

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of Administration
Division of Personnel & Labor Relations

To: Nicki Neal
Director

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Subject: Final adjustments for Prospective Administrative Study

Introduction:

The Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (DOP&LR) proposed a classification study of the Administrative Assistant, Administrative Manager I-IV, and Administrative Services Manager I-II in October 2006. The proposal was in response to ongoing challenges with applying the existing class specifications due to the ongoing changes in agencies' structure, operations, and complexities; and a significant volume of agency requests for reclassification of positions in the classes.

As a result of the study, the series was restructured. The class specifications for the Administrative job classes were revised, and in addition, the following job classes were established: Administrative Assistant I (SR 12) & II (SR14), Administrative Officer I (SR 17) & II (SR 19), and Administrative Operations Managers I (SR22), II (SR23) & III (SR24). The study was implemented in May 2007.

However, by October 2007, the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations identified the potential of another technical level within the Administrative Assistant series. In January 2008, the final adjustments for the Administrative Assistant job class series were completed, which resulted in more clearly defining the first two levels and the addition of an advanced technical level.

Study Scope:

History: The Administrative study was a pilot for the Prospective Study Approach. This approach includes:

- using Position Descriptions submitted within the last two years instead of requiring new ones at the beginning of the study;
- gathering additional information through interviews and a panel discussion with agency study contacts;
- developing and implementing new job classes/series that reflect current business needs and practices; and

- providing agencies a 12-month “migration” period for allocating positions into the new classes, rather than requiring that all study positions be processed with a single effective date.

The Prospective Study Approach was developed to reduce study processing time and provide agencies flexibility in managing the workflow and workforce issues associated with large, cross-agency studies. Specific benefits intended in this approach are:

- the timeline between the beginning of the study and implementation of new or revised job classes is considerably shortened;
- agencies can strategically manage their workload and minimize impact of the study on daily operations and workforce; and
- the work required of agencies at the beginning of the study is significantly reduced.

The Prospective Study approach may be utilized for future studies which cross all agencies. Modifications will be made with the process to care for suggested improvements learned through this first Prospective Study.

Study Method:

This final adjustment for the Administrative study covers the Administrative Assistant class specifications and positions, and revision of the minimum qualifications for the Administrative Officer I job class. Even with the need for an adjustment to the Administrative Assistant class specifications, the Prospective Study remains on schedule for completion in May 2008.

The study team consisted of Chuck Boland (Human Resource Specialist I), Richard Kaplan (Human Resource Specialist I), Chad Diekmann (Human Resource Specialist II), and Aimee Olejasz (Human Resource Specialist II).

History of Job Classes:

For complete history please see Administrative Study memo dated May 07, 2007.

The prospective class study (dated May 07, 2007) was conducted resulting in the following job classes: Administrative Assistant I & II, Administrative Officer I & II, and Administrative Operations Manager I, II, and III.

With the establishment of the Deputy Director job class in January 2008, the Administrative Operations Manager II (Option 2) and Administrative Operations Manager III job class are no longer necessary and, therefore, abolished. Although this action is occurring simultaneously with the revision of the Administrative Assistant class specifications, these are two separate classification events.

Class Analysis:

For complete class analysis information, please see Administrative Study memo dated May 07, 2007.

For the Prospective Administrative Study, there was sufficient variance in the scope of duties assigned to positions to originally sort them into two separate levels. However, as position descriptions were submitted for reclassification into the Administrative Assistant I and II job classes, it was determined there may be an additional level not previously identified. In addition, through multiple conversations with agencies, it was determined the interpretation and the language used in the new class specifications needed clarification. Lastly, agencies expressed concerns regarding the three-range increment between the highest-level of the paraprofessional series and the first-level of the professional series. Previously, three-range increment existed between the highest-level of the clerical series and the only technical level. With this final adjustment, it is determined three separate levels actually exist and that the language used in the original class specifications for the two levels in the paraprofessional series needed additional clarification.

The first level (Administrative Assistant I) is characterized by performance of predominately technical work in multiple areas requiring some knowledge of administrative methods and practices to perform specified work requiring skill, care, and attention to detail. Incumbents perform routine, well defined technical tasks, are assigned work that requires care and precision, and are clearly covered by existing guidelines. This level can either be an entry level or a trainee level (for flexible staffing).

The Administrative Assistant I job class is separated into two options. The first option is the entry level, which is to be used when either journey-level work does not exist for the specific position or when the agency wishes to assign entry level work due to organizational structure. The second option allows for flexible staffing, which can be used when an agency has sufficient work at the higher level to support the allocation and is committed to training the incumbent in specific functional areas. The flexible staffing option is a position-specific option to aid in employee recruitment, training, development and retention. This option provides agencies the greatest opportunity for training and developing employees. DOP&LR is assisting with addressing recruitment and retention issues by creating a sample flexibly staffed training plan and criteria for all agencies to tailor to their individual departmental needs.

The second level (Administrative Assistant II) is characterized by performance of work requiring assessment and evaluation of policies and regulations to apply to circumstances, to determine how specific characteristics affect the actions to be taken, and to apply judgment in implementing decisions.

The third level (Administrative Assistant III) is characterized by performance of advanced work requiring coordination of a variety of processes, assessment and evaluation to modify processes to meet the needs of the organization, while maintaining consistency with established guidelines and procedures, and exercising judgment in implementing decisions.

Minimum Qualifications:

For complete minimum qualification information, please see Administrative Study memo dated May 07, 2007.

The minimum qualifications for both the Administrative Assistant I and II job classes were revised to reflect the related knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the work and do not create an artificial barrier to employment of individuals in protected classes. These revisions are on par with the job classes used as comparisons, therefore, creating the potential for larger applicant pools during recruitment efforts.

The Administrative Assistant III is the advanced level and not all agencies will have positions assigned to this job class; therefore, the minimum qualifications of the Administrative Officer I job class will be adjusted to include qualifying experience from the Administrative Assistant II *and* III levels. In most cases, it is anticipated the progression through the Administrative Assistant series to be Administrative Assistant I to Administrative Assistant II to Administrative Officer I. Since the Administrative Assistant III level may not be an option in all agencies, career progression needed to be addressed.

Internal Alignment:

For complete internal alignment information, please see Administrative Study memo dated May 07, 2007.

The salary range of a job class is determined based on internal consistency within the State's pay plan, in accordance with merit principles, with the goal of providing fair and reasonable compensation for services rendered and maintaining the principle of "like pay for like work." In evaluating internal consistency, the difficulty, responsibility, knowledge, skills, and other characteristics of a job are compared with job classes of a similar nature, kind, and level in the same occupational group and job family or related job families.

To conduct the pay analysis for the new job classes, comparisons were first made in the General Administrative job group (PB). Then specific elements were evaluated against job families outside the General Administrative job group to ensure the classes were given a full evaluation. The classes used for comparison were from the following job families:

- PB02 Accounting and Fiscal
- PB03 Personnel and Employee Relations
- PB05 Statistics and Research Analysis
- PB06 Supply
- PC01 Business Finance
- PC05 Revenue and Audit
- PD09 Property Management
- PF01 Public Programs
- PF05 Labor and Employment Services
- PI05 Legal Document Processing

The comparison of the Administrative Assistant I and II classes' defining characteristics; the type and level of knowledge and skills required; nature of guidelines used; and independent authority exercised found the majority of similarities remain with classes assigned salary ranges 12 and 14.

Consideration for the progression a typical employee would experience in advancing through the clerical classes into these paraprofessional classes supported assigning ranges that continue the two-range interval pattern.

The comparison of the Administrative Assistant III class defining characteristics; the type and level of knowledge and skills required; nature of guidelines used; and independent authority exercised found the majority of similarities remain with classes assigned salary range 15.

Based on the preponderance of internal comparisons and the logical career progression from clerical classes, it is recommended that the Administrative Assistant I, II, and III be placed at salary ranges 12, 14, and 15 respectively.

Originally, the Prospective Study resulted in a three-range interval between the higher-level paraprofessional and the first-level professional class. With the addition of the Administrative Assistant III job class, this would result in a two-range increment. However, the Administrative Assistant III level is the advanced level and not all organizations will support allocation of positions to this level. The Administrative Assistant II is the journey level, and as such, it is expected the majority of positions will be allocated to this level; therefore, the three-range increment between the journey technical level and the first-level of the professional series exists.

Conclusion:

The final adjustment goals were to revise the class specifications so they clearly defined the levels of work, consider the three-range increment between the paraprofessional and professional series, and to address the minimum qualifications for recruitment and retention issues.

The final adjustment of the class specifications for the Administrative Assistant series now includes three paraprofessional levels (Entry/Trainee, Journey, and Advanced). The salary ranges are 12, 14, and 15, and the effective date is January 16, 2008.

Our intention is to expedite the allocation process and to remain true to our original timeline for abolishing the old administrative classes. The old administrative classes shall be abolished when all positions have been allocated into the new classes, no later than May 7, 2008. The analysis for study positions is being processed through the On-Line Position Description (OPD) system. In order to expedite the allocation review process for this portion of the prospective study, most positions will contain an abbreviated written analysis.