



# Memorandum

To: Nicki Neal  
Director

Thru: Keith Murry *KM*  
Class Studies Supervisor

From: Kirk Thorsteinson *KVT*  
Class Studies Analyst

Date: April 1, 2013

Subject: Veterans Affairs Administrator Job Class Study

## Preamble:

In August, 2012 a study request was made by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to review the Veterans Affairs Administrator job class. The request was made to review the work to determine if the class concepts accurately reflected the full range and complexity of work performed, to review and assess the qualifying education and experience, to revise the class specification as appropriate, and conduct a salary analysis and internal alignment.

## Study Scope:

The study request included the review of the Veterans Affairs Administrator, a single position job class employed by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

## Study Contacts:

Study contacts for the Veterans Affairs Administrator Study included McHugh Pierre (Deputy Commissioner), Susan Colligan (Director of Administrative Services); and Verdie Bowen (Veterans Affairs Administrator) from the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Nicki Neal, Director

April 1, 2013

Page 2

History of PCN/Job Class:

Specific duties of the Commissioner (Adjutant General) of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs are listed in Alaska Statute 26.05.160 (Appointment, Qualifications, and Duties of Adjutant General). Alaska Statute 26.05.160 (c) states "The adjutant general is the official liaison between the state and the active military in the state. The adjutant general shall provide advice and assistance to state agencies having dealings with the active military in the state." Alaska Statute 26.05.160 (d) states "the adjutant general is the official liaison between the state and the federal Department of Veterans Affairs. The adjutant general shall provide advice and assistance to state agencies having dealings with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs."

On May 30, 1995 the Office of Management and Budget approved the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' request for the establishment of a new Special Assistant to the Commissioner I position in the partially exempt service. Effective June 7, 1995 the position's responsibilities almost exclusively provided direct assistance to the Commissioner (Adjutant General) as a high level staff officer performing various tasks such as investigation, researching, and providing information required by the Commissioner to effectively manage the Department's veterans affairs.

On June 2, 2005 the Personal Board approved extension of the partially exempt service to the position in the Veterans Affairs Administrator job class per Alaska Statute 39.25.130 (Extension of Partially Exempt and Classified Services). The job class was created on June 16, 2005 and the filled Special Assistant to the Commissioner I position reclassified. The position served as the primary advocate for veteran affairs in the State of Alaska and advisor to the Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs responsible for developing and sustaining a comprehensive advocacy program for veterans under the authority of Alaska Statute 26:10 (Military Affairs, Veterans, and Disasters: Veterans). Since that time, no changes have been made to the Veterans Affairs Administrator job class.

The Alaska Veterans Advocacy Council (AVAC) was established on July 3, 1996 by Governor Tony Knowles' Administrative Order Number 164 in order to advise the Office of Veterans Affairs, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, on ways to better address the needs and concerns of Alaska's veterans, their dependents, and survivors. The council is responsible for making recommendations to the Veterans Affairs Administrator on priority service needs, developing public and private partnerships to meet those needs, improving recognition of Alaska's veterans, and providing coordination of information regarding veterans' benefits and services around the state. The council holds meetings and establishes committees as appropriate to carry out its duties. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs serves as the lead contact agency for the council and provides administrative support necessary for the council to carry out its duties. As an advisory body, the council has no supervisory authority over Department of Military and Veterans Affairs staff.

**Class Analysis:**

The state's classification plan provides for the Occupational 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 Occupational 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.

The Veterans Affairs Administrator has been defined as a position that manages the Office of Veterans Affairs and advises the Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs as the primary advocate for veterans' issues in the State.

The focus of this study was to review the work to determine if the class concepts accurately reflected the full range and complexity of work performed, to revise the class specification as appropriate, and conduct a salary analysis and internal alignment. To examine this, the position description was submitted, telephonic and email desk interviews were completed, a site visit to the current Office of Veterans Affairs was conducted, and comparative analysis performed.

Evaluation of the Veterans Affairs Administrator indicated the position continued to be responsible for the ongoing development and sustainment of comprehensive advocacy affairs for veterans under the authority of Alaska Statute 26.10. What had changed was an increase in the number of programs and projects available to veterans; an increase in the number of nationally recognized veteran organizations; an increase in annual budget available; and the addition of supervisory duties over professional and technical job classes; all of which were in large due to an increase in the number of eligible veterans and dependents in the State of Alaska due to new federal legislation such as the Post-9/11 GI-Bill. World events to include the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have increased the number of veterans over the last decade. During this time the Veterans Affairs Administrator has significantly grown the Office of Veterans Affairs in the following ways: created training to improve timeliness and quality of veteran claims, added additional staff to provide administrative support and coordinate the Alaska Veterans Cemetery and Veteran Service Officer Grants, facilitated veterans to receive hospital care where they live rather than paying to have them travel to a Veterans Affairs Hospital, created the Alaska Tribal Veteran Representative Program, researched and presented honorable discharge benefits for Alaska Territorial Guard members, and facilitated the addition of veteran status on Alaska Driver Licenses. With an expected increase in the number of veterans over the next decade as veterans return from duty and the Department of Defense lowers the size of the armed forces, the Veterans Affairs Administrator's scope of responsibility will continue to get larger rather than smaller. While current support for the veteran community is high, successfully competing for declining State and federal grants to support existing and new endowments and

programs is a critical responsibility. To reflect these changes the specification was updated and modified to reflect the current specification format being used by the State of Alaska; additional distinguishing characteristics were added; and the examples of duties and knowledge, skills, and abilities were expanded.

**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.

The Veterans Affairs Administrator class title continues to concisely and accurately reflect the level of work; therefore, the class title shall remain the same.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

The job class has been in the partially exempt service and had not included minimum qualifications. When reviewing the draft class specification the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs requested minimum qualifications be established. After discussion of the difference between minimum qualifications and desired qualifications, the partially exempt service's exclusion from the recruitment requirements in the Personnel Act, and the knowledge and skills required by the position, a recommended qualification of experience serving in the armed forces and discharged under Honorable Conditions was added.

**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 Occupational 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 Veterans Affairs Administrator job class was previously placed within the 'Administrative classes not otherwise described' (PB99) Job Family, which includes classes of positions of an administrative or management nature of general or miscellaneous character which are not specifically classifiable in another Job Family. This Job Family is in the Administrative and Office Support Occupational Group (PB), which 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. Upon review of current Occupational Groups and families it was determined the nature of the work performed by the Veterans Affairs Administrator does not fit into any other specialized areas available. In absence of a Job Family with similar characteristics the Veterans Affairs Administrator will remain in PB99.

Veterans Affairs Administrator:

Class Code: PB9904

AKPAY Code: P1919

**Fair Labor Standards Act**

The position in this study is 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 employee in the Veterans Affairs Administrator job class meets the Administrative Employees exemption as he is compensated on a salary basis at a rate not less than \$455.00 per week exclusive of board, lodging, or other facilities; his primary duty is the performance of office or non-manual work directly related to the management and general business operations of the Office of Veterans Affairs; and his primary duty includes the exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance.

The employee in the Veterans Affairs Administrator job class also meets the Executive Employees exemption as he is compensated on a salary basis of \$455.00 per week exclusive of board, lodging, or other facilities; his primary duty is management of the Office of Veterans Affairs; which includes directing the work of three full-time employees; with the authority to hire or fire or whose suggestions and recommendations as to the hiring, firing, advancement, promotion, or any other change of status of other employees are given particular weight.

The employee in the Veterans Affairs Administrator job class does not meet the Professional Employees exemption because his primary duty does not require knowledge of an advanced type in a field of science or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction. He also does not require invention, imagination, originality or talent in a recognized field of artistic or creative endeavor.

**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 previously discussed, the Veterans Affairs Administrator performs work that falls under the Administrative classes not otherwise described Job Family (PB99), which includes classes of positions of an administrative or management nature of general or miscellaneous character which are not specifically classifiable in another Job Family. Initial preparation for employment is typically through progressively responsible professional experience.

Due to the small number of comparable job classes in the PB99 Job Family, analysis was broadened to include the entire Administrative and Office Support Occupational Group (PB): PB01 (General Administration); PB02 (Accounting and Fiscal); PB03 (Personnel and Employee Relations); PB05 (Statistics and Research Analysis); and PB06 (Supply). Due to the specialized nature, scope, and level of responsibilities of the Veterans Affairs Administrator job class, the analysis was further broadened to include the Job Family in the Executive and Senior Administrators Occupational Group (PA01).

The Executive and Senior Administrators Job Family (PA01) includes classes of positions that serve as agency executives and top level administrators, including those in the Partially Exempt Service. Initial preparation for employment is typically through progressively responsible experience in a professional or administrative occupation and normally includes management experience.

The General Administration Job Family (PB01) includes classes of positions that perform administrative, technical, and clerical work of a general nature that enables agencies to perform their line functions. Initial preparation for employment is typically through general education or office experience with subsequent career progression based on progressively responsible experience.

The Accounting and Fiscal Job Family (PB02) includes classes of positions that advise on, administer, supervise or perform professional, technical, or related clerical work of an accounting or financial management nature. Initial preparation for employment is typically through advanced education in accounting with subsequent career progression based on progressively higher education and responsible experience.

The Personnel and Employee Relations Job Family (PB03) includes classes of positions that advise on, administer, supervise or perform work involved in the various phases of personnel or human resource management and employee relations. Initial preparation for employment is typically through general advanced education or experience with subsequent career progression based on progressively responsible experience.

The Statistics and Research Analysis Job Family (PB05) 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 Job Family. Initial preparation for employment is typically through general education or experience with subsequent career progression based on progressively responsible experience.

The Supply Job Family (PB06) includes classes of positions that advise on, administer, supervise or perform work concerned with furnishing all types of supplies, equipment, and materials required in the performance of state functions, from planning through acquisition, cataloging, storage, and distribution. Initial preparation for employment is typically through general education or experience with subsequent career progression based on progressively responsible experience.

The table below describes the job classes selected for alignment comparison and their class characteristics.

Range	Job Class/Job Family	Description	Range Characteristics
21	Executive Director, Violent Crimes Comp BD (PB99)	This partially exempt job class manages the programmatic affairs and financial resources of the Violent Crimes Compensation Board (Board) so the Board can fulfill its statutory mandate (see AS 18.67). In this pursuit, performs assignments such as reviewing applications for payment; assisting the Board to facilitate compensation payments; recommending and drafting policy; conducting programmatic research, development, and outreach; supervising support staff; and managing finances.	Comparable classes aligned to this range include partially exempt and supervisory staff advisors and personal assistants to a board, agency management, or Commissioner who perform research, analyze data, and make recommendations. May require a generic bachelor degree and multiple years of specific professional work experience.
	Research Analyst IV (PB05)	This supervisory job class is responsible for all research, analysis, and statistical reporting of an agency; serves as staff advisor to management on budgetary, policy, or legislative implications of studies/findings.	
	Special Assistant to the Commissioner I (PA01)	This partially exempt job class acts as a personal assistant to a Commissioner, coordinating and monitoring the status of projects and analyses, facilitating intra and interdepartmental activities, and/or performing substantive research and data gathering in support of executive level decision-making and	

		management processes.	
22	Administrative Operations Manager I (PB01)	This supervisory job class is the first level of the series in which incumbents manage the administrative support functions for a major subdivision of a department. At this level the difficulty of administrative support work is moderately impacted by the organizational structure and scope of control.	Comparable classes aligned to this range include supervisory and single position managers of specialized project teams to major agency subdivisions having statewide focus and impact. May require a specific bachelor or master degree and multiple years of advanced professional work experience.
	Business Analyst III (PB99)	This supervisory job class provides management and direct oversight of a specialized project management team responsible for a module of the Statewide Administrative Systems Replacement Project.	
	Chief, Health Research and Vital Statistics (PB05)	This single position and supervisory job class works for the Director, Division of Public Health. Plans, directs, supervises and implements statewide programs involving health-related statistical research and vital records.	
	Human Resource Manager I (PB03)	This supervisory job class oversees and directs a major functional section of the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations.	
	Payroll Manager (PB02)	This single position job class is responsible for directing all aspects of the State payroll accounting system. Performs and supervises professional payroll accounting staff and acts as a management resource to state labor relations staff and Human Resource Managers for confidential labor relations matters.	
	Risk Manager (PB99)	This single position job class works for the Director, Division of Risk	

		Management. Assists the Director in planning, directing, coordinating and administering activities of the division; performs duties in the director's absence.	
	State Demographer (PB05)	This single position and supervisory job class is responsible for research and statistical analysis of Alaska's population size, growth, density, distribution, and composition. Provides projections and analysis of the state's population and serves as the state's expert on demographic matters.	
23	Administrative Operations Manager II (PB01)	This supervisory job class is the second level of the series in which incumbents manage the administrative support functions for a major departmental subdivision where the difficulty of support work is significantly impacted by the organizational structure and scope of control.	Comparable classes aligned to this range include partially exempt, supervisory, and single position managers of major functional sections and agency subdivisions having statewide focus and impact. May require multiple years of specific advanced professional work experience.
	Chief Contracts Officer (PB06)	This single position job class works for the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and has statewide responsibility for establishing standards and methodologies and ensuring compliance with all State and federal requirements governing the procurement of construction services and materials.	
	Human Resource Manager II (PB03)	This single position and supervisory job class assists the Director, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations in the overall management and strategic planning for the Division. Is specifically responsible	

		for overseeing one or more major functional sections of the Division and is responsible for the coordination of all cross-functional programs within the Division.	
	Retirement and Benefits Manager (PB03)	This single position and supervisory job class is the principle manager of operations over the Division of Retirement and Benefit's Member Services Section.	
	Special Assistant to the Commissioner II (PA01)	This partially exempt job class provides staff assistance to a Commissioner and directly participates in the management of a department by performing and/or overseeing special and ongoing assignments of major significance to the management of a department's core business activities and accomplishment of agency goals and objectives.	
24	Business Analyst IV (PB99)	This single position and supervisory job class is responsible for managing project staff responsible for the financial modules of the Statewide Administrative Systems Replacement Project directly and through subordinate supervisor(s).	Comparable classes aligned to this range include partially exempt, supervisory, and single position managers of specialized project teams, specialized functional sections, and significant portions of a division having statewide focus and impact. May require a certificate and multiple years of advanced professional and/or supervisory work experience.
	Division Operations Manager (PA01)	This supervisory job class works for a Division Director or equivalent and is the principal assistant to a Director. 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. Exercise authority for planning, organizing, directing, coordinating,	

		and controlling the activities and resources for the areas supervised. During the Division Director's absence, assumes acting status.	
	Labor Relations Manager (PB03)	This partially exempt and single position job class works for the Director, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations. Plans, organizes, directs, and evaluates all activities and employees of the Labor Relations Unit. The Unit is responsible for the negotiation and administration of collective bargaining agreements between the State and its employees.	
	State Accountant (PB02)	This partially exempt and single position job class is responsible for ensuring all of the State's accounting activities comply with professional accounting and financial reporting standards and State and federal laws. The work requires expertise in accounting principles, concepts, and standards to develop and implement policies, procedures, and work practices that ensure adequate internal controls and accurate reporting of State finances.	

The Veterans Affairs Administrator is responsible for managing the Office of Veterans Affairs, a small agency section with statewide focus and impact which includes supervision of three full-time professional and technical staff. The Incumbent is the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' representative for identifying and resolving issues faced by Alaskan veterans, their dependents, and/or survivors. Responsibilities not already mentioned include providing expertise on veterans issues; overseeing the establishment and maintenance of veteran-related grant programs; refining and maintaining the vision and focus for the Alaska Territorial Guard; preparing an annual capital and operating budget; providing legislative, judicial, and congressional testimony; developing short and long term strategic planning; creating, facilitating, and signing Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding; meeting with and communicating benefits available to the veteran community; and providing oversight, developing training and guidance on benefits counseling and claims assistance.

Information gained in the Veterans Affairs Administrator class study suggests a higher range than previously assigned due to the nature of supervision received and the purpose and nature of person-to-person work relationships.

The information gained in the Veterans Affairs Administrator class study also suggests a higher range allocation than the previous allocation as a Special Assistant to the Commissioner I. The Veterans Affairs Administrator takes a direct role in the substantive management of the Office of Veterans Affairs which is a core business activity of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The Veterans Affairs Administrator also takes a direct role in accomplishing the Departments goals and objectives in relation to the Office of Veterans Affairs. This scope and level of work exceeds that expected and performed as a Commissioner's personal assistant which characterizes the Special Assistant to the Commissioner I.

The Veterans Affairs Administrator has many similarities to the job classes at Range 22, however, it has greater responsibility and wider latitude to interpret and apply policies, rules, and regulations than the comparable classes of managers of specialized project teams to major agency subdivisions having statewide focus and impact. In addition to looking inward at what the State of Alaska is doing and how to make improvements, the Veterans Affairs Administrator also looks at what other states are doing and serves as a subject matter expert to other states desiring to implement best practices used in Alaska. While many of the examples of duties are similar at this range, regular interaction with senior members of State and federal government to resolve critical issues through purposeful initiative and the freedom for 'think outside the box' originality exceed the characteristics of Range 22. This initiative and freedom to think outside the box are strongly possible and supported by the Veterans Affairs Administrator's placement in the organizational reporting structure directly beneath the Department's Deputy Commissioner.

The Office of Veterans Affairs is a major component of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs having statewide focus and impact and its primary function is a major reason the Department exists. While the Veterans Affairs Administrator does not have a significant subordinate structure as does the Administrative Operations Manager II, Human Resource Manager II, and Retirement and Benefits Manager job classes which are found in larger departments with multiple divisions, similarities with the Chief Contracts Officer and Special Assistant to the Commissioner II are clear. The Chief Contracts Officer and Special Assistant to the Commissioner II both report directly to the Commissioner (Deputy Commissioner for the Veterans Affairs Administrator). The Chief Contracts Officer's statewide duties and responsibility in the specialized areas of construction procurement and contracts are delegated directly from the Commissioner. The Special Assistant to the Commissioner II acts on behalf of the Commissioner to manage the department's core business activities and accomplish department goals and objectives just as the Veterans Affairs Administrator does for the Office of Veterans Affairs: drafting and recommending

goals and objectives; serving as a department spokesperson to the legislature; developing and implementing management systems and control mechanisms for activities; advising and assisting executives and managers on administrative issues such as personnel, staffing, budget, and fiscal control; identifying, researching and analyzing public needs and interests within the purview of responsibility; acting as a hearing officer in the resolution of complaints or appeals; and acting as contact, coordinator, and representative with specific individuals and groups for the purpose of facilitating accomplishment of the agency mission, where the individuals and groups exercise a degree of control or influence over the agency's activities. The Veterans Affairs Administrator gives effective recommendations that have both state and nationwide impact as other states can choose to implement the same or similar practice for their veterans.

When compared to the job classes of managers of specialized project teams, specialized functional sections, and significant portions of a division having statewide focus and impact that are at Range 24, the Veterans Affairs Administrator does not have the level or significance of organization managed. While comparable job classes at Range 23 and Range 24 both include subject matter experts and program heads, the significant subordinate structure required at Range 24 distinguishes it from Range 23. The exception to this is the State Accountant whose subordinate structure is not significant but whose minimum qualifications require current registration as a Certified Public Accountant. The significant similarities at Range 23 supported assigning the Veterans Affairs Administrator to that range.

The Veterans Affairs Administrator is unique in that a significant percentage of its duties require regular interaction with high level State and federal government representatives. This interaction has three main role focuses, those of coordinator, liaison, and lobbyist. While many job classes communicate with and have regular relationships with the federal government, these relationships are often directive in nature. The federal government generally makes a determination and the State must determine how to best implement the determination. The federal government then audits the State to ensure the determination is being correctly applied and that the State is compliant. In comparison, the Veterans Affairs Administrator's relationship to the federal government is more a peer association with dialogue going both ways. Suggestions at the State level have the opportunity to be researched and implemented by the federal level. This level of responsibility is typically retained by an agency head. The importance and uniqueness of these duties warrants raising the range of the Veterans Affairs Administrator above Range 23. Final analysis results demonstrate the Veterans Affairs Administrator's alignment is best aligned at Range 24 along with the managers of specialized project teams, specialized functional sections, and significant portions of a division having statewide focus and impact.

**Conclusions:**

The Veterans Affairs Administrator retains the same job class title. The definition; distinguishing characteristics; examples of duties; knowledge, skills, and abilities; and minimum qualifications were updated. The salary range has been determined based on the current characteristics of the duties and responsibilities. We recognize that the work of the Office of Veterans Affairs' continues to evolve to meet the needs of the State's veterans and the changing federal programs. Should the changes to the Veterans Affairs Administrator over the next few years warrant reexamination of the salary alignment we will be open to an agency request for a salary review.

The Veterans Affairs Administrator job class remains part of the PB99 Job Family and the codes remain the same.

The Salary Range for the Veterans Affairs Administrator is increased from 21 to 24.

The employee in the Veterans Affairs Administrator job class is exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act under the administrative and executive exemptions and is not eligible for overtime.

The revised job class and position allocation is effective April 1, 2013.

Correspondence on the allocation of this study position is being distributed through the Online Position Description (OPD) system.

Attachment:  
Final class specification

cc: McHugh Pierre, Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Susan Colligan, Director  
Division of Administrative Services  
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Ouida Morrison, Human Resource Specialist II  
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs