

City of Worcester, Massachusetts

City Auditor

Profile



EDWARD J. COLLINS JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
JOHN W. McCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
GLOBAL AND POLICY STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

Introduction

The Worcester City Council has retained the services of the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston to assist in its search for a City Auditor. The Center is a part of the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Global and Policy Studies. Founded by the Commonwealth in 2008, and named to honor the memory of the first Deputy Commissioner of Local Services, the Center has an initial focus on assisting Massachusetts municipalities and state agencies.

Background on the City of Worcester

All great cities share certain traits — a vibrant, undeniable energy and culture that drives growth and characterizes livability. Great cities are easily accessible and welcoming to businesses and families alike. With strong roots in a proud past, they also are progressive — innovating, collaborating, busy building a successful future. Worcester — a five time recipient of the All American City Award — offers the resources and exciting attractions of a metropolis, balanced with the more intimate, livable scale of a mid-sized city — and something more!

The city of Worcester, New England's second largest city is home to 10 colleges and universities. Worcester is also home to some of the nation's top-ranked health care providers, including Saint Vincent Hospital, Reliant Medical Group, Fallon Community Health Plan, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, and the region's largest health care system — UMass Memorial Health Care.

Among the preeminent manufacturing cities of the twentieth century, Worcester has successfully emerged as a leader in many sectors, including advanced manufacturing, biomedical technology,

information technology, education, financial services, and medical research. The Hanover Insurance Group, Siemens, Polar Beverages, Saint-Gobain Abrasives, Inc., Unum, and Allegro Microsystems are among the city's top employers.

Through a range of housing stock, quality public schools, access to diverse and highly-acclaimed arts, sports, restaurants, and entertainment, and a reliable public transportation system (including commuter rail access to Boston and both intracity and intercity bus systems), Worcester truly is a city that offers its residents, and resident businesses, the best of both large cities and small towns.

More information is available on the City's web site (www.worcesterma.gov), the Worcester Chamber of Commerce web site (www.worcesterchamber.org) and the web site of the Worcester Municipal Research Bureau (www.wrrb.org).

Organizational Design and Governance

The Chief Executive Officer of the City is the City Manager who is appointed by an eleven member City Council. Five of the Councilors are elected by district and the balance are elected on an at-large basis. The Mayor, who serves as the presiding officer of the Council, is elected at-large and serves as the City's ceremonial head. Council terms are two years. The City Manager structure of governance has been in place since 1950. The school system functions as a City Department but is under the policy jurisdiction of an elected School Committee, as is customary in Massachusetts. The Mayor serves ex officio as a member of the School Committee. The schools represent approximately 56% of the City's expenditure budget. The current City Manager, Michael V. O'Brien, was appointed in 2004 and the most recent municipal elections were held in November 2011. The City Auditor is appointed by and reports to the City Council. The core powers and duties of the City Auditor are described in Section 2-8 of the City Charter which is on the City's website.

Public Finance

The City has adopted many long-term financial policies, which include a five-year financial budget model and a five-year capital plan.

The City renews its bond rating with the annual issuance of General Obligation Bonds and in October 2011 the City received positive bond-ratings in a generally adverse financial climate, a climate in



which rating agencies were considering a downgrade of the municipal sector as a whole. As of October 2011, Moody's Investor Services, Fitch Ratings, and Standard and Poor's have set the City's Bond Ratings at A1, AA and A-, respectively indicating the City's strong fiscal health.

Like all Massachusetts municipalities Worcester has suffered significant cuts in state aid and is taking the steps necessary to adjust to this situation. In Fiscal Year 2012 State Aid represented approximately 43% and property taxes represented 38% of the City's revenue. In the current economic climate limitations on new construction and the potential for declines in property valuations may adversely affect the prospects for increases in property tax revenues.

The City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report may be found on the City's web site (www.worcesterma.gov/city-auditor/cafr). The Report contains extensive information about the City and its finances.

The most recent Offering Statement published in October 2011 has been posted on the Collins Center web site (www.umb.edu/cpm). The statement provides an extensive discussion of the City's financial situation, a financial history, demographic and economic statistics and a summary of development plans.

The Role of the City Auditor

The City Auditor functions as the chief accountant for the city. The City Auditor is an important member of the City's financial management team. The City Auditor is responsible for accurately maintaining the accounting records and approving expenditures for city departments and the Worcester Public Schools. In addition, the Auditor will perform the tasks specified by state law for City Auditors and assist the City Council on fiscal affairs. While appointed by the City Council the City Auditor works closely with the Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer, and finance professionals in line departments. The work of the City Auditor as well as the work of other financial officials is audited by an outside auditor annually. The City Auditor serves ex officio as one of five members of the City's Retirement Board, an independent entity that manages the City's retirement system.

Challenges for the City Auditor

- Developing a collaborative relationship with the City's financial management team to both support the team and receive support from the team. Expectations are high that the City Auditor will



foster an organizational climate within the City Auditor's Office that sustains and strengthens close working relationships at all levels between the City Auditor's Office and city line and staff departments.

- Developing and maintaining a climate of continuous process improvement so that the City Auditor's Office and the staff and line functions it supports become more efficient and effective over time through effective utilization of personnel, innovation and through adopting new and emerging technologies.
- Earning the respect and support of subordinates, peers and key opinion leaders including key personnel of rating agencies. The City Auditor will have extensive interaction with key players in the municipal organization and the key financial institutions that service, support and audit the City. The City Auditor will need to quickly demonstrate a high level of competence and professionalism to earn the respect required to be effective in this position.
- Working with staff to ensure that the City Auditor's office puts forth a professional public image with a priority on customer service.
- Working with the financial and technology departments in the possible conversion of financial software systems.

The Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will be a professional, a seasoned financial manager, a skilled manager of people and excellent communicator who has a demonstrated record of effectiveness in public organizations or similar organizations in the private and non-profit sectors.

The Ideal Candidate needs to be:

- Able to demonstrate unquestioned integrity in interactions with political leaders, staff at all levels and the public.
- Able to firmly exercise management control over the functions of the City Auditor's Office in a way that engenders understanding of the City's duties as a steward of public resources to internal and external audiences.
- Able in collaboration with the City's financial team to help elected officials understand the short and long term financial implications of their policy decisions and the constraints the City faces.
- Able to effectively communicate the City's financial condition and prospects in discussions with city officials, lenders and financial partners. Excellent communication skills are required, particularly the ability to present complex technical information to an interested lay audience.
- Able to maintain an effective and professional relationship with key staff of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, outside auditors and the financial officials of organizations making grants and loans to the city.
- Able to identify and remedy staff weaknesses through coaching, mentoring and serving as a role model as well as through the city's formal performance evaluation mechanisms.
- Able to engender and sustain a culture of continuous improvement at all levels in the department.
- Able to sustain and improve the current systems of internal financial control, especially the system of budgetary accounting.
- Able to function as a hands on manager when needed, but also able to delegate operational management duties when feasible.
- Able to work effectively in an environment where the organization's policy leaders are elected directly by the public.
- Able to provide accurate and sophisticated independent professional advice and information to elected officials in public forums.
- Familiar with Massachusetts standards for financial management, control and reporting.
- Able to prepare and analyze complex financial reports and accurately account for City funds.
- Able to communicate effectively in writing and orally, particularly to explain detailed financial information to City Council members in a way that is easy to understand.

- Able to serve as an independent voice and not be bound by political loyalty, serving in the role of providing checks and balances for the City.
- Able to work closely with the Mayor, the Chief Financial Officer, and all departments.

Requirements

The ideal candidate will have a Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business or a closely related field and ten (10) years related experience of which three must be in a supervisory/management role. A CPA, MPA, or MBA is preferred.

The successful candidate must have accounting and financial management skills and the ability to hit the ground running. Experience as an effective manager of technical and support staff in an organization of similar complexity is essential. Experience with Massachusetts standards including UMAS, GASB, GAAP and GFOA is preferred.

The Selection Process

The Collins Center will recruit candidates, accept resumes and carryout an initial review of candidates. A Screening Committee will conduct preliminary interviews and forward names of finalists to the full City Council for public interviews.

Salary and Schedule

The City Council will enter into an employment agreement with the City Auditor. The salary scale for the position is \$94,000 to \$141,000, plus a \$3000 Retirement Board stipend, with an attractive benefit package.

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted via email directly to the Collins Center preferably in one pdf document. Email address: recruitment.umb@gmail.com. The words City Auditor must appear in the subject line. Review of resumes will begin October 10, 2012.

Should you have any questions regarding this opportunity, or a recommendation of a colleague for the position, please contact: Richard Kobayashi, Senior Associate (617-489-8812), or Mary Flanders Aicardi, Associate (508-215-8992). Candidates should assume that the Collins Center will transfer all applications to the City of Worcester Human Resources Department.

To learn more about the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at UMASS Boston, please visit: www.umb.edu/cpm