

City of Somerville, MA
Job Description

Position Title:	Chief Administrative Officer	Grade Level:	VI
Department:	Executive	Date:	1/5/2025
Reports to:	Mayor	FLSA Status:	Exempt

Statement of Duties

The **Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)** is the senior leader in the Executive Administration Office with oversight over all municipal administrative operations. The CAO has oversight over all municipal administrative operations responsible for the day-to-day operations of the City of Somerville (“City”), works with the Executive Team to create strategies to meet operational goals, and reports on the performance of key departments to the Mayor. The CAO is a strategic thinker who evaluates and optimizes current workflow systems to achieve an efficient City government that is nimble and responsive to the needs of residents and prepared for future challenges.

Essential Functions

The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various type of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position.

- Supervise and manage all City departments in executing daily operations and tasks and ensure coordination and communication across departments.
- Work closely with the Mayor and Chief Financial Officer on all financial matters, including reviewing and signing off on warrants, contracts, budgets, and other financial obligations.
- Prepare and present reports to the Executive Team.
- Lead the development and implementation of strategies, procedures and plans needed to enhance City growth and optimize systems.
- Establish department and City performance goals with Executive Team and allocate needed resources accordingly.
- Lead creation of central documentation of City processes for ease of use, consistency, and continuous operations to ensure smooth operations during turnover among department heads or executive leadership.
- Oversee Finance and Budget teams to ensure timely creation and implementation of annual operating budget.
- Lead Finance, Infrastructure and Asset Management, Department of Public Works, Information Technology, and other departments in creation and implementation of both short and long-term capital improvement plans.
- Collaborate with Human Resources and Law to pursue productive employee relations and bargain in good faith with the City’s labor unions.
- Partner with Somerville Public Schools leadership to work toward smooth operations across both institutions.
- Direct departments to future proof City processes against external threats to operations, stemming from effects of climate change, cyberattacks, and other major issues.

City of Somerville, MA

Job Description

- Conduct routine daily review and approval of basic human resources decisions, while triaging and advising Mayor on larger decision making.
- Ensure that City operations proceed in accordance with local ordinances, Somerville's City Charter, and all relevant state and federal laws.
- Other duties as necessary and assigned by the Mayor.

Supervision Required

Under the policy direction of the Mayor, the Chief Administrative Officer exercises authority over the day-to-day operation of the City in conformance with general directives and objectives as set forth by the governing body and in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. The employee seeks counsel of the Mayor and/or the governing body on matters of policy or where required by law, regulation, or local ordinance. The CAO is expected to exercise whatever means are necessary to resolve conflicts that cannot be addressed at the department level.

Supervisory Responsibility

The Chief Administrative Officer as a regular part of the job is required to provide direct direction and guidance of a major department of the city with responsibility for the supervision over individuals including service delivery, training, evaluation and disciplining of subordinates, budget development and control. Directs and coordinates the operation of the department through subordinate supervisors who are responsible for supervision over individual departments. The employee provides direct management responsibility over assigned employees; employees supervised work at the same location and on the same work shift, a few may be dispersed to other locations.

Accountability

Duties involve primary responsibility for the entire operation of the municipality. Consequences of errors, missed deadlines or poor judgment including adverse public relations, monetary loss, legal repercussions, labor and material costs, jeopardize programs, personal injury and harm to personal reputations and corporate goodwill. Poor judgment could have far reached effects on the municipality's ability to deliver services and the public's confidence.

Judgment

Work is performed based on administrative or municipal policies, general principals, legislation, or directives that pertain to a specific department or functional area. Extensive judgment and ingenuity are required to develop new or adapt existing methods and approaches for accomplishing objectives or to deal with new or unusual requirements within the limits of the guidelines or policies. The employee is recognized as the department or functional area's authority in interpreting the guidelines, regulations or laws, in determining how they should be applied, and in developing operating policies. The employee also must be able to direct the overall activity of the municipality by accepting responsibility while exercising authority for planning, operation, and oversight.

Complexity

Work consists of managerial functions and processes such as planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating, evaluating, and integrating activities and programs for more than one

City of Somerville, MA

Job Description

major department within the city.

Nature and Purpose of Personal Contacts

The employee has constant interaction with local, state, and federal government officials, community leaders, and any other individuals to protect and promote the municipality's overall interest. Employees must possess a high degree of diplomacy and judgment and must be able to work effectively with, and influence, all types of persons. Duties require a well-developed sense of strategy and timing in representing the municipality effectively in critical and important situations that may influence the well-being of the municipality.

Confidentiality

In accordance with the State Public Records Law, the Chief Administrative Officer has regular access at a department level to confidential information such as lawsuits, client and/or department records that is obtained during performance of regular position responsibilities.

Recommended Minimum Qualifications

Education and Experience: Master's degree in political science or public administration or an equivalent specialized master craftsman level of trade knowledge; a minimum of ten (10) years related work experience as a manager in large, complex organizations with at least five (5) years in a management capacity; or any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job.

Special Requirements: Experience working in an urban municipal environment and a unionized environment is preferred.

Knowledge, Abilities and Skills

Knowledge: Understanding of municipal operations and functions is required, including but not limited to HR and Finance. Knowledge of City of Somerville municipal organization, the operation of state legislature as well as other public and quasi-public state and regional agencies (i.e., MBTA, MWRA etc.). Common policies, practices and procedures of the department and office operations including accounting/bookkeeping; laws and regulations that are pertinent to position functions including public policy, policy making and municipal operations. Working knowledge of office software (word processing, database management, and spread sheet applications) and resources in support of department operations. Knowledge of the principles and practices of organizational behavior, management, and process improvement. Experience supervising and managing teams and mentoring other managers. Extensive knowledge of the principles and practices of effective budgetary management in large organizations. Experience with strategic planning. Working knowledge of computer hardware and software as well as the Internet in support of department operations.

Abilities: Ability to establish clear and concise goals and objectives and to evaluate the effectiveness of municipal services and operation of municipal departments. Ability to engage in process documentation and improvement, to prepare and administer budgets; ability to recruit,

City of Somerville, MA
Job Description

train and supervise staff effectively. Ability to work independently, to anticipate the needs of board/committee members and co-workers, and to communicate with City workers, City Councilors, and other stakeholders in a tactful and professional manner at all times. Ability to manage multiple tasks in a detailed, timely, and organized manner. Ability to prepare detailed, accurate reports. Ability to work with highly sensitive, confidential information.

Skills: A strong skill set working with diverse populations and stakeholders is critical. Excellent management skills; skill in coordinating various programs and projects simultaneously; strong communication skills, verbal and written; training in interpersonal communication and mediation. Excellent presentation skills. Multilingual skills are preferred.

Work Environment

The work environment involves everyday discomforts typical of indoor environments such as office settings, with infrequent exposure to outside elements. Noise or physical surroundings may be distracting, but conditions are generally not unpleasant. Employee may be required to work beyond normal business hours in response to attend evening meetings.

Physical and Mental Requirements

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the position's essential functions.

Physical Demands: Little or no physical demands are required to perform the work. Work effort principally involves sitting and walking to perform work tasks, with intermittent periods of stooping, and standing. The employee is required to lift objects such as office equipment.

Motor Skills: Duties are largely mental rather than physical, but the job may occasionally require the application of basic motor skills for activities such as moving objects, operating a telephone personal computer and office equipment.

Visual/Auditory Skills: The employee is required to constantly read documents, personal computer screens and written reports for general understanding and routinely for analytical purposes. The employee must have the auditory ability to listen and comprehend. The employee is rarely required to determine color differences or to review non-written materials such as maps or construction blueprints.

This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee, and is subject to change by the employer, as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.