

MEMORANDUM

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

To: Nicki Neal
Director

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Subject: Chief, Labor Research and Analysis Study

Introduction:

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) requested a classification study of the single position job class, Chief, Labor Research and Analysis, class code PD0230. The request was initiated, “1) to improve organizational alignment within the Research and Analysis Section. This position oversees the work of professional staff (economists, demographers, and research analysts) and paraprofessional staff (statistical clerks and technicians) encompassing ranges 10 – 22. 2) To ensure the range/compensation assigned to this position accurately reflect the broad scope of knowledge and responsibility of this job class.”

Study Scope:

The job class reviewed for this study is the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis.

Study Contacts:

The study contact was the DOLWD Director of the Division of Administrative Services. The Director and the job class incumbent provided occupational information for the study.

History of Job Class:

This job class was established in 1977. The salary range was changed in 1979 and in 2004. The job itself has remained largely unchanged. The context of the salary history of the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis (CLR&A) job class is particularly difficult to determine. From the available records it appears that the most recent change was effective November 16, 2004. At that time the salary range was increased from SR-22 to SR-23.

However the available documentation for that change does not include a salary analysis. Therefore it is not possible to ascertain how the current salary range of SR-23 was determined.

Class Analysis:

The state's classification plan provides for the grouping of positions into job classes when they are sufficiently similar with respect to duties and responsibilities, degree of supervision exercised and received, and entrance requirements so that: 1) the same title can be used to clearly identify each position; 2) the same minimum qualifications for initial appointment can be established for all positions; 3) the same rate of basic pay can be fairly applied to all positions; and 4) employees in a particular class are considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall. Job classes should be constructed as broadly as is feasible as long as the tests of similarity are met.

An updated position description was submitted for this study. In addition, a desk audit interview was conducted with the incumbent, and a supervisory interview was conducted with the position's supervisor. The duty statements in the class specification have now been updated, as has the definition to reflect the current description. This job class continues to be a one position, one level class. This job class is not part of a class series.

The subject position is located in Juneau at the DOLWD headquarters. It is the section chief of a unit in the Division of Administrative Services. The overall function of this position/job class has remained stable over the years. The primary role is to provide leadership, vision and direction to the DOLWD Research and Analysis Section. The Chief is the lead economist, program manager and budget manager for the Section, an organization comprised of 40 permanent staff positions and a few non-permanent positions. All positions are in one location, Juneau, with the exception of two that are in Anchorage. The Chief directly supervises two Economists IV, one Administrative Assistant II and one Statistical Technician I.

The Chief, Labor Research and Analysis reports to the DOLWD Director of Administrative Services. The Chief receives general administrative and programmatic direction. According to the position description, over 90% of the work is independent of any ongoing or formal review. Other sections in the Division of Administrative Services include the Fiscal, Procurement, Data Processing and Budget units. It should be noted however that the Research and Analysis Section is not typical of organizational units usually found in divisions of administrative services. While fiscal, procurement, data processing and budget units are often found, a statewide research and analysis group is not.

Class Title:

A Class Code is assigned based on the placement of the job class in the classification schematic of Occupational Groups and Job Families. Occupational Groups are made up of related Job Families and encompass relatively broad occupations, professions, or activities. Job Families are groups of job classes and class series that are related as to the nature of the work performed and typically have similar initial preparation for employment and career progression.

The subject class has used the same title since it was originally established. This title remains an appropriate one, as the position is located in the DOLWD and because the work is research and analysis of labor information. Therefore no change has been made.

Minimum Qualifications:

The minimum qualifications established for a job class must relate to the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the work and must not create an artificial barrier to employment of individuals in protected classes. Required training should be limited to the basic formal training that customarily prepares individuals for work in the field. Experience requirements are intended to ensure new employees can successfully perform the work after a period of orientation or familiarization. Required experience should be directly related to the actual duties of positions in the class and should not be equivalent to the work to be performed.

The department has not indicated any problems with the minimum qualifications, nor have they requested any changes. The minimum qualifications have been reviewed and continue to be appropriate.

Class Code:

This class is in the PD02 Economic Research family within the PD Government Management and Infrastructure occupational group. It is assigned class code PD0230. There have been no changes to the subject job class which warrant any modification to the class code number. Therefore it is unchanged.

AKPAY Code:

AKPAY Codes are assigned to job classes for use in legacy computer systems which cannot use the six-digit Class Codes. The AKPAY code is unchanged, as P2229 remains the appropriate AKPAY code for this class.

Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA)

The positions in this study are covered by the minimum wage and maximum hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as Amended (FLSA). While exemption from the provisions of the Act are determined based on the specific circumstances of an individual employee on a work-week basis, there are general aspects of the classes and their influence on the exemptions for employees in bona fide executive, professional, or administrative positions that can be addressed in general.

The review of this job reveals that it meets the tests for the Executive Exemption. It meets the salary test as the salary exceeds \$455/week. It meets the primary duty test by managing a customarily recognized department or subdivision of the enterprise - the DOLWD Research and Analysis Section. Additionally, an incumbent of this job customarily directs the work of an organization of 40 permanent staff positions.

Finally, an incumbent's suggestions and recommendations as to the hiring, firing, advancement, promotion or any other change of status of other employees are given particular weight.

Salary analysis:

The salary range of a job class is determined based on internal consistency within the state's pay plans, 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.

As shown in the Classification Outline, the Research and Analysis Section is more comparable to the Economic Research Group in the Department of Revenue, Tax Division than it is to any of the other sections in the DOLWD Division of Administrative Services. The Classification Outline is the schematic hierarchy by which various classified and partially exempt State job classes and class series are sorted into smaller job families within larger occupational groups. In the Classification Outline the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis is currently grouped in the PD02 Economic Research family, within the PD Government Management and Infrastructure occupational group.

The Economic Research family includes classes of positions that administer, supervise or perform work that requires application of economics knowledge and analysis of economic data. Initial preparation for employment is typically through advanced education in economics with subsequent career progression based on progressively higher education or responsible experience.

PD02 Economic Research

Job Class Code | Range | Category | Title

PD0201	16	B	ECONOMIST I
PD0202	18	B	ECONOMIST II
PD0203	20	B	ECONOMIST III
PD0204	22	B	ECONOMIST IV
PD0209	24	B	CHIEF ECONOMIST
PD0221	22	B	PETROLEUM ECONOMIST I
PD0222	24	B	PETROLEUM ECONOMIST II
PD0230	23	B	CHIEF, LABOR RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

Another family with job classes containing work also found in the DOLWD Research and Analysis Section is PB05 Statistics and Research Analysis. PB05 is in the PB Administrative and Office Support Occupational Group. This Occupational Group includes families of classes that advise on, administer, supervise or perform work involved in administration; management; accounting and related financial management; research and statistics; supply; personnel management; information technology; and clerical and secretarial work.

PB05 Statistics and Research Analysis

This family includes classes of positions that administer, supervise or perform research or work requiring application of statistical theory. Classes of related clerical work requiring the understanding and use of statistical methods and operations are also included in this family. Initial preparation for employment is typically through general education or experience with subsequent career progression based on progressively responsible experience. Job classes in the Statistics and Research Analysis family are:

Job Class Code | Range | Category | Title

PB0501	10	A	STATISTICAL CLERK
PB0502	12	A	STATISTICAL TECHNICIAN I
PB0503	14	A	STATISTICAL TECHNICIAN II
PB0511	13	B	RESEARCH ANALYST I
PB0512	16	B	RESEARCH ANALYST II
PB0513	18	B	RESEARCH ANALYST III
PB0514	21	B	RESEARCH ANALYST IV
PB0520	21	B	OPERATIONS RESEARCH ANALYST I
PB0530	18	B	EQUIPMENT OPERATIONS ANALYST
PB0540	22	B	CHIEF, HEALTH RESEARCH AND VITAL STATISTICS
PB0551	19	B	DEMOGRAPHER
PB0552	22	B	STATE DEMOGRAPHER

The Chief Labor Research & Analysis oversees the work of staff in the Economist I-IV, Research Analyst I-IV, State Demographer and Demographer job classes in addition to other staff including Publication Specialists and Statistical Technicians.

In determining the appropriate salary range for the subject job class, comparisons were made first to other classes in the Economic Research family.

The Chief Labor Research & Analysis supervises two Economist IV positions. The salary range assigned to Economist IV (expert/supervisor) is SR-22, a one range difference from the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis salary range. The Chief LR&A has significantly greater managerial responsibility than would an Economist IV. In contrast to the Economist IV, the Chief LR&A is a section chief. Therefore a higher salary range would be expected for the subject job class.

The Petroleum Economist I, under general direction, analyzes and interprets economic data relating to the determination of the economic value of known and potential petroleum resources, financial status of oil companies, oil revenue projections and oil tariffs. This is the specialist/expert level class for economists involved with the economics of the petroleum industry including projected costs and revenues of oil and gas production and transportation. Positions in this class may lead the work of lower level economists and research staff. While Petroleum Economist I may lead the work of others, it does not function as a section chief. Therefore it is appropriate that it is set at a lower range than Chief, Labor Research & Analysis.

The Petroleum Economist II class was to be abolished concurrent with the establishment of the Chief Economist class. While it is still listed in the Classification Outline, it is not considered a current job class, and is not appropriate for comparative purposes.

In addition to the Economists IV, the Chief Labor Research & Analysis supervises a State Demographer, also set at SR-22. The State Demographer class does not have the supervisory and managerial responsibilities of the Chief, LR&A. Accordingly a higher salary range assignment for the Chief, LR&A would be expected, and continues to be supported.

A comparison which includes the historical alignment perspective with the Chief Economist job class is difficult, as once again, the documentation is not available. When the Chief Economist job class was established effective September 9, 2004, it was set at SR-24. However there is no document available that includes the salary analysis for that action. The Chief Economist job class utilizes the same class code and salary range as the abolished class, Chief, Taxation/Revenue Research. The Chief, Taxation/Revenue Research "under general administrative direction, directs economic research, analysis and interpretation for projects associated with the taxation and revenue issues of the State of Alaska." Inasmuch as the salary range assigned to the Chief, Taxation/Revenue Research was SR-24, it seems logical that the Chief Economist would also be assigned SR-24.

The Chief Economist job class supervises the economic research, revenue forecasting, and financial analysis staff and functions of the Economic Research Group in the Department of Revenue, Tax Division. It oversees a unit of eight permanent subordinate Petroleum Economist (2) and Economist (6) positions - a small and specialized staff located in Anchorage and Juneau. Currently there are also two non-permanent College Intern positions. The Chief Economist has the primary responsibility for the development, coordination and production of the economic and financial analysis of State revenue from all tax sources. An incumbent of this job class provides briefings to the Governor, Legislature, professional societies and business organizations, bond rating agencies and the general public. While the Economic Research Group may not be a large staff, their role in this state might well be considered large. In addition to other responsibilities, the Chief Economist supervises the preparation of the State's semi-annual Revenue Sources Book, issued in December as the Governor's budget is being prepared, and again in April as the Legislature prepares its final disposition of the budget.

The minimum qualification statements for the subject job and the Chief Economist job are nearly identical. However the Chief Economist MQs include a third option: a doctoral degree from an accredited college in economics or a specialty of economics, tax, mathematics, statistics, econometrics, accounting, public or business administration, petroleum engineering, industrial engineering, or closely related field.

Given the differences in the nature and level of the work, the work environment, the scope and impact, and in the roles of these two job classes, the salary of the Chief Economist appears to appropriately be set at a level which is above that of the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis.

As mentioned earlier, the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis (SR-23) reports to the Division Director (SR-27) of the DOLWD Division of Administrative Services. In 2006 the salary range for the Division Director - PX job class (PA0112/P1901) was raised from SR-26 to SR-27. Prior to this increase, the differential between the Chief, LR&A and the Division Director was three salary ranges. In 2008 the Deputy Director I and II job classes have been established at SR-24 (PA0113) and SR-25 (K0054) respectively, whereas previously Deputy Director classes were usually set at SR-23 or SR-24. This slight easing of some of the salary compression at the higher levels, relative to the lower subordinate job classes, then makes it possible to consider a slight increase to the salary range assigned to the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis.

Of the two Deputy Director job classes, the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis is more comparable to Deputy Director I. A Deputy Director I, under the general direction of a Division Director or equivalent, is the principal assistant to the Director. Deputy Directors I serve as subject matter experts in the matters of their division and are assigned supervisory responsibility over a significant portion of the division's sections or programs. Deputy Directors I exercise authority for planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling the activities and resources for the areas supervised. During the Division Director's absence, the Deputy Director I assumes acting status. This is a supervisory class with substantial responsibility for the exercise of independent judgment in appointing, promoting, transferring, suspending, discharging and adjudicating the grievances of subordinates.

In comparison, the Chief, LR&A is a subject matter expert, and is assigned supervisory responsibility over a relatively large section which is a significant portion of the Division of Administrative Services' sections. The Chief, Labor Research and Analysis job class, at SR-23, was assigned the same salary range as some Deputy Director job classes. Now that the Deputy Director I job class is assigned SR-24, it would not be inappropriate to recommend that the Chief, LR&A be assigned a similar salary range. An increase to SR-24 would provide a clear differential between the subject class and the subordinate classes that it supervises. It would also be in keeping with the changes to the salary hierarchy of the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis, Deputy Director and Division Director job classes. And it would restore the three range differential from the Division Director-PX job class. Increasing the salary range assigned to the Chief, Labor Research and Analysis to SR-24 is therefore recommended.

Conclusion:

The study goals of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development were 1) to improve organizational alignment within the Research and Analysis Section and 2) to ensure the range/compensation assigned to the subject job class accurately reflect the broad scope of knowledge and responsibility of this job class.

The Chief, Labor Research and Analysis class specification has been updated. The salary range assignment is increased to SR-24.

These changes are effective May 16, 2008.

Allocation information for PCN 071701 is being distributed through the OPD system.

Attachment:

Final class specification

Cc: Guy Bell, Director
Division of Administrative Services
Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Sharon Dick
Human Resources Manager
General Services Center
Division of Personnel and Labor Relations
Department of Administration