

# Employee Relations Manager

CITY OF  
**OAKLAND**  
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

*The City of Oakland is an equal opportunity employer that values workforce diversity, inclusion, and equity. Oakland has a long history of activism around issues of justice and equity. Both oppression and this resistance to oppression have shaped the city's historical roots and the lives of its residents to this day. As public servants in one of the most diverse cities in the nation, we strive to develop employees who understand the harm and impacts of systemic inequity to create lasting, meaningful outcomes for everyone. Oakland strives to establish an environment that embraces the richness of culture, community, and individualism of employees.*



## **An Outstanding Opportunity**

The City of Oakland is searching for a talented, energetic professional to serve as the Employee Relations Manager. The Employee Relations Manager will have broad and expert experience in and a thorough understanding of labor and employee relations.

In 2026, the City's labor agreements with its miscellaneous and safety groups will be open for successor bargaining. We seek an individual who will be able to serve as a key partner in the City's overall labor strategy.

The ideal candidate has excellent interpersonal skills and is successful at building and maintaining strong working relationships across the organization. This top manager serves as a strategic labor relations partner and will be responsible for the full spectrum of employee relations, including negotiations, investigations, grievance processing, training and discipline. Additional oversight and responsibilities include acting as a management advisor and contributing to overall organizational health. High level experience for a mid-size or large governmental organization is essential for success in this role, with highly desirable experience in prior roles as Chief Negotiator.

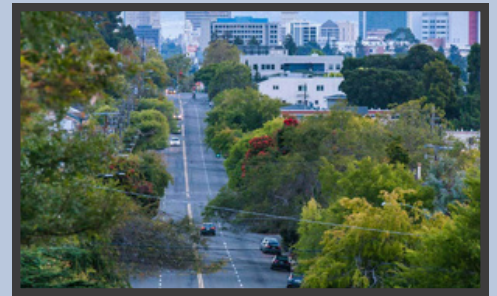
The Employee Relations Manager will be well supported by a strong and committed leadership team, which will enable the best energetic, collaborative, and creative efforts to positively contribute to Oakland's workforce.

# The City of Oakland

The City of Oakland is a vibrant urban hub located in the San Francisco Bay Area. With a population of over 400,000, Oakland is renowned for its rich diversity, boasting a multicultural community where more than 125 languages are spoken. The city is home to one of the largest LGBTQ+ communities in the nation and combines historic neighborhoods with a growing downtown and thriving arts and entertainment district.

Oakland's strategic location between the Pacific Ocean and rolling hills provides breathtaking views and abundant green spaces, including over 140 parks, recreational amenities, and scenic areas such as Lake Merritt and Joaquin Miller Park. The city is also a key economic driver in Northern California, anchored by the Port of Oakland, the region's busiest international trade center, and a strong corporate presence with home to corporate headquarters such as Kaiser Permanente, Clorox, and Pandora.

Known for its innovative spirit, Oakland continues to grow as a center for commerce, technology, and education, with six major universities in close proximity. This dynamic city blends natural beauty with urban energy, making it a desirable place to live, work, and thrive.



## City Governance

The City of Oakland operates under a Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor, elected at-large for a four-year term, leads the executive branch and appoints the City Administrator, who oversees daily operations across all departments. In May 2025, Barbara Lee, longtime U.S. Congressional Representative and the first Black woman elected Mayor of Oakland, was sworn in as the City's 52nd Mayor. Her administration emphasizes transparent, accountable leadership and delivering meaningful results through good governance, meaningful engagement, and effective communication for all residents. [Learn more about the Mayor.](#)

The City Council consists of eight members – seven elected by district and one at-large – serving staggered four-year terms. The Council sets citywide priorities, adopts ordinances, approves the budget, and appoints members to boards and commissions. Additional information about [Council members and activities](#) is available [here](#).

The City of Oakland has an annual budget exceeding \$1.3 billion. Its 4200+ employees provide a wide range of essential services, including police, fire, public works, violence prevention programs, parks, libraries, and more. [Learn more about Oakland City Services.](#)



## Human Resources Management Department

The Human Resources Management (HRM) Department recruits, develops, and maintains the talented and diverse workforce that serves the Oakland community. HRM is responsible for the administration of the competitive civil service process, labor agreements, risk management systems, and employee health benefits. Valuing equity and professional growth, while building a strong, committed workforce. As an internal service department, HRM takes pride in customer service, problem solving, and employee recognition capacity; striving to be a model for human resource services in the public sector, HRM demonstrates exceptional professionalism and integrity.

The Human Resources Department consists of five divisions:

- Recruitment, Operations, and Classification
- Benefits and Risk Management
- Employee Relations
- Training and Organizational Development
- Administrative



As the organization grows, so do the demands and support for quality internal services. Human Resources Management is central to the City's success, leading with quality customer service and collaborative management.



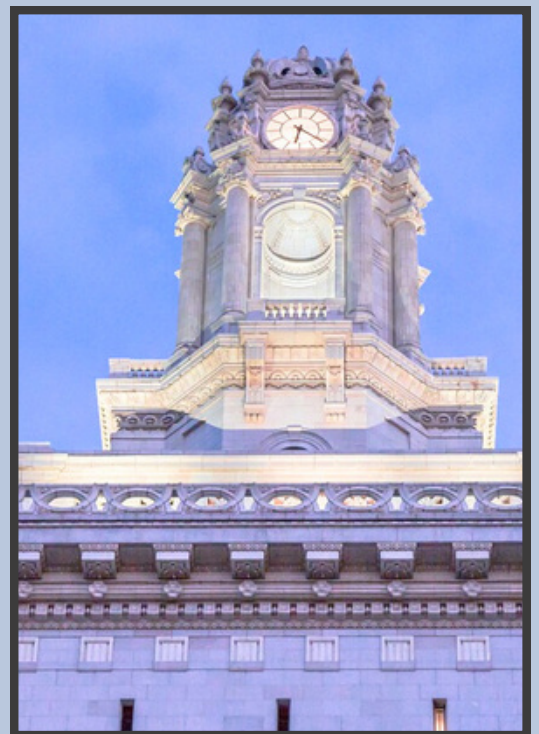
## The Position

The Employee Relations Manager reports to the Director of Human Resources Management. The responsibilities of this position involve considerable discretion and latitude of judgment in the formulation and development of workplace policies and procedures, as well as supervision and direction over professional and technical staff. This position also coordinates work activities of a variety of technical consultants. The ER Manager is responsible for labor and employee relations for a workforce of over 4,200 employees.

Oakland has a vibrant and diverse workforce, which consists of seven collective bargaining groups that represent and support City staff. The ability to understand complex policies, rules, and labor agreements in a collective bargaining work environment is key to the success of the ER Manager.

Key responsibilities include:

- Cultivate a positive work environment by collaborating with staff, administration, departments, and other important stakeholders who rely on quality human resources services;
- Manage employee and labor relations activities for the City of Oakland to comply with labor agreements, facilitate open communication between labor groups and appropriate management staff;
- Exercise considerable discretion and latitude of judgment in the formulation and development of policies and procedures;
- Provide leadership and direction, evaluation, and modification of existing goals, policies, programs, and labor agreements;
- Serve as Chief Negotiator and/or oversee the overall coordination of collective bargaining for wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment;
- Direct and supervise employee relations activities that support organizational development and health;
- Manage and conduct a variety of investigations, issue findings related to complaints and allegations; recommend modifications to programs, policies, and procedures as appropriate;
- Conduct complex research; prepare and present reports including recommendations and conclusions to the Director of Human Resources, Mayor's Office, City Administrator, and City Council.





## **The Ideal Candidate**

The ideal candidate is a highly energetic individual with solid and broad human resources experience, complemented by a thorough understanding of municipal operations. The Employee Relations Manager will have outstanding leadership skills and exceptionally strong people skills. This distinguished ER Manager will also embrace a philosophy of proactive and strategic consultation with operating departments and truly believe in the benefit of working for and promoting a healthy organization to the fullest.

The successful candidate will work to intentionally integrate the principle of “fair and just” on a city-wide basis to advance equitable opportunities for all people and communities, and will play a critical role in the race and equity analysis for the Human Resources Department.

Additionally, the ideal candidate will have a career history that supports the ability to:

- Excel in developing interpersonal relationships with the full spectrum of the organization and labor representatives by being an excellent communicator and collaborator;
- Be seen as committed to best practices in a civil service environment with a forward-thinking approach to labor and employee relations;
- Offer a high level of integrity and honesty; be known as a professional recognized for their efforts and sought out by others throughout the organization;
- Engage and be a good listener with a results-oriented approach to problem-solving;
- Be an analytical yet strategic thinker; be a pragmatic and forward-thinking individual with the ability to understand technical issues and offer sound, objective decision-making to management staff;
- Present facts and information clearly and concisely in the course of analyzing and responding to issues and questions; identify clear courses of action; convey confidence and decisiveness;
- Coach, inspire, and mentor staff to reach and achieve goals, setting an example of the highest level of professionalism; and
- Establish and maintain effective work relationships with those contacted in the performance of required duties.



## Requirements

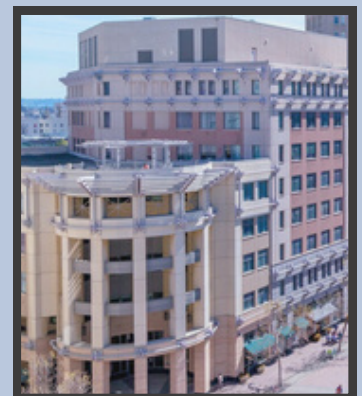
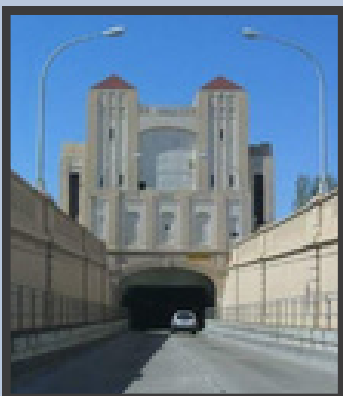
*Any combination of education and experience that is equivalent to the following minimum qualifications is acceptable.*

**Education:** Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in human resources, public or business administration, social science, or a related field. A Master's degree may be a plus.

**Experience:** Six years of progressively responsible experience in public sector personnel administration and management, including at least four years in a supervision or management capacity. Highly desirable experience includes having previously served as Chief Negotiator during successor negotiations, and experience working in a highly unionized environment. Relative experience in a medium to large, complex municipal organization is required. California experience may be a plus although all highly qualified candidates on a national basis will be evaluated for further consideration.

**License:** Individuals who are appointed to this position will be required to maintain a valid California Driver's License throughout the tenure of employment OR demonstrate the ability to travel to various locations in a timely manner as required in the performance of duties.

*Full Discretion of the City of Oakland:* The above qualifications are guidelines, as the appointing authority (Director of Human Resources) has broad discretion in filling this position. The Director will have the full right to evaluate the education, experience, and overall career history of candidates to advance individuals for an interview or further consideration in this process.

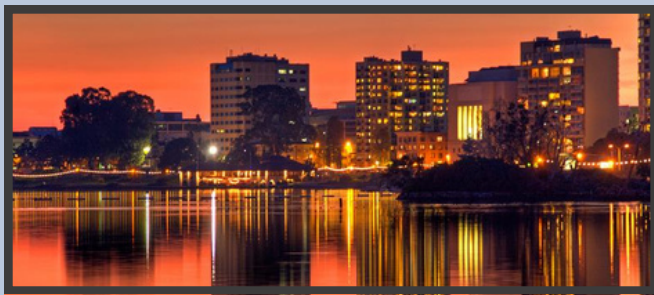


# The Process

The process for the ER Manager position will begin with the screening of applications, resumes, and cover letters by the Human Resources Management Department. The most qualified candidates will be invited to participate in an interview - likely with a panel of external stakeholders familiar with the position and with internal representatives. The most highly qualified candidate will be selected for this critical position and will serve at the pleasure of the Director of Human Resources.

## Compensation & Benefits

This comprehensive package reflects the City's commitment to attracting and retaining top talent in public service. The salary range for this position is \$181,694.04 to \$223,066.44 annually. Salary is negotiable within the defined range depending on qualifications. Benefits include generous medical insurance, life insurance, automobile allowance, paid holidays, vacation, sick leave, management leave, public sector retirement (CalPERS 2.5% @ 55 classic member; 2% @ 62 new PEPRA member), and voluntary deferred compensation. Click on the link for the city's 2025 Benefits Matrix



## How to Apply

To be considered, please submit a comprehensive resume and compelling cover letter outlining the background and experience that makes you the ideal candidate, electronically through the city's online applicant portal found here:

[www.governmentjobs.com/careers/oaklandca](http://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/oaklandca)

**Candidates are encouraged to apply no later than Monday, December 22, 2025.**

This is a confidential process and references will not be requested or contacted until mutual interest has been established. Interviews will take place in January 2026. It is anticipated that the selected Employee Relations Manager will join the City of Oakland in March 2026 (or sooner).

Confidential inquiries are welcomed to Director Mary Hao at (510) 238-6450 or [MHao@oaklandca.gov](mailto:MHao@oaklandca.gov).

