



Memorandum

To: Kate Sheehan
Director

Thru: Keith Murry *KM*
Class Studies Supervisor

From: Sophie M. Lager *SM*
Class Studies Analyst

Date: August 3, 2016

Subject: Psychological Counselor Study

Abstract and Findings:

This study was initiated by the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations, Classification Studies section as routine maintenance. The specifications were last reviewed in 1973.

This memorandum addresses the study processes and results of the Psychological Counselor job class. This study includes four positions; one in the Department of Military & Veteran's Affairs and three in the Department of Corrections. Due to the low number of positions in this job class, 3 Mental Health Clinicians I and II were also interviewed to gain perspective regarding the similarities and differences between the two job classes.

During the study, one position was removed from the study due to its deletion in Fiscal Year (FY) 17. Two positions were reclassified to another existing job class; Protective Services Specialists II. The job analysis found that the work assigned to the remaining position was unique, resulting in a new job class; Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselor (PG0527, Range 17) effective 08/16/2016. The Psychological Counselor job class is abolished effective 08/17/2016.

Study Contacts:

April Wilkerson, Division Director, Division of Administrative Services, Department of Corrections, Xavier Frost, Human Resource Consultant V, Division of Administrative Services, Department of Corrections, and Ouida Morrison, Human Resource Consultant III, Division of Administrative Services, Department of Military & Veterans Affairs served as contacts to coordinate agency activities and present information during the study process.

History of Job Classes:

The Psychological Counselor I and II job classes was established on 04/04/1968. On 4/30/2013 the Psychological Counselor I job class was deleted and the Psychological Counselor II job class was renamed Psychological Counselor.

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.

PCN 090307 is currently part of the Psychological Counselor job class, but is vacant and has been selected for deletion FY 17.

PCN 201052 is responsible for working with the APIC program (Assess, Plan, Identify, and Coordinate) and assisting in the coordination of inmate release and reentry services; this includes liaising with Social Security and Public Assistance on behalf of inmates; ensuring continuing medical appointments and prescriptions; and coordinating housing. PCN 201052 works with facilities across the State and may have contact with inmates in order to obtain forms, such as ROIs (Release of Information), but primarily works with members of facility treatment teams and organizations within the community the inmate will be released to. This position regularly applies knowledge of social work principles, methods, and programs to help inmates successfully transition and adjust to returning to their community.

PCN 208642 is responsible for performing line-level social work functions in segregation units dedicated to inmates with mental and behavioral health diagnoses in the Anchorage Correctional Complex. This includes performing segregation rounds and release planning. Segregation rounds include daily interactions with inmates in the collection of data regarding current mental health needs, including general observation and the inmate's self-identified need of care. Information gathered during these rounds is provided to Mental Health Clinicians for determining current risk factors and assisting inmates in making appropriate social adjustments to their incarceration. PCN 208642 works with state agencies and community providers to set up release plans ensuring housing and continuity of mental health services so inmates can achieve more adequate, satisfying, and productive social adjustments once outside the facility's care.

PCN 204343 provides rehabilitative counseling to inmates with co-occurring severe and persistent mental illness and substance abuse disorders at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center and the Anchorage Correctional Complex; including responding to referrals and conducting Substance Abuse Screenings and Co-occurring Disorder (COD) integrated assessments. This position provides individual counseling, usually in relation to grief or general case management, and develops and

leads group counseling. Group counseling is aimed at drug and alcohol education, mental health, recovery needs, social skills, relapse prevention, 12 step work, coping skills, cognitive-behavioral work, and release and reintegration. PCN 204343 also engages in release planning to ensure the continuity of care upon inmate release.

The current duties assigned to PCNs 201052 and 208642 are not sufficiently similar to justify being grouped with PCN 204343 and are covered by the Protective Services Specialist II job class.

Job analysis of PCN 204343 identified one level of work. Current duties assigned to this position have shifted from general counseling services and are now primarily focused on combination substance abuse and behavioral disorder counseling. The performance of these duties requires the incumbent to hold a Chemical Dependency Counselor I Certification.

The work is categorized as professional as it requires 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 consistently studied to improve data, materials, and methods.

The body of work assigned to PCN 204343 was compared to other job classes, including Mental Health Clinicians I/II and Protective Services Specialists I/II/III and it was determined the level of responsibility, specialized nature of the work, knowledge, skills and abilities, nature of contacts, nature and extent of supervision exercised, and authority precludes grouping these positions with other existing job classes.

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. Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselor is selected to identify positions responsible for providing substance abuse and behavioral health counseling to individuals and assisting them in locating the appropriate resources for continuing support and care in their community.

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 minimum qualifications for the Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselor have been set to provide a pool of candidates with the necessary knowledge of behavioral health and substance abuse counseling with the required minimal experience as needed for incumbents to be successful. Performance of the work requires knowledge of current techniques and standards of care in behavioral health and specialized knowledge in the treatment of addiction and community care. This knowledge is traditionally gained through a combination of education in a behavioral health field, such as sociology, psychology, addiction, counseling, psychiatric nursing, human services, or social work from an accredited university at the bachelor's level and certification as a Chemical Dependency Counselor.

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

The primary duty of Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselors is the research, development, and provision of substance abuse and co-occurring disorder counseling to individuals in the care of the State of Alaska, including group and individual counseling. Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselors are required to possess a bachelor's degree in a behavioral health field, such as sociology, psychology, addiction, counseling, psychiatric nursing, human services, or social work and have acquired a Chemical Dependency Counselor I Certification from the Alaska Commission for Behavioral Health Certification. Incumbents meeting the salary requirement under the Fair Labor Standards Act under Title 29, Part 541, Subpart D will meet the Professional exemption and be ineligible for overtime.

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.

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.

Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselors are assigned to the same job family as the Psychological Counselors; PG05 Mental and Behavioral Health Services. This family includes classes of positions that advise on, administer, supervise, or perform work related to mental health, alcoholism, developmental disabilities, counseling and other related programs. They are assigned the Class Code of PG0527 to allow for addition of other levels if need arises.

To ensure internal consistency with the State’s pay plan the Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselor job class was compared with similar job classes with in the PG05 Mental and Behavioral Health Services job family; including Mental Health Clinicians I-III, and Regional Alcoholism Program Coordinator.

Range	Job Class	Description	Range Characteristics
17	Mental Health Clinician I (PG0511)	Performs entry level general mental health services in an institution or clinic and may supervise Clinical Associates.	The first professional level and provide a limited scope of mental health services in an institution or clinic. These job classes typically require postgraduate education or certification.
19	Mental Health Clinician II PG0512)	Performs journey level general mental health services requiring greater professional skill and may have responsibility for mental health services in a community center or clinic.	Independently perform a wide array of journey-level mental health services with the authority to diagnose mental health disorders.
21	Mental Health Clinician III (PG0513)	Serves as the senior working leader level of the series and performs the most complex mental health services in an institution or clinic. Incumbents at this level lead work of lower level Clinicians or Clinical Associates and frequently have particular expertise as a consultant in a specialty area such as child psychology.	Leadership positions, responsible for performing advanced, specialized work and coordination.
	Coordinator, Suicide Prevention Council (PG0550)	A single position job class responsible for the administration, implementation of policies, and coordination of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council.	
	Regional Alcoholism Program Coordinator (PG0570)	Serve as coordinators responsible for all planning, coordination, implementation, direction, and administration of alcoholism-related programs, federal and State grants, local community program assistance for a defined region.	

Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselors require a Chemical Dependency Counselor I certification, marking them as the first professional level in this field. This certification typically requires two years of a combination of practical experience and education in the field and must be

maintained. This job class is responsible for leading group therapy which covers providing general mental health services and is limited to providing diagnoses for alcohol-related behavioral health disorders. Positions in this job class may be assigned to a clinic or institution for the State of Alaska. Positions in this job class are not responsible for managing, supervising, or coordinating a behavioral health program.

The consequence of error, nature and scope of recommendations, latitude of initiative and originality, nature of available guidelines, complexity of interpersonal relationships, and knowledge, skills, and required qualifications associated with a Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselor align with those of a salary range 17. Positions aligned at a salary range 19 require more complex and specialized knowledge, skills, and other qualifications and operate with more independence and a greater consequence of error. Positions aligned at a salary range 21 exercise a greater scope, complexity, and latitude of responsibility than Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselors and serve in a leadership role, providing supervision and/or coordination.

Based on the analysis of the duties and responsibilities typical of the classes, the preponderance of comparisons with other job classes, the goals for the pay plan, and the need to provide sufficient range separation between classes to recognize and compensate differences in skills, difficulty, and responsibility, this analyst recommends that Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Counselors continue to be assigned to salary range 17. If and when other job classes in this family are studied, it is recommended that this salary range be reviewed.

Attachments:

Final class specification
Allocation Spreadsheet

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