

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska Department of Administration Division of Personnel

To: Administrative Service Directors
Human Resource Managers

Date: September 16, 2002

From: Sharon Barton, Director

Phone: 465-4429

Subject: HR Classification Study
Human Resource Assistant

Fax: 465-2269

Attached herewith is the final class specification for the new Human Resource Assistant job class. The class specification is effective September 1, 2001.

HISTORY

The State of Alaska and the Confidential Employees Association entered into Letter of Agreement (LOA) 01-KK-048 as part of the 2000 – 2003 collective bargaining agreement. The LOA required the State to conduct a classification study of Human Resource job classifications placed primarily within the Confidential Unit. The study was to include, but was not limited to, the following job classes:

- Human Resource Manager I, II, III
- Personnel Officer I, II
- Personnel Specialist I, II, III
- Personnel Assistant I, II
- Employee Resource Consultant Specialist
- Employee Resource Consultant Manager
- Labor Relations Specialist I, II, III
- Personnel Manager I, II

The Labor Management Committee (LMC) established by the contract identified the following problems and concerns to be addressed:

Personnel Assistant I:

- Difficulty exists in recruitment and in the interpretation of the qualifications.

Human Resource Managers:

- Range 19 (HRM I) is obsolete.
- Criteria established at all levels to not seem realistic distinctions of complexity.
- Is this a separate job class series or an extension of the Personnel Officer?
- The level of influence on department/“change element” influence.

Salary Ranges for all HR jobs:

- New factors – delegation and federal mandates
- Retention and recruitment
- Increased liability

Career Tracks:

- Generalist vs. Specialist positions
- Inequity
- No range 16 exists in the generalist – either as a technician or entry professional.

Centralized vs. Delegated:

- Equity in job classes available
- Overtime exemption inequity

The Department of Administration solicited bids to conduct the study and develop new class specifications. A contract was awarded under the procurement rules and the contractor met with the Committee several times, held group interviews with selected incumbents, and produced draft specifications. After several unsuccessful attempts to improve the quality of the work product, the State cancelled the contract. A Working Group composed of the union members of the LMC and several Division of Personnel (DOP) staff members began anew and completed work on the study. The State contracted with Cooperative Personnel Services (CPS) to study the Human Resource Manager and Personnel Manager job classes. The consultant interviewed the incumbents and issued a report and recommendations to the Director of Personnel in July 2002.

All Position Descriptions (PDs) were read and reviewed. A list of duty statements representative of the various HR functional areas and levels of work was developed and distributed to the Human Resource Managers (HRMs). The HRMs categorized the tasks as clerical, technical, or administrative. Responses from each department were compiled and reviewed; the Working Group assigned the category when there was no consensus among the department responses.

Teams of interviewers from the Division of Personnel and the departments conducted position interviews with the incumbents of most positions in the departments and in DOP. The results of the interviews were reported to the Working Group and used, along with the PDs and function lists, to develop and clarify the class specifications.

The consultant interviewed all Human Resource Managers and Personnel Managers as planned, and requested additional interviews with the Classification Manager and the Employee Programs Manager. From those interviews and from information supplied by each department, the consultant prepared a report of findings to the Director of Personnel.

The LMC and the Division of Personnel hosted a briefing in late July at which CPS consultant Rick McWilliams presented his report and recommendations regarding the Human Resource Manager and Personnel Manager class series. Draft specifications were distributed for the other human resource series included in the study. Reallocation of positions in classifications covered by the study was suspended effective August 1, 2002, to allow for completion and implementation of the study.

A formal comment period followed the briefing during which departments were invited to make specific remarks and suggestions about all but the Human Resource Manager, Human Resource Officer and Personnel Manager job classes. All comments were collected by the Division of Personnel and forwarded to the Working Group, which considered and made a determination regarding each recommendation. Reports summarizing these decisions will be distributed to agencies following implementation of Phase One. While the comment period was underway, two general meetings were held to discuss questions raised by agency representatives. The first meeting addressed the technical series; the second meeting addressed the professional series. Both meetings were well attended, with representation from most departments.

Whereas Phase I of the study was scheduled for implementation on September 16, 2002, the Working Group imposed a deadline of August 1, 2002, for revised PDs to be considered part of the study.

Following revision of the class specifications based on the comments received and the further deliberations of the Working Group, three test allocation sessions were held. Definitions and Distinguishing Characteristics for the following classes were considered: Human Resource Assistant, Human Resource Technician I-III, Payroll Supervisor, Human Resource Specialist I-III, and Human Resource Officer. The Working Group considered the issues raised in the test allocations and made final revisions to the class specifications. In addition, the Working Group concluded that it needed additional information in order to resolve questions about work performed by positions that provide professional human resource services exclusively to specific divisions or regions, as well as those that act as "seconds" or "assistants" to Human Resource Managers. The Working Group determined that action on the individual positions should be deferred to Phase Two, that audits should be conducted, and that final action on class specifications occur in conjunction with the Human Resource Manager and Personnel Manager job classes. The recommendation was forwarded to the LMC.

The Working Group finalized the class specifications and presented its work product and recommendations to the full LMC on September 3, 2002. At that meeting the Working Group recommended that positions providing comprehensive HR services to regions or divisions, as well as those that serve in the capacity of a "second" or an "Assistant HRM," be given additional scrutiny and that actions on these positions be deferred until Phase Two. The LMC concurred. As a result, DOP staff will audit these positions to develop accurate position information covering the study period. This information will be used to draft Phase Two class specifications and, if appropriate, to recommend revisions to the Human Resource Specialist series to incorporate all or some of the audited work.

The Working Group deferred its review of the consultant's report until after the implementation of the Phase I class specifications on September 16; work on the Human Resource Managers, Personnel Managers, Human Resource Officer, Payroll Manager, and Retirement & Benefits Manager will be completed at a later date.

The Director approved the final class specifications. The following job classes and series are established:

Human Resource Assistant

Human Resource Technician I, II, III
Payroll Supervisor
Payroll Specialist I, II, III
AMHS Dispatcher
Human Resource Specialist I, II, III
Labor Relations Analyst I, II, III, IV

The interview teams reviewed the PDs, interview notes, and any additional information in conjunction with the final class specifications and recommended individual position allocations.

SCOPE

The study was limited to positions allocated to Human Resource job classifications placed primarily within the Confidential Unit. Positions allocated to job classes shared with other bargaining units were not included (i.e. Analyst Programmers). Departments were invited to submit PDs of individual clerical positions that they believed might perform work properly allocated to a HR class.

CLASS CONCEPT

Human Resource Assistants, under general supervision, perform advanced clerical tasks requiring a working knowledge of human resource functions, policies, procedures and forms in order to recognize errors and discrepancies in information and determine the appropriate action to take, explain requirements to others, vary procedures according to the situation, prioritize work, and exercise discretion and tact in processing documents and information of a confidential or sensitive nature.

Human Resource Assistant is an advanced clerical class in which incumbents provide clerical support for a departmental or Division of Personnel human resource program. Assignments require a working knowledge of human resource functions, policies, procedures and forms in order to recognize errors and omissions and take action to obtain correct or complete information, explain requirements to others, select from a variety of established procedures depending on the situation, and coordinate processing of personnel forms and documents, including reviewing for completeness and accuracy and/or calculating and entering standard time and attendance.

Policies and procedures are typically clear and specific. Work is typically subject to review, revision, correction and forwarding to technical and professional human resource staff for approval or action. Positions require sufficient knowledge of computer software to enter information in a variety of databases and design, produce or direct the preparation of reports, computer filing systems and documents. Lead or supervisory duties may be assigned but are not class controlling.

Contacts are primarily with employees to explain human resource policies and procedures, collective bargaining agreement provisions, and employee benefits and with department Human Resource Technicians to provide documents and information required for personnel actions.

ANALYSIS

The original study design did not provide for consideration of clerical positions. During the initial PD reviews and interviews, study participants identified several positions that were classified as Personnel Assistants, but appeared to be doing primarily clerical work. After considerable discussion about these and related Administrative Clerk II and III positions, the Working Group determined that certain advanced clerical positions are sufficiently distinct in their requirement for specialized knowledge of human resource policies and procedures to warrant a separate clerical class that provides career progression into the Human Resource Technician series. Positions performing this body of work may be located in operational divisions as well as in human resource and Division of Personnel offices; in either case, technical direction and review with respect to human resource policies, practices and procedures is provided by higher level technical and professional human resource staff. Positions which provide general clerical support a majority of the time or which do not receive technical direction and review from higher level human resource staff should not be allocated to this job class.

SALARY ANALYSIS

The Human Resource Assistant is an advanced clerical class that performs a variety of duties in support of a Human Resource Office or function. The duties are appropriately compared with the generic clerical classes of the Clerical and Secretarial family (P11XX). For purposes of internal alignment, the Human Resource Assistant performs duties directly analogous to those of the Administrative Clerk III. Assignment to salary range 10 is appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Positions performing specialized advanced clerical duties in support of a department or central agency human resource function are appropriately severed from the general Administrative Clerk series which defines and distinguishes positions performing a variety of clerical tasks. The class specification accurately defines and distinguishes the duties and responsibilities of the positions and the knowledge, skills and abilities required. The minimum qualifications will provide a broad pool of candidates and provide for career progression in the human resources field.

The Human Resource Assistant is assigned to salary range 10.

The attached class specifications are established September 16, 2002, and are effective retroactively to September 1, 2001, pursuant to LOA 01-KK-048 as amended.

Attachment