



CLASSIFICATION NO. 859

Established: 10/24

Revised and Retitled: 12/25

FLSA: Exempt

EEO: 2

## **BENEFITS AND LEAVE SPECIALIST**

### **CLASS CHARACTERISTICS**

Under general supervision, to perform a variety of routine to complex technical and administrative duties in support of the County's employee health and welfare, and wellness or leave of absence and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations programs; to serve as technical expert and resource to County departments, employees, retirees and their family members; and to do other work as required.

### **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

The Department of Human Resources provides human resources services to all County departments, including recruitment and selection, HR policy administration, employee and labor relations, classification, compensation and pay equity, organizational development, employee engagement and development, employee wellness and benefits administration, risk management, workers' compensation, liability and casualty claims management, and human resources information systems.

The Benefits and Leave Specialist is responsible for a variety of specialized, technical functions and services within either employee benefits or leave of absence. Work is performed with minimal supervision and incumbents have latitude for exercising independent judgment and initiative within established policies, guidelines, and procedures. Incumbents possess specialized knowledge within their functional area and assist in maintaining compliance with related laws, collective bargaining agreements, and agreements with third party administrators. The Benefits and Leave Specialist acts as a liaison between contracted vendors and County employees, retirees and their family members.

The Benefits and Leave Specialist differs from the Benefits Coordinator which is responsible for the planning and coordination of services and activities related to the County's employee benefits programs and has lead work and budget responsibilities. It further differs from the Leave and Accommodations Analyst which is responsible for evaluating accommodation requests, reviewing confidential medical information in evaluation of reasonable accommodation eligibility, and working directly with management and County Counsel on complex leave of absence and ADA Accommodation matters.

### **TYPICAL TASKS**

General duties may include but are not limited:

1. Researches, compiles, organizes, and reviews data to verify facts, resolve discrepancies, or provide statistical information; researches and reports on information related to contract proposals.

2. Maintains a variety of records, logs and reports related to employee benefits and leave information and assigned activities; establishes, updates and maintains records and filing systems.
3. Responds to benefit or leave questions from managers, supervisors, employees, retirees, COBRA participants and applicants; refers questions requiring more in-depth contract or policy interpretation to higher level HR staff.
4. Utilizes the County's human resource information system (HRIS), leave management system and query tools to select employee information for a variety of claim and leave issues; uses HRIS in conjunction with other computer tools to generate reports and documents.

Duties also include, within HR functional area – Benefits:

5. Provides benefit information to participants; explains employee benefit programs and eligibility requirements; provides more comprehensive benefits orientation as needed.
6. Reconciles billing statements for assigned benefits plans; in timely manner, identifies and resolves discrepancies, prepares journal entries and fund transfers; processes claim payments for self-insured health plans.
7. Serves as liaison between benefits carriers and plan participants; researches and resolves problems and questions regarding benefit eligibility, types and cost of coverage, and eligibility of dependents.
8. Assists in administering benefits for employees and retiree during onboarding, open enrollment and life event changes; facilitates enrollment in benefits systems, and audits employee, retirees and dependent eligibility to ensure data integrity and compliance.
9. Ensures accurate and timely payment of vendor bills relating to benefits programs.
10. Assists with annual open enrollment processes; provides input regarding updates to the benefit information on the County website.

Duties also include, within HR functional area – Leave Administration:

11. Codes timesheets for employees on leave in accordance with federal and state regulations, county policies, collective bargaining agreements, and existing payroll practices; determines appropriate pay codes and amount of accruals for employees; answers questions from employees, supervisors and managers on available pay options while on leave in accordance with County policies and Collective Bargaining agreements; in coordination with Leave and Accommodations Analyst and Supervisor, prepare and submit timesheet adjustment requests to Payroll when applicable.
12. Answers questions from supervisors and managers and employees on how to navigate through the leave process and work with leave administration vendor; advises employees on available pay while on leave; accrual elections; and applying leave to timesheets.

13. Responds to routine questions from employees regarding continued leave; assists employees eligible for short/long-term disability and refers employees to appropriate insurance provider for administration.
14. Resolves issues with vendor administering leaves; identifies discrepancies in leave dates, eligibility information, applicable policies; escalates complex issues to Analyst.
15. Conducts research projects as assigned; remains current with legislation, regulations, case laws, issues and trends related to disability, family and medical leave programs.

## **REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

Working knowledge of: Principles and practices of benefits administration; applicable Federal and State laws, rules, acts, regulations ordinances and guidelines governing employee benefits and health and welfare programs or disability and family medical leave programs; employee benefits programs including retirement, COBRA, disability and health plan eligibility and enrollment requirement; human resource information systems; methods and techniques of research, analysis and claims administration; report preparation and presentation methods and techniques; basic math.

Some knowledge of: Principles and practices of public administration; County government organization and operations.

Skill to: Learn, interpret and apply employee benefits or leave laws, codes, rules and regulations appropriately; stay current on laws, practices and trends in human resources leave, health and welfare benefit programs; read, interpret, implement and communicate a variety of complex laws, guidelines, initiatives and policies; collect, compile and analyze information and data; enter variety of information into data bases; prepare clear and concise reports; perform accurate math calculations; communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; establish and maintain effective working relationships with County employees, retirees, family members and vendors; maintain confidentiality and demonstrate discretion, initiative and good judgment; assure efficient and timely delivery of program services, projects and activities; learn and use a variety of technologies and software programs, such as Microsoft Office Suite, HRIS and other software programs.

## **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

Minimum qualifications are used as a guide for establishing the minimum experience, education, licensure, and/or certifications required for employment in the classification. The following minimum qualifications are established for this classification. Additional minimum qualifications and special conditions may apply to a specific position within this classification and will be stated on the job announcement.

**Experience:** A minimum of three (3) years of related experience which must include one (1) years of specialized benefits or leave administration experience that would provide the required knowledge and skills to perform the responsibilities of this position.

**Licenses/Certifications:** None required.

## **PRE-EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Driving may be necessary for County business. For position(s) with occasional/incidental driving, incumbents must possess a valid driver's license. Accommodation requests for an acceptable alternative method of transportation will be reviewed on an individual basis in compliance with State and Federal legislation. For position(s) with regular driving, incumbent(s) must also possess and maintain an acceptable driving record throughout the course of employment.

*Retitled from Benefits Specialist 12/25*