

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 Specialists

Fax: 465-2269

Attached herewith are the final class specifications for the new Human Resource Specialist series.

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- Range 19 (HRM I) is obsolete.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.

SERIES CONCEPTS

Human Resource Specialist I - III is a professional series in which incumbents perform a wide variety of human resource management activities in the areas of classification and compensation, recruitment and selection, employee and labor-management relations, employment compliance, training, worker safety and health, program and policy development, or other functions directly related to human resource management in an organization. Positions in the series may be assigned to work primarily in a single specialty area or in multiple specialty areas, depending on the size or organization of the unit or agency. Lead or supervisory responsibilities may be assigned at any level in the series.

Human Resource Specialist I is the journey level of the series. (Entry level work is included in the definition, distinguishing characteristics, and examples of duties of the Human Resource Technician series.) Under direction, Human Resource Specialists I perform journey level work that is analytical, evaluative and interpretative in nature in support of a department or Division of Personnel human resource program. Methods of performing tasks are usually left to the judgment of the incumbent, with the supervisor available for assistance if needed. Work may be reviewed on completion. Assignments are primarily structured, standard and recurring, requiring research, analysis and the use of independent judgment and discretion to interpret and apply statutes, regulations, policies and procedures, collective bargaining agreements and human resource principles and practices to specific situations, rather than the mere application of detailed rules and procedures. Contacts are ordinarily with other human resource staff, agency employees and supervisors to obtain facts, explain rules and procedures, and complete routine personnel activities such as individual position allocation.

Typical activities at the Human Resource Specialist I level include research in readily available and identifiable sources; investigation within defined guidelines of circumstances resulting in requests for agency action, complaints, appeals, or grievances involving routine matters; drafting reports, standard forms and memoranda to respond to inquiries, lower level complaints, appeals

or grievances, or to make recommendations for agency action within defined parameters; and assisting higher level human resource professionals with complex or controversial projects. Decisions and recommendations are typically limited in scope and impact, affecting individuals or small groups within a single unit or agency, such as the allocation of individual positions or the development of class specifications for department specific job classifications involving limited controversy or effect on other agencies or job classes.

Human Resource Specialist II is the advanced level of the series. Under general direction, Human Resource Specialists II perform advanced administrative work that requires substantial analytical skill, considerable knowledge of human resource management principles and practices, and the exercise of substantial independent judgment and discretion in support of a departmental or Division of Personnel human resource function.

Incumbents perform a wide variety of human resource activities in the areas of classification and compensation, recruitment and selection, employee and labor-management relations, employment law compliance, training, worker safety and health, program and policy development, or other functions directly related to human resource management in an organization. Positions in the series may be assigned to work primarily in any one or a combination of these areas, depending on the size or organization of the unit or agency. Lead or supervisory responsibilities may be assigned at any level in the series.

Human Resource Specialists II work under the general direction of a higher level human resource professional in one of two options:

- 1) Regularly and consistently plan, manage and conduct major projects or complex investigations that involve a wide variety of variables and effects, are controversial or sensitive, and have the potential to create or avoid substantial liability. Work may be in one or more specialties and may include some routine assignments, but is primarily complex and analytical in nature, and requires substantial independent judgment and discretion to select, develop or modify methods and means to accomplish goals. Incumbents may lead or supervise the work of lower level positions.
- 2) Supervise a major functional area(s) or unit(s) such as a department classification or labor relations unit that includes two or more subordinates, at least one of which is at the journey professional level, **and** perform advanced level professional work (as described in Option 1 above) on a regular and recurring basis. This option is fully supervisory; incumbents exercise substantial responsibility for the exercise of independent judgement in appointing, promoting, transferring, suspending, disciplining and discharging subordinates

Contacts are ordinarily with administrators, supervisors and employees, as well as union representatives and human resource staff in departments and the Divisions of Personnel and Finance to obtain facts, identify and mediate interests, provide analysis and take or effectively recommend action. Incumbents apply knowledge of human resource principles and practices as well as statutes, regulations, rules, policies and procedures and collective bargaining agreements to make decisions and take actions that have substantial impact on small to large groups of employees, organizational structures and budgets, or which can create or avoid substantial legal or financial liability.

Human Resource Specialist III is the expert level in the series. Under general direction, Human Resource Specialists III perform very complex human resource management work as 1) a Division of Personnel subject matter expert in a major functional area responsible for analysis and design of fundamental statewide human resource structures, policies and procedures, or 2) the full supervisor of one or more functional units in a large operational agency performing advanced human resource management activities.

Incumbents work under the general direction of a higher level human resource professional in one of two options:

- 1) As a Division of Personnel subject matter expert reporting to a Personnel Manager in a major functional area such as classification and compensation, a Human Resource Specialist III will analyze fundamental statewide human resource structures, systems, policies and procedures, and develop and effectively recommend changes and additions. Assignments ordinarily involve the most complex and sensitive issues the resolution of which affects all agencies. Incumbents must apply a broad knowledge of and experience with statewide, cross-agency issues and operations in order to develop innovative methods and procedures to achieve goals and objectives.
- 2) Supervise a major functional area(s) or unit(s) such as a department classification or labor relations unit which consists of two or more subordinates, at least one of whom is at the advanced professional level, **and** perform advanced level work on a regular and recurring basis. Incumbents apply knowledge of human resource principles and practices as well as statutes, regulations, rules, policies and procedures and collective bargaining agreements (hereinafter “guides”) to make decisions and take actions which have substantial impact on small to large groups of employees, organizational structures and budgets, or which can create or avoid substantial legal or financial liability. This option is fully supervisory; incumbents exercise substantial responsibility for the exercise of independent judgement in appointing, promoting, transferring, suspending, disciplining or discharging subordinates

Contacts are typically with administrators and managers at all levels in the organization, as well as union representatives and human resource staff in departments and the Divisions of Finance and Personnel to obtain facts and opinions, identify and mediate interests in situations which often involve substantial conflict, and explain recommendations and decisions in formal and informal briefings for executives and managers.

The Working Group considered a third option for the HR Specialist II as the manager of a recognized regional HR function. After considerable discussion and comment by departments, the final class specification does not include this option. It will be considered during Phase II of the study along with other senior management classes. The HR Specialist II and III may be revised when Phase II is implemented.

ANALYSIS

The LMC identified discrepancies between the specialist and generalist series as an issue to be reviewed during the study. The Working Group considered the scope of professional work performed in human resources, the desired career paths and the ability to recruit effectively at

each level and concluded a generalist series encompassing the majority of the work was in the best interest of the state and employees. The Working Group included the less complex labor relations work in the generalist series but determined the more complex work requiring specific delegation from the Division of Personnel was appropriately assigned to a separate class series. The final class specifications recognize three levels of generalist professional work in the Human Resource Specialist series and allow the series to be used by both the Division of Personnel and operating departments, and both large and small departments.

The performance of analytical, evaluative and interpretative work in one or more human resource functional areas in support of a department or Division of Personnel human resource program distinguishes the Human Resource Specialist series. The new series incorporates most of the work previously included in the Personnel Specialist series and the Personnel Officer series.

Levels within the Human Resource Specialist series are distinguished by the level of responsibility and authority and by the complexity of the work performed, not by the specific specialty or specialties performed. Supervision can occur at any level; however, supervision in and of itself does not generally qualify a position for a higher level of the series; rather, the position must actually perform higher level work on a regular and recurring basis to advance to the higher level. Consistent with classification principles, occasional performance of higher level work is generally not class controlling, nor is a hypothetical assignment "should the opportunity occur" where not probable given the organizational structure or other reasons.

SALARY ANALYSIS

In accord with the principal of internal alignment, the salary ranges for the Human Resource Specialist series were compared to professional and administrative classes in the Personnel and Employee Relations family (P14XX), the Accounting and Fiscal family (P12XX), the Labor and Employment Services family (P46XX), the Statistics and Research Analysis family (P17XX), the Social Work and Public Assistant family (P41XX), the Management and Systems Analysis family (P18XX), the Law Enforcement family (P77XX), the Legal family (P71XX) and the Special Social Services family (P42XX).

The classes most comparable to Human Resource Specialist I are Workforce Development Specialist I (R15), Research Analyst II (R16), Field Auditor (R16), Accountant II (R16), Workers' Compensation Officer I (R16), Wage-Hour Investigator I (R16), Retirement and Benefits Specialist I (R16), Employment Counselor II (R16), Training Specialist (R16), Investigator II (R16), Paralegal II (R16), Local Government Specialist III (R17) and Payroll Specialist (recommended R16). These are journey professional positions performing research, investigation, analysis, interpretation, counseling and consulting in a specialty field. Assignments include the full spectrum of issues commonly encountered in the specialty or cover a narrow segment of the specialty with greater depth. Higher level professionals are available to provide guidance and direction when unusual or sensitive issues arise. Allocation to salary range 16 is appropriate.

The classes most comparable to Human Resource Specialist II are Workforce Development Specialist II (R16), Research Analyst II (R16), Workforce Development Specialist III (R17),

Retirement and Benefits Specialist III (R18), Workers' Compensation Officer II (R18), Wage-Hour Investigator II (R18), Human Rights Field Investigator III (R18), Workforce Development Specialist IV (R18), Research Analyst III (R18), Investigator III (R18), Training Specialist (R18), Accountant III (R18), Local Government Specialist III (R19), Project Coordinator (R18), Program Budget Analyst III (R19) and Labor Relations Analyst I (recommended R18). These are advanced professional positions performing a full spectrum of professional duties requiring difficult analysis, developing new or revising current methods of performing the work, and coordination and leadership of statewide, multi-agency projects or programs with substantial independent judgment and discretion. Allocation to salary range 18 is appropriate.

The classes comparable to Human Resource Specialist III are Project Coordinator (R18), Local Government Specialist IV (R19), Employment Counselor (R20), Retirement and Benefits Specialist III (R20), Training Specialist (R20), Program Coordinator (R20), Program Budget Analyst IV (R21) Local Government Specialist V (R21) and Research Analyst IV (R21). These are expert positions responsible for planning, development and coordination of statewide programs, often with significant administrative responsibility for a unit or section which includes advanced professional staff. Allocation to salary range 20 is appropriate.

CONCLUSION

The administrative work performed in the operating departments and the Division of Personnel in the areas of classification and compensation, recruitment and selection, employee and labor-management relations, employment law compliance, training, worker safety and health, program and policy development, or other functions directly related to human resource management in an organization are appropriately grouped into a single job series. Three distinct levels of work in the Human Resource Specialist series were identified: journey, advanced, and expert. Positions in the series may be assigned to work primarily in a single specialty area or in multiple specialty areas, depending on the size or organization of the unit or agency. Lead or supervisory responsibilities may be assigned at any level in the series. The class series may be used in either the Division of Personnel or the departments. 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.

Human Resource Specialists I, II, and III are assigned to salary ranges 16, 18, and 20 respectively.

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

Attachments