

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska Department of Administration Division of Personnel

To: Pam Day
Human Resource Manager
Department of Natural Resources

Date: October 4, 2002

Thru: Lee Powelson
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Subject: Appraisers Classification Study

History:

In the process of conducting a classification study of the Natural Resource Management job classes the department identified a group of positions which did not meet the tests of similarity for inclusion in the revised classes. The Division of Personnel was asked to review the positions and determine the appropriate allocation within existing job classes or to reestablish the abolished Appraiser series as necessary. After reviewing the work of the positions the Division determined the work was not appropriately allocated to existing job classes. Supplemental information was gathered and class specifications for a new class series drafted. The department provided comments on the draft class specifications and the specifications were refined. Due to an immediate need for recruitment the new series is being implemented prior to the completion of the Natural Resource Management study.

Scope:

This study covers four positions in the Appraisal Section of the Division of Mining, Land, and Water in the Department of Natural Resources which perform or review appraisal of real property.

Study Method:

Updated position descriptions were received from the incumbents. Information was gathered in interviews with the unit supervisor, Judy Robinson, and additional information on real property appraisal was gathered from class specifications used by the federal government and the states of Washington, Oregon, and California; occupational licensing criteria; and from professional publications.

The positions were reviewed under the tests of similarity for job classes and number and types of levels determined. Class specifications were developed for each level based on the duties described in the position descriptions and the additional information gathered. The draft class

specifications were distributed to the department for review and comment. The department requested changes to the draft minimum qualifications. The request was discussed with the section supervisor and the specs revised. The new series was compared with other classes for internal alignment and the appropriate salary ranges determined. The individual positions were allocated within the new series and the study finalized.

Class Concepts:

The Appraiser series covers positions performing or reviewing work in the appraisal of real property or property interests. The positions require technical knowledge and skill in the application of the principles, practices, and techniques of appraisal to research, gather, analyze, and interpret information on a specific property, neighborhood, or market area. Positions determine the value of real property or property interest as of a specific date, current or historical, based on the property's condition, size, boundaries, and topographical features; the highest and best use of the property; and market area characteristics. Positions which appraise real property in conjunction with their primary duties of property acquisition, management, or disposal are excluded from this series.

Appraiser I is the entry professional level of the series in which incumbents assist higher level appraisers by preparing segments of complex appraisals, which may include conducting research and drafting analyses, compiling maps and plats, providing the results of previous appraisals, or researching, analyzing, and drafting information for inclusion in special reports. Incumbents also independently prepare appraisals of properties, where there are stable economic conditions, readily available comparable sales, obvious uses, and few encumbrances and other legal concerns, such as subdivision lots and remote recreational cabin sites.

Appraiser II is the journey level of the series in which incumbents appraise various types of real property ranging from small, unimproved tracts through highly developed complexes, including agricultural lands, tidelands, and timberlands. Appraisals include complications such as a lack of comparable sales; mineral, water, and sewer rights; severance damages due to partial takings; multiple ownership; easements; environmental or historic preservation issues; timber values or rights; agricultural rights; many different potential uses of subject property and surrounding properties; or the presence of advanced or unusual financing techniques.

Appraiser III is a single position job class responsible for managing a departmental real property appraisal program. The incumbent reviews and approves or rejects appraisal reports submitted by staff or contract appraisers. The incumbent serves as the technical expert for all issues concerning real property appraisal, develops policy and procedures for the appraisal program, drafts and reviews regulations and legislation, and provides expert testimony for litigation.

Analysis:

In determining if the positions in the appraisal section were appropriately grouped with other natural resource management positions the following tests of similarity for grouping job classes were analyzed:

1. The same title can be used to clearly describe the positions. Separate titles are needed to clearly describe the specialization of positions in the appraisal section. Using the Natural

Resources classes will not distinguish positions performing appraisals from positions managing real property. Using the Right of Way Review Appraiser classes will not distinguish the general appraisers from those performing specialized appraisals in the area of eminent domain.

2. The same minimum qualifications for initial appointment can be established for all positions. Real property appraisal is a distinct professional field with specific educational requirements and established professional organizations and certification criteria. Restricting the minimum qualification requirements to education and experience in real property appraisal is appropriate. This restriction is not appropriate for general property management job classes.
3. The same basic rate of pay can be fairly applied to all positions. The analysis of internal alignment for the revised natural resource classes has not been completed.
4. Employees are considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall. The nature of work, educational requirements, and professional expertise required indicate the employees are not considered an appropriate group for layoff and recall from other job classes.

As three of the four tests of similarity were not met, a separate series is appropriate for the appraisal positions.

Levels in the Appraiser series are distinguished by the scope, variety and complexity of real property appraised. At the entry level employees perform analysis of individual properties and make value determinations based on established standards. At the journey level employees perform analysis of a variety of properties with complicating factors and establish the standards against which other properties are valued. The management level employee is responsible for overseeing the appraisal program and reviewing, approving or rejecting appraisals from staff and contract appraisers. These levels are appropriately distinguished with separate titles, assigned different minimum qualifications, assigned different rates of basic pay, and considered separate groups for purposes of layoff and recall.

Salary Analysis:

In accord with the principal of internal alignment, the salary ranges for the Appraiser series were compared to professional classes in the Economic Research and Planning job family (P22XX), the Right of Way Negotiation job family (P27XX), and the Land Appraisal job family (P26XX).

The classes most comparable to Appraiser I are Community Development Specialist II (R16), Labor Economist II (R16), and Right of Way Agent II (R16). These are professional positions in which incumbents research, analyze and interpret market and socio-economic data, determine, evaluate and document conclusions, and assist higher level professional staff with complex large scale projects. Allocation of Appraiser I to salary range 16 is appropriate.

The classes most comparable to Appraiser II are Economist I (R18), Economist II (R20), Labor Economist II (R18), and Right of Way Agent III (R18). These are professional positions in which incumbents perform complex and innovative research and analysis of economic factors, present results in a professional report and commonly serve as project leaders directing the work of professional staff. Allocation of Appraiser II to salary range 18 is appropriate.

The classes most comparable to Appraiser III are Labor Economist IV (R20), Right of Way Agent IV (R20), Right of Way Review Appraiser I (R21), Right of Way Review Appraiser II (R22), Economist III (R22), and State Assessor (R22). Positions in these classes perform and supervise complex research and analysis of market and socio-economic data, conduct professional reviews of real property appraisals, manage a program with subordinate review appraisers, or manage a statewide property assessment and tax relief program impacting municipal property tax programs. The Appraiser III's specialized responsibility as a review appraiser, supervision of professional appraisers, lack of subordinate review appraisers, and programmatic scope and variety indicate allocation to salary range 21 is appropriate.

Conclusions:

The professional real property appraisal work performed in the Appraisal Section of the Division of Mining, Land and Water is appropriately grouped into a separate class series. Three distinct levels of work in the Appraiser series were identified: entry, journey, and management. The class specifications accurately define and distinguish the work of the series, allow for career progression, and establish minimum qualifications that will provide a broad pool of qualified applicants.

Appraiser I, II, and III are assigned to salary ranges 16, 18, and 21 respectively.

The attached class specifications are established October 4, 2002

Attachments:

Final class specifications