counties. The survey is an important AWC service as it provides city and county officials with comparable data to assist them in determining wages and benefits for their staff. AWC conducted the 2021 Salary and Benefits Survey this spring and we've just released the results. The data is available to AWC member cities, AWC associate members, and counties. With nearly 85% participation (236 of 281 cities and towns, and 35 of 39 counties), the information provided by the survey results will be valuable for upcoming city budget planning.



Human Resource Professionals in Washington Cities

SORT BY: AUTHORIZED FTE

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City of Yelm	10,770	1,225,883,801	113,824	1,559,024	3,146,990	68	-	72	Human Resource Specialist	Human Resources Director		
City of Ridgefield	15,180	2,656,557,619	175,004	1,925,237	4,182,864	63	3	75	HR Coordinator	HR Analyst		
City of DuPont	10,180	2,213,541,968	217,440	1,982,121	1,557,853	68	4	76	HR Director		Analyst	
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City of Mountlake Terrace	23,810	4,154,980,609	174,506	4,618,674	4,268,727	113	12	130	Human Resource Manager			Per the website Human Resources Manager Leslie Choate.
City of Fife	11,150	3,196,778,714	286,707	3,529,703	12,017,964	118	39	132	Human Resources Director	Human Resources Analyst		
City of Monroe	20,590	3,395,678,937	164,919	3,469,175	6,641,984	130	10	135	HR Director			
City of Arlington	21,740	3,669,525,566	168,791	2,750,000	9,851,963	133	-	136	Human Resource Director	Human Resources/Deputy City Clerk		Per website, Human Resource Director Shawn Friang.
City of Mukilteo	21,590	6,009,246,123	278,335	5,763,077	3,400,761	121	7	138	Human Resources Manager			
City of Sunnyside	16,530	1,057,486,191	63,974	2,476,462	3,731,205	124		145	Human Resources Generalist			

City of Bonney Lake	23,250	4,111,070,430	176,820	3,467,720	8,208,245	137	5	155	Human Resources Manager	HR Generalist		
									HUMAN RESOURCES			
City of Centralia	18,400	1,820,601,513	98,946	1,057,398	4,239,241	154	9	158	DIRECTOR/RISK MANAGER	PAYROLL/HR ANALYST	HR ASSISTANT	
City of Oak Harbor	24,780	2,526,249,219	101,947	4,605,453	5,031,754	133	4	168	Human Resources Director	HR Specialist-Payroll	Analyst-Labor	
City of Aberdeen	17,080	1,330,694,169	77,909	3,134,644	5,270,575	181		188	Human Resources Director			
											Human Resources Specialist	
City of Ellensburg	20,900	2,096,467,949	100,309	3,413,985	6,242,500	157	13	213	Human Resources Director			
City of Anacortes	18,020	4,758,505,751	264,068	5,523,241	6,033,290	211	16	221	Human Resources Assistant	HR & LR Director		
City of Port Angeles	20,240	2,418,910,414	119,511	4,896,443	4,753,779	262	5	267	Human Resources Manager	HR Specialist		
City of Tukwila	22,780	7,986,365,586	350,587	17,242,581	20,429,656	288	60	310	Administrative Services/Chief	Analyst		
City of Airway Heights	11,280	846,290,758	75,026	1,468,367	2,830,700	73	83		HR Specialist			
City of Liberty Lake	13,150	2,319,974,709	176,424	2,927,099	5,746,197	75	5		Human Resources Manager			

Each year, AWC conducts a comprehensive survey of the salaries and benefits provided to employees in Washington's cities and counties. The survey is an important AWC service as it provides city and county officials with comparable data to assist them in determining wages and benefits for their staff. AWC conducted the 2021 Salary and Benefits Survey this spring and we've just released the results.

The data is available to AWC member cities, AWC associate members, and counties.

With nearly 85% participation (236 of 281 cities and towns, and 35 or 39 counties), the information provided by the survey results will be valuable for upcoming city budget planning.



City Administrator and HR Professional Comparables

Conclusion: Of the eight comparable cities used for AFSCME labor negotiations (Airway Heights, Anacortes, Ferndale, Lynden, Shelton, Stanwood, Yelm, Steilacoom) all but Town of Steilacoom had a City Administrator (City Manager, Admin Service Director) and at least one HR professional. Town of Steilacoom has a Town Administrator / Town Clerk / Treasurer, it appears they do not have a dedicated HR function. Town of Steilacoom has a population of 6,825, roughly half the size of Sedro-Woolley. Other surrounding cities include Mount Vernon and Burlington, who also have a City Administrator and HR professionals.

AFSCME Comparable Cities			
City	Population	Contact	
City of Airway Heights	11,280	Finance Director / City Clerk Stanley Schubert	
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
City Manager	10,030.00	11,976.00	2024 non-represented schedule
Human Resource Specialist	4,988.00	5,956.00	2024 non-represented schedule

City of Anacortes	18,020	Finance Director Steve Hoglund	
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
Administrative Services Director	11,654.31	14,746.42	2024 non-represented & management salary schedule
Human Resource Assistant	5,733.15	7,254.26	2024 non-represented & management salary schedule
Human Resource Generalist	6,264.70	7,926.93	2024 non-represented & management salary schedule
			2024 non-represented & management salary schedule - Per Finance Director Steve Hoglund, this positions is not funded, instead they have an HR Director who is involved in labor negotiations.
Human Resource Manager	8,174.10	10,342.84	
			2024 non-represented & management salary schedule. - Per Finance Director Steve Hoglund, moved away from having an HR Manager, instead has a HR Director who is involved in labor relations.
Human Resource Director	10,655.34	13,495.06	

City of Ferndale	16,330	Finance Director Danielle Ingham	
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
City Administrator		13,393.44	Contract: 2024 = \$160,721.28
			Contract: 2024 = \$110,040. Position is also the City Clerk / HR Manager with a Deputy Clerk working under her. Separate Finance Director.
Administrative Service Director		110,040.00	

<https://ferndale.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/5379/>

City of Lynden	16,520	https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/lyndenwa/classspecs	
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
City Administrator	11,284.83	14,724.19	Job description
Human Resource Director	8,397.00	10,956.18	Job description
Human Resource Coordinator	4,639.86	6,055.00	Job description

City of Shelton	10,420	Human Resource Manager LeAndra Sharp	
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
City Manager	10,810.01	14,506.80	2024 non-represented wage grid
Human Resource Technician	4,761.66	6,389.89	2024 non-represented wage grid - placeholder
Human Resource Analyst	5,198.84	7,112.37	2024 non-represented wage grid - placeholder
Human Resource Analyst (Senior)	5,718.72	7,823.60	2024 non-represented wage grid - placeholder
Human Resources Manager	7,103.52	9,568.42	2024 non-represented wage grid

Other Surrounding Cities			
City of Mount Vernon	35,590	Finance Director Doug Volesky	
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
Full-Time Mayor			No City Administrator
Human Resources Analyst	6,695.41	8,810.70	2024 non-represented salary schedule
Human Resources Analyst	6,695.41	8,810.70	2024 non-represented salary schedule
Human Resources Director	11,451.40	15,069.34	2024 non-represented salary schedule

City of Burlington	9,702	Finance Director Joe Stewart	
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
City Administrator	14,976.88	19,071.70	2024 non-represented wage grid
			2024 non-represented wage grid - placeholder
Human Resource Generalist	5,509.70	7,016.10	
Human Resource / Admin Manager	8,238.84	10,491.40	2024 non-represented wage grid

City of Stanwood		8,585	
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
City Administrator	15,025.00	16,971.00	2024 non-represented schedule
Human Resource Manager	9,674.00	10,995.00	2024 non-represented schedule

City of Yelm		10,770	Finance Director Stephanie Nanavich (Dice)
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
City Administrator	12,586.84	15,029.91	2024 non-representation schedule
Admin Service Director	9,323.63	11,193.21	2024 non-representation schedule - Included on the grid but Stephanie confirmed Yelm only has a City Administrator
Human Resource Specialist	5,778.27	6,933.18	2024 non-representation schedule
Human Resource Manager	8,116.29	9,814.95	2024 non-representation schedule - Currently vacant
Human Resources Director	9,454.64	11,355.24	2024 non-representation schedule

Town of Steilacoom		6,825	Human Resource Coordinator Micki Sterbick
Your job title	Minimum salary	Maximum salary	Position comments
Town Administrator / Town Clerk / Treasurer			

AFSCME Comparables - Average			
City Administrator / Manager	12,112.06	14,478.25	
AFSCME + Other Surrounding			
Cities	12,470.16	15,052.43	
City of Sedro-Woolley	13,613.42	16,183.67	

How Many HR Staff Members Is Best?

Data shows that inadequate HR staffing leads to higher turnover

January 18, 2024 | [Roy Maurer](#)



Employers require a certain level of HR staffing to operate effectively, but what is that number?

The ADP Research Institute analyzed payroll and econometrics data on more than 25 million employees and turned up some interesting findings about HR staffing levels, including:

- The “sweet spot” for most employers is between 1.5 and 4.5 HR staff per 100 employees. “That’s accurate, but a wide gap,” said Nicole Belyna, SHRM-SCP, director of talent management and inclusion at SHRM. According to SHRM’s *2022 Human Capital Benchmark Report*, the average HR staff to employee ratio is 1.7 per 100.
- HR headcount is up more than 11 percent since 2018.
- Too few—or too many—HR staff members results in higher turnover.

“The ‘right’ level can vary by industry, company size and boom-and-bust labor market cycles,” said Jeff Nezaj, principal data scientist at the ADP Research Institute in Roseland, N.J. “In tight labor markets, organizations will bulk up their HR offices with recruiters and other specialists to gain an advantage in the pursuit of talent. HR divisions might shrink when labor demand cools.”

Nezaj found that HR staffing has grown the fastest in industries with large, low-wage, front-line workforces that tend to have lower HR staffing ratios than white-collar organizations.

“Job roles in large, low-wage, front-line industries tend to be more uniform and standardized and usually require lower HR staffing levels,” Nezaj said. “It is interesting to note that while these industries have the lowest staffing levels overall, they have experienced the most growth in HR staffing. When the pandemic hit, we know that low-wage workers were disproportionately laid off compared to high-wage earners. The increase in HR staffing could be a response to the demand in hiring that was required during the recovery.”

HR staffing ratios grew faster and more steadily for larger companies than smaller ones between 2018 and 2023, Nezaj added, and ratios at the smallest employers are up 4.7 percent since 2018.

Labor market fluctuations affect some industries and their HR staffing ratios more than others. For example, employers in the leisure and hospitality, manufacturing, and construction industries tend to have lower HR staffing levels than those in finance or professional and business services. Having more high-wage workers is seen as necessitating more HR involvement.

HR staffing in education and health services lies in the middle, perhaps due to a more even mix between low-wage and high-wage workers.

Notably, recruiters make up the largest share of HR staff, but growth of recruiter roles has fallen since hiring began to cool in 2023. It’s become common to see reactive hiring and reductions in force for talent acquisition professionals, Belyna said.

Impact on Turnover

ADP researchers also analyzed the correlation between HR staffing levels and employee turnover and found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that reduced HR staffing is accompanied by more employees leaving the organization. Turnover begins to fall when there is at least one HR staff member for every 200 employees, according to ADP.

“An understaffed and overburdened HR department could lead to frustration and overall job dissatisfaction within an organization based on the critical functions HR performs,” Nezaj said.

“One could argue that an organization that does not properly staff its HR department has other organizational issues,” Belyna said. “Perhaps the lack of HR staffing is a result of a lack of interest in people or workplace culture.”

Researchers found that expanded HR headcount will reduce employee turnover, up to a point. As HR offices grow bigger—specifically, when HR staffing exceeds nine members for every 200 employees—turnover starts to rise again.

There is no definitive reason for why that is, but surveys reveal that employees rate HR higher when they have a single point of contact, even if that contact directs them to subject-matter experts on topics such as benefits or employee relations. When HR staffing ratios rise beyond a certain point, HR may be seen as too specialized, and employees might not know whom to reach out to for help.

Outside Assist

Beefed-up HR administration can support a lean HR team by allowing them more free time to spend with employees, said Kristen Appleman, senior vice president and general manager of ADP TotalSource, the company’s professional employer organization (PEO) for outsourced HR management.

PEOs can help with routine administrative HR tasks and compliance requirements, leaving HR to focus on more strategic aspects of people management. “All the while, the PEO is working hard in the background to onboard new talent, provide competitive benefit programs, and stay compliant with employment rules,” Appleman said.

From: Lisa Pool <lpool@mrsc.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 1:15 PM
To: Charlie Bush
Subject: Your MRSC inquiry
Attachments: MRSC Human Resources Vendors.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of Sedro-Woolley mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Charlie -

I looked through our past inquiries and found some cities that, based on their questions, may use some level of consultant assistance for HR services. These include Sequim, Duvall, Sammamish, Bainbridge Island, Shoreline, and Oak Harbor. Please let me know if you would like help locating who to talk to at any of these cities.

While you didn't specifically ask for a list of potential HR consultants, it looks as if Sedro-Woolley is a member of MRSC Rosters, where you can run searches of consultants. Here is a list of our Service Categories. We only have one subcategory for HR Human Resources under Personnel Services, "Compensation and Human Resources Consulting." Directions for how to run lists for services are here. I've also attached a list of the HR vendors on our roster that we pulled for an inquiry last summer, but you'll want to run a new search through your membership to get a more recent list.

Here are a few additional consultants to consider (a few with client lists):

- Aperture EQ via AWC's facilitator directory - its core services include human resource consulting. This page includes clients like Redmond, Mercer Island, Sammamish, Snohomish, Anacortes, and Renton.
 - Archbright, who is on the attached list, was recommended by some of my colleagues here at MRSC.
 - Cabot Dow Associates - specializes in compensation, employee-management relations, labor contract negotiations, and more. See client lists with some WA cities here.
- For questions about the Rosters Program, please contact Theresa Gonzales, MRSC's Rosters Coordinator.
- You may also want to talk with your city's risk pool/insurance carrier to see if they have any recommendations.

Please let me know if you have additional questions.

Lisa

Lisa Pool, AICP
Public Policy Consultant
206.625.1300 x106

MRSC Empowering local governments to better serve their communities

My incoming/outgoing email messages are subject to public disclosure requirements per RCW 42.56.

Cities Mentioned by MRSC as Contracting Some HR Services

City	Internal Staff	Notes
Sequim	Director	Smaller than Sedro-Woolley, no fire department or solid waste, population 8,350
Duvall	None, handled by City Administrator	Smaller than Sedro-Woolley, no fire department or solid waste, 8,530
Sammamish	Multiple HR staff	Larger than Sedro-Woolley, population of 68k+
Bainbridge Island	HR Manager and Analyst	Larger than Sedro-Woolley, population 25,180
Oak Harbor	Four HR staff members, including a Director	Larger than Sedro-Woolley, population 24,780



19 MARCH 2024

Charlie Bush
SEDRO-WOOLLEY CITY ADMINISTRATOR
325 Metcalf Street
Sedro-Woolley, WA, 98284

Charlie,

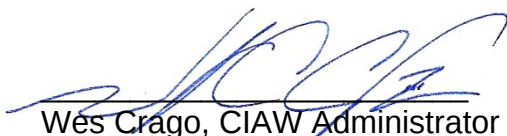
This letter is in response to your question regarding adding a Human Resource (HR) leader at Sedro-Woolley. It is important to note that a guiding principle of Clear Risk Solutions (CRS), and the Cities Insurance Association of Washington (CIAW), is that we do not engage in the day-to-day operations of a member. So, please accept this letter as more of a global statement, and not a specifically recommended course of action; my thoughts are general in nature and are not related to any specific issues, needs, or knowledge, about Sedro-Woolley.

In general, I see the addition of a Human Resource (HR) leader as an unqualified positive for any city. The widely accepted, though un-scientific, rule-of-thumb is that one HR leader should be present for every 100 full-time equivalent employees. I believe Sedro-Woolley is very close to that figure, and conventional wisdom would suggest that an HR leader is now warranted.

An effective HR leader in a city is likely to pay for themselves in reduced risks, the prevention of claims, and a more productive workforce. The cost of every HR-related claim, on average across the entire CIAW, is approximately \$44,000 per occurrence.

Additionally, the addition of another senior leader, who can advise and counsel, is a tremendous gain for the Council and Mayor. It has been my experience that the entire community benefits from a leader who can focus exclusively on that most important of all resources.

In local government, all things must be balanced. You and your City Council knows best where that balance point is for Sedro-Woolley regarding the addition of an HR leader. At Clear Risk Solutions, we will support you in whatever way your community chooses.



Wes Crago, CIAW Administrator

Director Comments Regarding an HR Manager

Kelly Kohnken, Finance Director

- Payroll Clerk is currently performing a portion of the HR function and is also a member of the AFSCME union. AFSCME members and other city staff often feel comfortable coming to the Payroll Clerk to disclose HR related item. It would be beneficial to have someone outside the union and payroll function for staff to disclose HR related information to without having to go up the chain to the City Administrator.
- Provide additional time for Payroll Clerk to perform payroll duties.
- Improved tracking of employee performance and documentation of trimester talks and annual reviews.
- Support for difficult staff conversations including low performance or disciplinary action.
- Support for updating and ensuring consistency in job descriptions.
- Additional support in labor negotiations.

Dan Mcilraith, Police Chief

- Police hiring is bound to civil service rules and process, for both commissioned staff and support staff. It is more complicated and time consuming.
 - When police hiring it is a lengthy process.
 - Written physical scores obtained from Public Safety testing for police officer, for a potential candidate list.
 - From those scores dates and times for interviews must be scheduled. Right now, that falls on finance (Jeanine). That includes email, phone calls to offer dates for interviews.
 - On the interview dates selected, Jeanine is making sure that full application (personal history statement) is available. In addition to gathering documents for requirements of the job application. Birth certificate, SS Card, Dissolution paperwork, military paperwork/preference points, and more.
 - The interview and PST scores are combined completing an overall score and ranking amongst candidate list. Compiled by Jeanine.
 - That candidate list then needs to be certified by civil service, which entails scheduling a date by calling and emailing civil service board members and Chief potential dates for this meeting to occur. She then will make the agenda from our input, attend that

meeting, and take the meeting minutes.

- Once list is certified, then PD has other items that need to be schedule such as polygraph and Pre-psych. Jeanine provides that information to the candidate to schedule and complete before moving into the full background process.
 - Once we are at the point where we are at the point of offering a conditional offer of employment, Jeanine is asked to complete a conditional offer letter to the candidate that include a potential start date, salary and benefits, and the list of additional requirements to complete to gain that offer of employment.
 - Once completed then academy paperwork must be submitted, required documents gathered.
 - Then get all the paperwork for medical, retirement, beneficiaries for payroll.
- The majority of this applies to support staff as well. Records staff and code enforcement/animal control.

Nikki Thompson, City Attorney

1. Onboarding and offboarding processes are important. Especially offboarding, as that is where the biggest risk lies. HR managers create checklists and ensure that assets are properly tracked and that employees are set up correctly.
2. Washington has complicated leave laws that often intersect with each other and federal leave laws. (FMLA/PFML/PSL) Tracking those laws and how they apply in an employee's situation is best done by HR, with legal assisting as necessary.
3. HR managers implement, with legal counsel, consistent discipline processes to ensure that all departments have a consistent approach and that the CBAs are followed. This reduces risk of due process violations and unlawful termination. Personnel actions are a significant loss to insurance companies.
4. The legislature frequently passes new personnel related legislation. (e.g. ban the box.) HR managers work with legal to implement new laws in a timely manner.
5. HR managers are in charge of overseeing compliance with L&I, including the posting of required information within City buildings.
6. HR managers often act as risk manager liaisons to city risk pools and implement training programs provided by the risk pools, or risk prevention strategies that are recommended.

Frank Wagner, Fire Chief

- Pre-Employment Screenings

- Drug Testing
- Medical Testing
- CBA knowledge and Liaison
- Background Completions
- Psychological Scheduling and administration
- Paperwork
 - Board of Volunteer Insurance
 - Volunteer FF Pension
 - Sexual Harassment Orientation
 - Pre-Hire Onboarding
 - City Policy Sign-Offs
 - Dept of Retirement Process
 - Healthcare Benefits
 - W4 completions
 - Conditional Offers
 - Final Offers
- Civil Service
 - Oral Boards
 - Written Testing
 - Commission Meetings
 - Hiring
- Disciplinary
 - Corrective Action Process
 - Proper Procedures
 - Liaison of Policies, Guidelines
 - Documentation
- Training
 - Leadership
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Motivational
 - Development
- Recruitment/Retention
 - Job Fairs
 - Job Postings/Announcements
 - Recognition Programs
- Post Accident Process
 - Drug Testing

- Chain of Custody
- Medical ..FMLA, PFMLA, process, laws etc..

Eulises “Woody” Tovar, Information Technology Director

- Policy enforcement & adjustments (NSFW sites/content)
- Streamlining On/Offboarding
- Tracking user training
- Unbiased position for conflict resolution

Charlie Bush, City Administrator

- Increased/more timely compliance with federal and state laws and regulations
- Improved employee retention
- Improved employee recruitment
- Improved employee development
- Increased training opportunities, including ensuring that mandatory trainings occur
- Better/more refined employee policies
- Improved onboarding and offboarding of employees
- More support for managers in providing effective coaching and feedback for employees
- Improved succession planning
- Better labor relations
- Freeing directors more to focus on managing their departments rather than taking on an HR-like role at times
- Deeper and better quality classification and compensation work and administration
- Development of longer-term human resources strategies around things like employee benefits and employee engagement
- Increased internal communication

- Will create a more independent “third party” option for employees to discuss sensitive topics, eliminating conflicts of interest present in the current HR system
- Increased capacity for the City Administrator to take on other needed duties and projects

Expansion Areas for the City Administrator Should the City Hire an HR Manager

- Emergency Management
- Communications
- Economic development
- City Council goals implementation
- Emerging Issues
- Cross-Departmental Coordination
- Organization development
- Mentoring/Coaching
- Community and Project Partnerships
- Efficiency and service delivery analyses
- Lean/Six Sigma
- Legislative advocacy
- Regional representation

Chapter 2.06

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Sections:

2.06.010 Created—Appointment—Removal.

2.06.020 Scope of authority.

2.06.030 Duties and responsibilities.

2.06.040 Salary.

2.06.050 Combination of position.

2.06.060 Mayor—Council ineligible.

2.06.010 Created—Appointment—Removal.

There is created the position of city administrator which shall be filled by appointment by the mayor, subject to confirmation by the council, of a majority vote. The city administrator shall serve at the pleasure of the mayor.

(Ord. [1990-21](#) § 1, 2021; Ord. [1120](#) § 1, 1991)

2.06.020 Scope of authority.

The city administrator shall be responsible for providing assistance to the mayor and city council for the administration of city government and the carrying out of city policies. This office will be responsible for the in-line management of all city departments, including accountability of their performance and including supervision over the chief of police, the fire chief, and clerical staff of the city. All authority and responsibility of the city administrator shall be subject to the direction, authority, and supervision of the mayor. (Ord. [1990-21](#) § 1, 2021; Ord. [1120](#) § 2, 1991)

2.06.030 Duties and responsibilities.

- A. To have general supervision of all the administration affairs of the city.
- B. To advise the mayor on such measures or reports that may be necessary or required by either the mayor and/or city council.
- C. In cooperation with the clerk-treasurer to keep the mayor and city council fully advised of the financial condition of the town and its future needs, and to assist in the preparation and submission to the mayor and council of a preliminary budget for the fiscal year.
- D. Develop and revise specific personnel and operating policies including job descriptions for all departments. Have regular evaluation interviews with

each department head. Conduct and participate in in-service training particularly on matters dealing with labor relations.

E. Plan, gives general directions and reviews the services rendered by the various city departments.

F. Serve as the purchasing and contracting agent for the city.

G. Prepare grant applications for the city.

H. Have knowledge of and act as advisor to the city on the most efficient utilization of computer systems currently used or which may be proposed.

I. Work closely with the city planner and city engineer to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan, to work with other local, state, and federal officials on growth management, wetlands, and similar issues.

J. Meet with the city council and planning commission in regular and special meetings when necessary as deemed by these respective bodies. Give information and transmit special or regular reports concerning various problems of municipal operations and advise members of both bodies in their deliberations on policy, legislative, or operational matters.

K. Assist the mayor and city council in their duties and other responsibilities as may from time to time be required by the mayor and city council.
(Ord. [1120](#) § 3, 1991)

2.06.040 Salary.

The city administrator shall receive a salary in such amount as recommended by the mayor and as the city council may from time to time establish by ordinance. (Ord. [1990-21](#) § 1, 2021; Ord. [1120](#) § 4, 1991)

2.06.050 Combination of position.

The office of city administrator may be combined with any other appointive position, provided that when combined the compensation shall be fixed by the city council for the combined office and shall not necessarily be the total of the compensation fixed for each office individually. (Ord. [1990-21](#) § 1, 2021; Ord. [1120](#) § 5, 1991)

2.06.060 Mayor—Council ineligible.

No person elected or appointed to fill a vacated position shall, subsequent to such election or appointment be eligible for the appointment of city

administrator until one year has elapsed following the expiration of the last term for which he or she was elected or appointed. (Ord. [1990-21](#) § 1, 2021; Ord. [1120](#) § 6, 1991)

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