

MEMORANDUM

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

To: Nicki Neal
Director

Date: June 30, 2010

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Subject: Eligibility Technician/Workforce Development Specialist Study

Preamble:

A classification study of the Eligibility Technician job classes was initiated at the request of the Division of Public Assistance and Alaska State Employees Association (ASEA) in accordance with Article 17.2 B of the GGU 2007-2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement. The scope of the study was expanded to include job classes in the Workforce Development Specialist series due to changes and overlap in responsibilities between both job class series.

Study Scope:

This study included the review of all permanent Eligibility Technician I-IV and Workforce Development Specialist I-IV positions, which included 326 permanent positions from the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) and Office of Children's Services (OCS), in the Department of Health and Social Services, and one permanent position from the Employment Security Division (ESD), in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Updated position descriptions for these positions were requested from these agencies. This memo addresses the analysis and revision of the Eligibility Technician and Workforce Development job class series.

Study Contacts:

Ron Kreher, Chief, Public Assistance Field Operations, with DPA, Shawnda Price, Administrative Officer II, with the OCS, and Jeff Kemp, Program Coordinator II, with the ESD served as study contacts to coordinate agency activities during the study process. Mr. Kreher provided subject matter expertise as an occupational consultant in addition to serving as study contact.

Study Method:

Updated position descriptions (PDs) for these positions were requested from all divisions in August 2009. The deadline for submission was initially set for November 1, 2009; however, due to a combination of the extremely low percentage (approximately 13 % as of September 7, 2009)

of permanent positions that were previously updated to the Online Position Description (OPD) system and the availability of DPA and OCS staff to update and post the high volume of submissions to OPD, the deadline was extended to November 15, 2009. The divisions were notified that positions for which no updated PDs were received by the deadline would be allocated based on the most recent PD of record.

Both DPA and OCS provided lists of designated Position Control Numbers (PCNs) and incumbents as benchmark positions for interview. The solitary Workforce Development Specialist I position in ESD was scheduled for interview.

In November and December 2009 the study team interviewed the incumbents of a total of forty-two Eligibility Technician and Workforce Development Specialist positions from the three divisions and ten different communities throughout the State. These interviews, conducted in-person and via telephone email response, represented approximately 13% of total permanent positions.

On October 8, 2009, it was decided in consultation with DPA, that the study team would also interview select Office Assistant positions in response to ongoing concerns that some agency clerical staff was performing significant elements of eligibility work. A list of five designated Office Assistant II PCNs and incumbents from four communities was developed jointly by the study team and DPA. In November 2009 the study team interviewed the incumbents from three Office Assistant II positions in two communities. All three interviews were conducted in-person. Of the remaining two selected positions: one was vacated by the incumbent during the interview stage, while the other incumbent would not respond to attempts to schedule either a telephone interview or email response. The non-responding incumbent had been interviewed in December 2008 for a similar position during the Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Administrative Clerk job class study and the interview notes from that study were reviewed instead.

This analyst attended and observed one day, each, of the two week Food Stamps and Family Medicaid training sessions in October and December 2009, respectively, provided by DPA as part of the division's formal training program for the flexibly-staffed Eligibility Technician I/II positions.

In late December 2009 and January 2010, a survey questionnaire of supervisory and managerial duties and responsibilities was sent via email to twenty supervisory Eligibility Technicians IV and Workforce Development Specialists III and IV who were not otherwise interviewed during the November and December 2009 desk audits. Participation in the survey was voluntary and a total of thirteen responses, or 65%, were received by the January 15, 2010, deadline.

For development of job class concepts and specifications, data compiled from the interviews, training sessions, supervisory survey, historical study and specification files, and Position Descriptions were reviewed and compared with current State of Alaska job class specifications as well as those of external agencies, including other states. Draft class concepts were presented in a meeting with DPA and OCS on February 16, 2010, and initial feedback was sought. Based on that feedback, formal class specifications were drafted, assessed in a test allocation session with classification analysts on April 19, 2010, and provided to the agencies for formal review

and comment on May 5, 2010. The specifications were refined based on the divisions' and analysts' comments and initial allocations determined.

History of Job Classes:

The Eligibility Technician I (P4171/SR12), Eligibility Technician II (P4172/SR13), Eligibility Technician III (P4173/SR14), and Eligibility Technician IV (P4174/SR15) job classes were established October 16, 1980, as part of the Eligibility Worker Study. This study, performed under the February 15, 1980, Letter of Agreement with the Alaska Public Employees Association (APEA) abolished and replaced the Eligibility Worker I-IV (P4130/SR09 through P4133/SR14, respectively) and the Eligibility Work Manager (P4109/SR16) job classes.

The Eligibility Technician IV job class was studied in 1984 per the April 17, 1984, APEA Article 18 request for review. This study resulted in the establishment of the Eligibility Office Manager (P4175/SR16) job class, for positions that supervise offices remote from onsite managers, effective February 16, 1985. The Eligibility Office Manager job class was abolished on September 15, 2006.

The Eligibility Technician I-IV job classes were studied again in 1991 per the December 3, 1990, APEA Article 19 request for review of the Eligibility Technician IV job class. This study resulted in a one-range increase for: Eligibility Technician I (from SR12 to SR13); Eligibility Technician II (from SR13 to SR14); Eligibility Technician III (from SR14 to SR15); and Eligibility Technician IV (from SR15 to SR16).

The minimum qualifications were narrowed for Eligibility Technician I-IV effective July 1, 1992. There have been no other substantial changes to the Eligibility Technician I-IV classes since the July 1, 1992, change in minimum qualifications.

The Workforce Development Specialist I (P4165/SR15), Workforce Development Specialist II (P4166/SR16), Workforce Development Specialist III (P4167/SR17), and Workforce Development Specialist IV (P4168/SR18) job classes were established November 16, 1996, to provide integrated eligibility determination and employment planning case management services in anticipation of State and federal mandates for self-sufficiency-based welfare reform. Other than a broadening of the distinguishing characteristics of the Workforce Development Specialist III on December 1, 1998, there have been no other substantial changes to the Workforce Development Specialist I-IV classes since their establishment.

Class Analysis:

The goals of the Eligibility Technician/Workforce Development Specialist Study were to compare and align range assignments with similarly situated job classes; strengthen career ladders and improve retention efforts; address concerns that current salaries do not reflect the complexity of the assigned work or the level of accountability for individual staff and current salaries have an adverse impact on recruitment, retention, and advancement; and better define job class concepts and combine closely aligned job classes.

The study updated and modified the existing Eligibility Technician job class series. These positions provide and/or supervise the determination of eligibility; the type, number, and level of benefits; and authorization of benefits that an applicant for federal and State family assistance

programs may receive. Incumbents regularly conduct extensive interviews; collect, review, and evaluate financial and non-financial data; and perform other investigations in order to determine the eligibility and benefit level from a diverse selection of entitlement and assistance programs and their subcomponents in areas such as supplements to Social Security and medical, nutritional, housing, foster care, energy, work services, and general cash assistance for first-time applicants or ongoing clients. Factors affecting the work of these positions at all levels include significant interpersonal contact; wide latitude of independence to review, investigate, and authorize benefits; infrequent supervisory review; an evolving spectrum of eligibility criteria that is most frequently driven by changes to federal regulation and funding requirements; and its subsequent shifting complexity of regulatory interpretation as manifested in programmatic policy, procedure, and manuals. It should be noted that the continual shifting of regulatory requirements and their resultant complexity—especially, with regard to federal requirements—is a factor endemic to a majority of State agencies, programs, and mission delivery. During the analysis, it was the spectrum of complexity of programmatic interpretation and application that proved the most distinctive criteria for distinguishing the entry and journey levels of the technical series.

Analysis and determination of the nature of the work performed by these positions proved difficult as the lack of support for a clearly established professional field, wide latitude of discretionary judgment to interpret specialized, complex policies and guidelines, and independent action to authorize allocation of substantial benefits seemed somewhat disproportionate to typical technical work and more characteristic of professional work. This was countered by a core body of work that requires extensive practical knowledge gained through experience and/or specific formal and on-the-job training. Eligibility Technicians perform tasks and computations and apply methodology that is covered by established precedents and guidelines and requires a high degree of skill, care, and precision. An exhaustive review of diverse technical classes indicated that a consistent overall low scope of initiative and originality to devise new methods or procedures and develop solutions for which no precedent exists was present among the majority of these technical classes and was comparable to the Eligibility Technicians. The typical work of the Eligibility Technicians and these other technical classes does not require the scope of creativity, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of more abstract concepts, or depth of specialized knowledge typically acquired through education or prolonged training equivalent to a bachelor's degree that is consistent with professional work. Final analysis indicated that continued classification as a technical (Category A) job class series was most appropriate.

There is an ongoing, distinctive incongruity between the twelve months required to train an incumbent to function as a full-performance Eligibility Technician II versus the contractual six-month probationary period of the trainee Eligibility Technician I. Incumbents could meet their probation as an Eligibility Technician I but fail to continue to adequately perform their responsibilities as their responsibilities and caseload increased as they approached the twelve-month mark for promotion to Eligibility Technician II under flexible staffing. To address these incongruities between contractual probationary periods and training, the Trainee Option will be removed from the Eligibility Technician I job class. This will utilize the twelve-month probationary period of range fourteen, or higher, job classes to improve the effective training window for new employees, provide a stronger entry into performing the full range of eligibility assignments, and facilitate better career progression.

The scope of the study was expanded to include the Workforce Development Specialist job classes due to changes in functional responsibilities and evolving similarities in work performed by these two job class series. Established as professional job classes in 1996, Workforce Development Specialist positions authorized program benefits, and developed employment plans that outlined the steps necessary to transition clients towards paid employment and economic self-sufficiency under DPA's Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP). Over time, the decrease in ATAP cases and significant increase in caseloads for the Food Stamps, Medicaid, and Adult Public Assistance programs resulted in a shift of the focus and nature of Workforce Development Specialist positions towards technical eligibility determination and benefits authorization. The predominance of case management responsibilities for the self-sufficiency portions of ATAP clients has been assumed by the Employment Security Division and private entities through reimbursable service agreements. Analysis of the study PDs and interview responses confirmed that there was substantial similarity in responsibilities and nature of work with the Eligibility Technician job class series.

The review of PDs and interviews revealed that there were two distinct groupings of supervisory positions consisting of line supervisors who are directly responsible for the work of a technical unit responsible for eligibility determination and benefit authorizations and managers who, in addition to directly supervising technical staff, are responsible for management of the site and operations of one or more specific offices. These "office managers" are responsible for maintaining strong working relationships to ensure joint, interagency management of integrated day-to-day functions and service delivery by partner agencies. These responsibilities have grown to include development and coordination of site re-design projects, administration of complex cost allocations strategies to address shared costs, and increased involvement with landlords and procurement to address facilities-related issues. There were two apparent levels of managers within this grouping: those who managed office operations in addition to directly supervising technical eligibility staff, and those who managed the operations of large offices through subordinate technical supervisors.

The review of a small number of DPA clerical positions, which was conducted in response to concerns that some agency clerical staff was performing significant elements of eligibility work, indicated that the elements of eligibility work performed by these Office Assistants II was significantly technical in nature and did not warrant creation of a specialized, advanced clerical class.

It should be noted that DPA's Gambell Office in Anchorage conducted a Kaizen (to paraphrase, a business improvement) event in October 2009 in an attempt to improve current business processes for dealing with a dramatically increased office caseload to better serve clients within improved processing times. The results of the Kaizen indicated that a process-oriented, as opposed to case-oriented model was optimal and was implemented in the Gambell Office effective February 1, 2010, for evaluation. Under this model, Eligibility Technicians determine eligibility and authorize benefits for a stage (i.e., initial application and determination, maintenance for changes to household or financial situations, or program recertification) of a client's eligibility instead of the traditional responsibility to handle all stages of a specific case throughout its duration. This model of service delivery was reviewed and evaluated by this analyst and determined not to be a significant factor in the development of class concepts and

structures as these positions continue to conduct the same extensive interviews; collect, review, and evaluate financial and non-financial data; and perform other investigations and calculations in order to determine eligibility and authorize benefits for clients.

For development of structural concepts, 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.

Previously, there were eight job classes within the scope of this study in two different job class series. Examination and analysis of study positions and their current duties found that the work of one job class series (Workforce Development Specialist I-IV) had changed dramatically and should be abolished and that there were two levels of work for which no current job classes existed. To address these changes in work, we have established a framework of six classes within two class series:

- Eligibility Technician
 - Eligibility Technician I (the entry level of the technical series)
 - Eligibility Technician II (the journey level of the technical series)
 - Eligibility Technician III (the lead/advanced level of the technical series)
 - Eligibility Technician IV (the supervisory level of the technical series)
- Eligibility Office Manager
 - Eligibility Office Manager I (the first level of the professional series)
 - Eligibility Office Manager II (the second level of the professional series)

At the entry level of the technical series, incumbents determine eligibility and authorize benefits for public and family assistance programs of limited financial benefit and/or duration of eligibility. As journey level technicians, incumbents determine eligibility and authorize benefits for a diverse selection of programs and their subcomponents that require substantial interpretation of intricate and detailed policies and procedures. Incumbents of the lead/advanced level formally lead and train lower level technical staff and/or perform specialized services and manage the most difficult or controversial cases. Incumbents of the supervisory level exercise independent judgment in employing, disciplining, or adjudicating grievances of subordinates in a unit of technical staff who determine eligibility and authorize benefits for recipients of public and family assistance programs.

At the first level of the professional series, incumbents directly supervise technical and clerical staff and manage the day-to-day operations and needs of one or more discrete public and family assistance offices. Incumbents of the second level of the professional series plan, implement, and manage the day-to-day operations and of one or more large public and family assistance offices through one or more subordinate technical supervisors.

Class Title:

A class title should be the best descriptive title for the work. It is intended to concisely and accurately convey the kind and level of work performed and should be brief, easily recognized, gender neutral, and understood by potential applicants.

At the core of the of the studied job classes in both DPA and OCS is the responsibility to conduct or supervise the determination of initial and ongoing eligibility of applicants and established clients to receive benefits from federally and State-funded assistance programs and their subcomponents in areas such as supplements to Social Security and medical, nutritional, housing, foster care, energy, work services, and general cash assistance. Eligibility Technician is the traditional and recognized title for this body of work and remains appropriate for this class series.

The two professional classes manage the operations and staff of discreet offices that determine the eligibility and authorize benefits for applicants and established clients to receive benefits from federally and State-funded assistance programs and their subcomponents. Eligibility Office Manager appropriately describes the work and is an easily recognizable title.

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.

Traditional entry to the Eligibility Technician class series was through the trainee level Eligibility Technician I under flexible staffing. To qualify for the journey level Eligibility Technician II, incumbents were required to complete approximately one year of training as the equivalent of an Eligibility Technician I with the State of Alaska or elsewhere. Advancement to the lead/advanced and supervisory levels of the series was predicated upon one year experience at the trainee level, plus a minimum of one year experience at the journey level. Removal of the trainee option from the Eligibility Technician I job class has resulted in a broadening of the minimum qualifications of the Eligibility Technician II in order to allow broadening of applicant pools to include candidates without the specific trainee level experience . Subsequently, the requisite minimum journey level experience has been increased to account for the twelve months training into the various programs and additional experience developing full proficiency at the journey level. This will also affect the minimum qualifications for the Eligibility Quality Control Technician I and Public Assistance Analyst I job classes, whose qualifying journey experience was based upon one year of training plus a stated amount of time of full-proficiency journey level work. This should be amended for consistency through subsequent Maintenance Requests of these job classes.

Qualifications for entry to the Eligibility Office Manager class series predominantly requires previous lead/advanced or supervisory eligibility experience as either an Eligibility Technician III or Eligibility Technician IV; however, to broaden viable applicant pools for offices in small

communities, specified journey level experience will qualify when combined with additional non-eligibility supervisory experience.

Class Code:

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.

Eligibility Technicians and Eligibility Office Managers provide and/or supervise accurate and timely eligibility determinations, the determination of the number and type programs an applicant is eligible to receive, and the authorization of benefits to applicants and recipients of federal and State family assistance programs.

The Eligibility Technician I-IV are currently assigned to the Public Programs job family PF01. This job family includes classes of positions that advise on, administer, supervise, or perform services in a social, government benefit, or public assistance program. Initial preparation for employment is typically through training or experience with subsequent career progression based on progressively responsible experience. The Eligibility Office Manager I-II job classes supervise the delivery of family assistance benefits and will be assigned to the Public Programs job family PF01.

Eligibility Technician I remains assigned PF0111
Eligibility Technician II remains assigned PF0112
Eligibility Technician III remains assigned PF0113
Eligibility Technician IV remains assigned PF0114

Eligibility Office Manager I is assigned PF0118
Eligibility Office Manager II is assigned PF0119

AKPAY Code:

AKPAY Codes are assigned to job classes for use in legacy computer systems which cannot use the six-digit Class Codes. The job classes revised in this study will retain their previously assigned AKPAY codes.

Eligibility Technician I remains assigned P4171
Eligibility Technician II remains assigned P4172
Eligibility Technician III remains assigned P4173
Eligibility Technician IV remains assigned P4174

Eligibility Office Manager I is assigned K0086
Eligibility Office Manager II is assigned K0087

Fair Labor Standards Act

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, administrative, or professional positions that can be addressed in general.

The Eligibility Technician I, II, and III job classes do not meet the criteria for exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

To meet the criteria for exemption as executive employees, the primary duty must be the management of a customarily recognized subdivision of the enterprise in which the employee is employed, must include the customary and regular direction of the work of two or more other employees, and must include the authority to hire or fire other employees or make suggestions and recommendations that are given particular weight in the hiring, firing, advancement, promotion or any other change of status of other employees. The primary duty of employees in the Eligibility Technician IV, Eligibility Office Manager I, and Eligibility Office Manager II job classes is to supervise and manage the staff of one or more defined technical units and/or family and public assistance offices that provide eligibility determinations and ongoing benefit authorizations for applicants and clients receiving benefits from diverse assistance programs. Employees of the Eligibility Technician IV, Eligibility Office Manager I, and Eligibility Office Manager II job classes are compensated on a salary basis at a rate that meets or exceeds \$455 per week and are responsible for the exercise of independent judgment in employing, disciplining, or adjudicating grievances of subordinates. Consequently, these employees meet the criteria for exemption from overtime as executive employees.

To meet the criteria for exemption as administrative employees, the primary duty must be the performance of office or non-manual work directly related to the management or general business operations of the employer or the employer's customers and must include the exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance. Employees of the Eligibility Office Manager I and II job classes direct the staff and operations of one or more discrete district offices that provide eligibility determinations and ongoing benefit authorizations for applicants and clients receiving benefits from diverse assistance programs. Employees manage the operational logistics of office sites, including the determination of layout and allocation of office spaces; assess, justify, and recommend office staff levels and equipment; coordinate site security; serve as liaisons with partner agencies; and justify, recommend, and control office expenditures either directly or through subordinate supervisory staff. Employees of the Eligibility Office Manager I and II job classes are compensated on a salary basis at a rate that meets or exceeds \$455 per week, perform non-manual work directly related to the delivery of the agency's programmatic services, and exercise significant discretion in managing the operations and logistics of one or more offices and meet the criteria for exemption from overtime as administrative employees.

To meet the criteria for exemption as professional employees, the primary duty must be the performance of work that requires knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning that is customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction, or that requires invention, imagination, originality or talent in a recognized field of artistic or creative endeavor. The primary duties of the Eligibility Technician IV and Eligibility Office Manager I and II are not in a field of science or learning whose customary preparation is

in a college degree in the field. This precludes employees in this job class from being exempted from overtime as professional employees.

Internal Alignment:

Two analyses were utilized to determine the appropriate salary range assignments of the Eligibility Technician I-IV and Eligibility Office Manager I-II job classes:

- Internal alignment; and,
- The State of Alaska 2009 Salary Survey conducted by Fox Lawson and Associates.

Under internal alignment, 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 first in the same job family; then within other job families within the same occupational group. Comparisons with classes in job families outside the occupational group are made when similarities are sufficient to provide valid relationships, the comparisons within the occupational group are few, and/or when the class has particular characteristics that justify comparisons with another job family. The greater the similarity with the study class the more weight should be given. Comparisons within the job family are typically given greater weight than alignment with less similar classes.

The Classification Outline is the hierarchy by which various job classes and class series are sorted into occupational groups and job families. Occupational groups consist of job families that encompass relatively broad occupations, professions, or activities. Job families consist of job classes that are related as to the nature of the work performed. The Eligibility Technician I-IV and Eligibility Office Manager I-IV job classes are assigned to the Social, Benefit, and Employment Services Occupational Group (PF). This group consists of families of classes that advise on, administer, supervise, or perform services in the social sciences, benefit or assistance programs, and social work and employment services.

Within the PF group, Eligibility Technician I-IV and Eligibility Office Manager I-II job classes are assigned to the Public Programs (PF01) family. The PF01 family consists of job classes and job class series that advise on, administer, supervise, or perform services in a social, government benefit, or public assistance program. Initial preparation for employment is typically through training or experience with subsequent career progression based on progressively responsible experience.

Eligibility Technician I-IV job classes are further assigned to Category A within the PF01 family. Category A job classes perform work involving processing data, normally initiated elsewhere, that is subject to verification, revision, correction, and forwarding for action or substantial elements of the work of a professional, scientific, or administrative field, typically performed in a supportive role. The work typically requires contact with the general public, the ability to follow specific procedures, explain, interpret, and apply established policies and procedures, and retrieve records and related information.

The newly created classes in the series, the Eligibility Office Manager I-II, are further assigned to Category B within the PF01 family. Category B job classes perform work involving the exercise of creative, analytical, evaluative, and interpretive ability with discretion, judgment, and personal responsibility for the application of an organized body of knowledge that requires a range and depth of specialized and theoretical knowledge of principles, concepts, and practices that is constantly studied to improve data, materials, and methods or involving the primary responsibility for planning, organizing, directing, and controlling resources and program delivery.

To determine salary ranges consistent with internal alignment, comparison of like work with other classes is based on comparison and contrast among the following factors:

- the nature, variety, and complexity of regular duties and responsibilities;
- the nature of supervision received;
- the nature of available guidelines;
- the latitude of initiative and originality;
- the purpose and nature of person-to-person work relationships;
- the nature and scope and recommendations, decisions, commitments, and consequence of error by a prudent employee;
- the nature and extent of supervision exercised over other employees; and,
- the knowledge, skills and other qualifications required for successful performance of the work.

The comprehensive salary survey conducted by Fox Lawson compared 179 benchmark jobs (representing 72 families) to similar jobs from 80 organizations (representing 13 entities ranging from municipalities in other states, through other states and the federal government, to private corporations). Data were adjusted to reflect annual salaries based on a 37.5 hour work week and 1,950 annual hours, account for federal cost-of-living-allowances, and geographic differentials from Anchorage. Market comparisons were made at the 65th percentile, which represents the figure where 65% of the rates were below and 35% were above. Market competitiveness is typically defined as:

- +/- 5% of the market were considered highly competitive;
- +/- 10% of the market were considered competitive; and,
- +/- 10% to 15% (or greater) of the market were considered potentially out of alignment.

Overall, State of Alaska salaries ranked 5% above market 65th percentile.

Eligibility Technician

Eligibility Technician II performs the full scope of technical work necessary to manage large and diversified caseloads composed of programs that require substantial interpretation of intricate and detailed policies and procedures in addition to distinct and often incongruous financial standards and circumstances, in order to either determine the eligibility and level of family and public assistance benefits, or authorize the continuance of ongoing benefits for applicants ongoing clients. The Eligibility Technician II is the benchmark or journey level of the series and, accordingly, serves as the basis for setting the pay ranges in the Eligibility Technician series.

To evaluate salary ranges consistent with the merit principles and goals of the pay plan, this analyst initially compared the Eligibility Technician II to other Category A (technical) classes in

the PF01 family. To ensure that full consideration was given to the characteristics of the work performed by Eligibility Technicians, comparisons were expanded to include Category B (professional) job classes from the PF01 family.

Within the PF01 family, the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) Technician II (Cat A, SR12) and Workers' Compensation Technician (Cat A, SR12) job classes advise on, review, determine or effectively recommend eligibility, and monitor and ensure the delivery of program benefits to clients in accordance to established regulations, policies, and procedures. These classes did not compare favorably to the Eligibility Technician II with respect to their limited diversity and complexity of assignments, narrower latitude of independence and reduced scope action, interpersonal interaction, and consequence of error and alignment of the Eligibility Technician II at salary range 12 is not appropriate.

Conversely, the Eligibility Quality Control Technician I (Cat A, SR16), Medical Assistance Administrator I (Cat B, SR16), PFD Specialist I (Cat B, SR16), Public Assistance Analyst I (Cat B, SR16), and Disability Adjudicator Associate II (Cat A, SR16) perform work that is substantially more advanced with regards to the complexity of regular and recurring duties; initiative, originality, and scope of actions; and requisite knowledge, skills, and qualifications than that typical of the Eligibility Technician II and do not support alignment to salary range 16.

The Eligibility Technician II aligned closest with the Child Support Specialist I (Cat B, SR14) within the PF01 family with respect to investigative complexity of assignments, supervision received and exercised, control by guidelines, initiative and originality, consequence of error, and overall qualifications. Yet, the significant variety of administered technical programs and extensive interpersonal interactions of the Eligibility Technician II was offset by the Child Support Specialist I's scope of action to conduct and determine resolution of administrative appeals and scope of action to initiate State and inter-jurisdictional legal determination of paternity and enforcement of financial and other support.

Although the greatest factorable weight is placed on comparative classes from the same family, expanded comparisons were made to additional classes both within and outside the occupational group that were selected because they either advise on, administer, supervise, or perform services in the social sciences, benefit or assistance programs, and social work and employment services; or, although the subject-matter of their respective work differs, perform a full range of technical tasks in compliance with standard methods, regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines and routinely take or effectively recommend action and correct errors in situations that require complex interpretation or reconciliation of multiple guidelines. Comparison within the PF Group indicated that the Eligibility Technician II compared closest to both the full-working level Employment Security Specialist IB (Cat A, SR14) and advanced/lead level Employment Security Specialist II (Cat A, SR15) with regard to the nature of work and similarities of subject matter, nature and scope of interpersonal contact, latitude of independence and initiative to accomplish work, infrequent supervisory review only after completion of work, and control of work by regulations and policy. In the final comparison, the Employment Security Specialist II exercises wider latitude to adapt or develop guidelines and processes and initiate actions. Comparisons outside of the PF group indicate favorable similarities with the Eligibility Technician II to the Accounting Technician II (Cat A, SR14), Human Resource Technician II (Cat A, SR14), and Tax Accountant III (Cat A, SR14) in the variety of work; minimal supervision

and infrequent review; latitude of independence and initiative to complete assignments; scope of investigation and research of situations, regulations, policy, and other diverse guidelines; and authority to take or effectively recommend subsequent action.

Although the class specifications for the Eligibility Technician series were updated, the primary work has remained relatively unchanged since the conclusion of the comprehensive salary survey in September 2009. Comparison of annual salaries for the Eligibility Technician II to the market's 65th percentile indicates that this work is currently being compensated at 11.6% above market.

Analysis of both internal alignment and salary survey data indicates that continued alignment of the Eligibility Technician II to salary range 14 is appropriate.

As the entry level of the series, the Eligibility Technician I manages a caseload that is typically characterized by a more limited interpretation and application of policies and procedures for eligibility determinations and benefits authorizations for assistance programs of limited financial benefit and/or duration of eligibility than that typical to the Eligibility Technician II. As the entry level to the series, alignment would typically be set two salary ranges below the journey level; however, the variety and complexity of regular and recurring work, latitude of independence and scope of action to negotiate delivery or continuance of services contingent upon benefits authorization, consequence of error, and comparative of complexity of the administered programs and controlling regulations and policies of the Eligibility Technician I are excessive in comparison to other salary range 12 job classes within the PF01 family, such as the full-proficiency PFD Technician II.

The Eligibility Technician III serves as an advanced/lead level technician who performs the most difficult or controversial case management to determine eligibility and authorize benefits, provide quality control, investigate fraud and formal complaints, resolve conflicts, train lower level technicians, and assign and evaluate work. Not all Eligibility Technicians III lead staff; however, all lead positions also perform advanced work. The advanced responsibilities of the Eligibility Technician III compared favorably with those of the Eligibility Quality Control Technician I. General classification principles place the advanced level class two ranges above the journey level of work being performed by the Eligibility Technician II and would align to salary range 16.

The Eligibility Technician IV is responsible for the effective operations of a technical unit that provides eligibility determinations and ongoing benefit authorizations for family and public assistance programs. This is a supervisory job class with substantial responsibility for the exercise of independent judgment in employing, disciplining, or adjudicating grievances of subordinates. General classification principles typically places the supervisory level class two ranges above the highest level of work supervised—in this case, by the Eligibility Technician III; however, comparison of the Eligibility Technician IV with the responsibilities of the Eligibility Office Manager job classes indicates that a one range separation between the advanced/lead and supervisory technical level of the series would be more appropriate and align to salary range 17.

Eligibility Office Manager

As this work had not been formally identified and established at the time of the comprehensive salary survey, the salary survey was not considered with respect to establishing the salary ranges of the Eligibility Office Manager I and II job classes.

Eligibility Office Manager I is the first level of the professional series in which incumbents direct staff and manage the programmatic delivery and operational logistics of one or more discrete offices that provide the delivery of public and family assistance programs to eligible applicants and ongoing clients.

Eligibility Office Manager II is the second level of the professional series in which incumbents direct one or more discrete offices where the scale or logistics of operations are large enough to require the direction of staff and operations through one or more technical eligibility supervisors due to the size and demographics of client populations and/or geographic separation of multiple office sites.

As there is not a specifically identifiable benchmark level, this analyst compared both Eligibility Office Manager job classes to equivalent Category B job classes in the PF01 family for this portion of the analysis. To ensure that full consideration was given to the characteristics of the work performed by Eligibility Technicians, the comparisons were expanded to include Category B job classes from other families within the PF group. These comparative classes were chosen for their responsibility to supervise staff and plan, organize, direct, and control resources and ensure delivery of programmatic services.

Neither the Eligibility Office Manager I nor the Eligibility Office Manager II compared favorably to the PFD Manager (Cat B, SR22), Child Support Manager (Cat B, SR21), Public Assistance Field Services Manager I (Cat B, SR21), Children's Services Manager (Cat B, SR21), Social Worker V (Children's Services)/Staff Manager (Children's Services) (Cat B, SR21), Vocational Rehabilitation Manager (Cat B, SR21), Unemployment Services Manager (SR21), or Employment Service Manager IV (Cat B, SR20) due to their scope of authority (i.e., regional or statewide, as opposed to localized, responsibility), size of staff, nature and scope of recommendations and decisions, and responsibility to supervise professional staff whose responsibilities require an advanced course of study or certifications. Alignment to, or above, salary range 20 is not appropriate for either job class.

The Eligibility Office Manager I compared favorably with the Employment Service Manager II (Cat B, SR17) in terms of their comparative scope of authority, nature and scope of recommendations and decisions, and size of staff; however, consideration must also be given to characteristics distinctive from the Eligibility Technician IV. The scope of authority to manage the operations of a district office, including such responsibilities as serving as the senior staff member who coordinates the operations and inter-agency service delivery with onsite partner agencies exceeds that of the Eligibility Technician IV and indicates an alignment higher than salary range 17. This, and the practice of aligning supervisory job classes two ranges above the highest level of work supervised—in this case, the Eligibility Technician III—supports alignment to salary range 18.

On paper, the Eligibility Office Manager II is distinguished from the Public Assistance Field Services Manager I (Cat B, SR19) by the latter's regional, as opposed to local, geographic scope

of authority; however, the Public Assistance Field Services Manager I has become an obsolete job class. Under current structures, regional field operations and delivery of services are implemented directly from the Public Assistance Field Services Manager II through the Eligibility Office Managers.

The Eligibility Office Manager II compared favorably with both the PFD Specialist II (Cat B, SR18) and Employment Service Manager III (Cat B, SR19) in terms of their nature of work, decision-making authority, scope of responsibility, and size of staff, including management through subordinate supervisors. The diversity of administered technical programs and advanced complexity of work performed within their offices aligns more closely with that of the Employment Service Manager III. The highest level of work supervised is the supervisory Eligibility Technician IV and further supports alignment to salary range 19.

Alignment Summary:

Based on the analysis of the duties and responsibilities typical of the classes, the preponderance of comparisons with other job classes, the goals of the pay plan, and the need to provide sufficient range separation between classes to recognize and compensate differences in skill, difficulty, and responsibility, this analyst recommends that Eligibility Technician I remain assigned to salary range 13, Eligibility Technician II remain assigned to salary range 14, Eligibility Technician III are assigned to salary range 16, Eligibility Technician IV are assigned to salary range 17, Eligibility Office Manager I are assigned to salary range 18, and Eligibility Office Manager II are assigned to salary range 19.

Conclusions:

The goals of the Eligibility Technician /Workforce Development Specialist Study were to compare and align range assignments with similarly situated job classes; strengthen career ladders and improve retention efforts; address concerns that current salaries do not reflect the complexity of the assigned work or the level of accountability for individual staff and current salaries have an adverse impact on recruitment, retention, and advancement; and better define job class concepts and combine closely aligned job classes.

All class specifications have been revised to accurately reflect the work performed at each level. The trainee option was removed from the Eligibility Technician I job class, two levels of management of public and family assistance offices have been identified and established, and the Workforce Development I-IV job classes have been abolished.

The preceding job analysis and combined review of internal alignment and the 2009 comprehensive salary survey did not justify a change in salary range for the entry and journey levels but did justify a change in range for the lead/advanced and supervisory levels of the Eligibility Technician class series. Internal alignment indicates that the Eligibility Technician I-IV job classes are appropriately aligned to salary ranges 13, 14, 16, and 17, respectively. Internal alignment indicates that the Eligibility Office Manager I-II job classes are appropriately aligned to salary ranges 18 and 19, respectively. Although the internal alignment of the journey level work remains unchanged, the updated definition and alignment of the advanced and supervisory eligibility work will strengthen career ladders and establish increased incentive for advancement.

The technical work currently performed by some Office Assistants II has been addressed in the revised Eligibility Technician I job class. This work should be either reassigned to appropriate technical positions, or the clerical positions in question should be reappraised and PDs should be updated and submitted for reclassification review for allocation to the appropriate Eligibility Technician job class upon conclusion of this study.

The position allocation analyses for study positions are being transmitted through the OPD system. The abolishment of the Workforce Development I-IV job classes is effective July 15, 2010. The revised job classes and all other study actions are effective July 1, 2010.

Correspondence regarding the allocation of study positions is being distributed through the OPD system.

Attachments:

Final class specification(s)

Position Allocation Spreadsheet

cc: Ellie Fitzjarrald, Director
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