



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

STATE HUMAN RESOURCES | DIRECTOR'S REVIEW PROGRAM

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January 15, 2015

TO: Connie Goff, PHR
Director's Review Program Manager

FROM: Meredith Huff, SPHR
Director's Review Program Investigator

SUBJECT: Claudia August v. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-14-024

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to February 26, 2014, the date DSHS Classification and Compensation Unit received Ms. August's request for a position review. (Exhibit A-2) As the Director's Review Investigator, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits and the written comments, and information gathered during a phone interview with the parties. Based on my review and analysis of Ms. August's assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude her position is properly allocated to the class of Office Support Supervisor 2.

Background

Ms. Claudia August submitted her Position Description Form (PDF) and a request for review of her position in the Bremerton regional office, to the Classification and Compensation Unit of Dept. of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The PDF is date stamped February 26, 2014. (Exhibit A-3)

On March 3, 2014, Ms. C.J. Iwata, DSHS Classification & Compensation Specialist, notified Ms. August that her position was being reallocated from Administrative Assistant 3 to the classification of Office Support Supervisor 2, effective February 26, 2014, at salary Range 40, Step L, \$3,459 per month. (Exhibit B-1)

On March 11, 2014, the State Human Resources Director's Review Program received Ms. August's request for a Director's review of DSHS' classification and salary determination. Ms. August indicated she thought the Office Manager class is a more appropriate classification and would include a salary increase. Ms. August noted that her previous monthly salary amount as Administrative Assistant 3, and her new classification of Office Support Supervisor 2 was at the same monthly amount of \$3,459. (Exhibit A-2)

On November 7, 2014, I conducted a Director's review telephone conference regarding this appeal. Ms. Claudia August was present. Ms. Dorothy Hibbard, DSHS Class & Compensation Specialist, and Ms. Jeanette Lyles, Human Resource Consultant 3, with the DSHS Classification and Compensation Unit, also participated in the phone conversation.

Guidance for Director's Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3712-A2 (1994).

The Personnel Resources Board (PRB) has held the following: Because a current and accurate description of a position's duties and responsibilities is documented in an approved classification questionnaire, the classification questionnaire becomes the basis for allocation of a position. An allocation determination must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities as documented in the classification questionnaire. Lawrence v. Dept. of Social and Health Services, PAB No. ALLO-99-0027 (2000).

Ms. August has submitted organizational charts of other offices for comparison with her position. The Board has addressed comparison of an appellant's position to other positions and has indicated it is not a factor used in a determination as follows: "Appellant questions the allocation of Community Partnership Program Coordinators located at other DOC institutions. However, in Byrnes v. Dept's of Personnel and Corrections, PRB No. R-ALLO-06-005 (2006), the Board held that "[w]hile a comparison of one position to another similar position may be useful in gaining a better understanding of the duties performed by and the level of responsibility assigned to an incumbent, allocation of a position must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual position compared to the existing classifications. The allocation or misallocation of a similar position is not a determining factor in the appropriate allocation of a position." Citing to Flahaut v. Dept's of Personnel and Labor and Industries, PAB Case No. ALLO 96-0009 (1996). Therefore, the allocation or misallocation of positions at other DOC institutions is not a determining factor in the appropriate allocation of Appellant's position."

Position Description Form (Exhibit A-3)

Ms. August's duties and responsibilities are described on the PDF as follows:

95% Directs the development, coordination and administration of the support staff operating procedures...; prepares regular periodic reports of support staff status; directs activities and plans and recommends changes in procedures and organization to increase efficiency.

Helps define and interpret Children and Family Services policies regarding the unit program to staff served; resolves problems that arise between personnel and social worker staff.

Responsible for coordination of work within unit; provides supervisory direction, consultation and setting and monitoring performance expectations. Assures all support staff receives necessary training to provide support to social worker staff.

Supervise staff responsible for PBX, word processing, records management, reception and clerical support to social worker staff. Responsible for maintaining all bus passes for each month; maintenance of telephone directory and computer input of both the on-line client tracking system (FAMLINK) and record transfer and retention systems (Barcode), case record makeup, including research, maintenance, and maintaining of case files, sending certified/restricted mail and maintenance of the postage account, PBX operation, customer services, which include scheduling of all conference and visiting rooms.

- 5%** Serves as records custodian for all closed case records requests. Sending certified/restricted mail and maintenance of the postage account, PBX operation, customer services which include scheduling of all conference and visiting rooms.

Operate a computer, use online applications and different software to accurately perform various computer tasks including spreadsheet, word processing, data base, and main frame applications to complete assigned tasks. Understanding and complying with the Collective Bargaining as it relates to subordinate positions included in the bargaining unit(s). Other duties as required; training, attending conferences and meetings.

During the review conference, Ms. August described the primary assignments of the employees she supervises as follows:

Secretary Senior (two full-time positions) These positions primarily provide clerical and court support and preparations such as discovery and disclosure documents. One position is dedicated to obtaining background checks.

Office Assistant 3 (three full-time positions)

- One position provides mail room operations and coverage for the office;
- One position provides reception services for the office; and
- One position provides car shop/motor pool coverage and maintenance for a fleet of eleven vehicles available to the staff in the office; this includes scheduling maintenance, making appointments for use and delivery of vehicles to clients.

Ms. August noted that each of these staff members develops and maintains a Desk Book that gives direction for elements of the assigned duties. Using the Desk Book as guidance allows the unit staff to provide quality coverage despite unexpected and sometimes long-term absences. Ms. August indicated the unit secretaries also produce court orders and court reports.

Summary of Ms. August's Perspective

In a letter dated March 7, 2014, Ms. August wrote, "In the Bremerton DSHS office, clerical supervision has been sporadic at best. I have been in Bremerton as an Administrative Assistant 3 since March, 2003. One sentence in the Admin Assistant Class Specification, 'May supervise lower-level staff', has periodically put me in a supervisory position throughout this time. In December, 2012, five clerical workers were assigned to me as their full-time manager. However, I've done this without benefit of reallocation, office space or formal training commensurate with the delegated task. I continue to report directly to the Area Administrator."

She also wrote: "...The salary of my Administrative Assistant position, Range 39 and the OSS2, Range 40, is the same. My request for a re-allocation as approved by my Deputy Regional Administrator, John March, was to a salary Range 41. Such a change [to range 41] affords me the opportunity – after a year's time – to increase my wages by \$2064 annually." (Exhibit A-2)

DSHS Human Resource Perspective

By letter dated March 3, 2014, Ms. C.J. Iwata, DSHS Classification & Compensation Specialist, advised Ms. August that her position was being reallocated from Administrative Assistant 3 to the Office Support Supervisor 2 classification. Ms. Iwata indicated Ms. August would remain in her current permanent position and her current salary of Range 39, Step M at \$3,459 per month would be changed to Range 40, Step L at \$3,459 per month effective February 26, 2014. (Exhibit B-1)

Ms. Dorothy Hibbard asserted during the review conference that Ms. August does not have sole approval for recruitment and hiring as higher authorities sign off on position budgeting, hiring and making additions to the payroll. Ms. Hibbard clarified that in accordance with policy, the effective date of a reclassification is the date stamp indicating the receipt of the request in the HR office. In this situation the date stamp is February 26, 2014. Ms. Hibbard indicated that she found the class of Office Support Supervisor 2 covers the work assigned to Ms. August and is the best match for this position.

Comparison of Duties to Class Specifications

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations. While examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification.

Comparison of Duties to Administrative Assistant Series (105E)

The Personnel Appeals Board has found that "for a position to be allocated to any level of the Administrative Assistant series, it must first meet the allocating criteria for Administrative Assistant 1 (AA1) (class code 105E). The key criteria is related to the supervisor's delegation and the incumbent's performance of reviewing, controlling, prioritizing and coordinating functions of the supervisor's subordinate professional staff. The extent of such involvement and performance by the incumbent is most important." See Deitrick v DSHS and DOP PAB Case no. A85-1.

Therefore, in order to determine if a position should be allocated to any level of the Administrative Assistant series, a position must first meet the criteria identified in the **Definition** of the Administrative Assistant 1 class which states:

Provides para-professional administrative and staff assistance to a professional supervisor by reviewing, controlling, prioritizing and coordinating the work of the supervisor's professional staff or performs technical work which is directly delegated from a professional position.

Ms. August does not review, control, prioritize or coordinate the functions of professional staff. Rather, the scope of Ms. August's position includes responsibility for supervision of five subordinates who support professional staff. She provides office space management which

requires contracted remodels, purchase, maintenance and disposal of equipment, and installation of phones and technical equipment. She is responsible for records management and archival. During the phone interview, Ms. August stated that in September 2014, she sent approximately 100 boxes of records to Olympia for records retention.

She provides support to the Area Administrator. Under Ms. August's supervision, other classified employees provide unit services such as postage and mailing, car pool scheduling and maintenance, creation of court reports and orders and other necessary support for the social workers and the office.

After closely reviewing and comparing the overall responsibilities of Ms. August's position and the AA3 classification, I agree with Ms. Iwata of DSHS's HR office, that the Administrative Assistant 3 classification is not the best fit for the majority of Ms. August's responsibilities.

Overall, Ms. August's duties are outside of the Administrative Assistant classification series.

Comparison of Duties to Office Manager (106J)

The **Definition** for this class states:

Plans, organizes, assigns, and supervises varied and extensive processing and service units and related central office activities.

The Office Manager classification does not contain distinguishing characteristics; therefore we look to the **Typical Work** statements for guidance. The Typical Work statements are:

Designs office space layouts to facilitate flow of office work between units and to various subdivisions of agency;

Reviews, evaluates, and recommends changes of policies and operating procedures;

Determines need for office equipment, furniture, and supplies; coordinates purchasing and maintenance;

Maintains liaison and coordination between service and technical or professional units;

Serves as department records management officer; installs filing systems; arranges for records classification, retention, and disposition;

Supervises transportation requests, including use of pool and department automobiles;

Arranges for maintenance contracts and emergency repairs;

Designs forms and prepares policy directives for internal use;

Ms. August's position duties do not reach the level of responsibility anticipated and encompassed in the Office Manager class. Her assignments do not include responsibility for supervising varied and extensive processing and service units as required by the **Definition**. Ms. August's responsibilities are limited to supervising support processes and services specific to the Bremerton office. These duties include supervising the processing of court orders and background checks; car pool use and maintenance; record retention and archival; and smoothing relationships between staff and social workers as necessary. The Office Manager class is not the best fit for Ms. August's assigned work responsibilities.

Comparison of Duties to Office Support Supervisor 3 (100R)

The **Class Series Concept** for the Office Support Supervisor series states:

Supervises staff and oversees clerical support operations.

The **Definition** for this class states:

Supervises assigned staff.

The **Distinguishing Characteristics** for this class states:

Interviews and recommends selection of applicants, conducts training, assigns and schedules work, acts upon leave requests, conducts annual performance evaluations and recommends corrective actions. Interprets rules, policies and procedures, develops and implements procedures, and makes recommendations regarding unit budget.

Multi-unit supervisor. Supervisor of supervisors in an organization with three or more functional areas such as accounting, cashiering, reception and customer service, centralized records and files, document reproduction and printing, and centralized mail services. A functional area is discrete from the other work performed in the unit. Staffs are typically assigned to a specific functional area.

Uses independent judgment to accomplish assignments or solve problems. Responsible for developing new work methods, procedures, or strategies or modifying existing work methods, procedures, and strategies to solve new or unusual problems. Plans and prioritizes work to meet internal and external deadlines. Work is subject to review at the completion stage to determine effectiveness in producing expected results.

A key responsibility for allocation to this class is specified in the **Distinguishing Characteristics**. Positions allocated to this class must supervise multi-units and be a supervisor of other supervisors. Ms. August does not have responsibility to supervise multi-units and other supervisors of functional areas.

The Office Support Supervisor 3 classification is not the best match for Ms. August's position.

Comparison of Duties to Office Support Supervisor 2 (100M)

The **Class Series Concept** for the Office Support Supervisor series states:

Supervises staff and oversees clerical support operations.

The **Definition** for this class states:

Supervises staff and/or lower level supervisors assigned to a variety of occupational categories or performing a variety of office support functions such as accounting, office support, data entry and inquiry, or word processing. Incumbents spend a majority of time overseeing and coordinating day-to-day unit operations, use independent judgment to accomplish assignments or solve problems, develop new work methods, procedures, or strategies or modify existing work methods, procedures, and strategies to solve new or unusual problems that impact the unit and requester of services, and plan and prioritize work to meet internal and external deadlines.

Ms. August's position meets the **Definition** of this class. Ms. August is the supervisor for five positions that perform a variety of office support functions related to the unit activities. Ms. August stated during the review conference that her responsibilities include recruiting, interviewing, selecting, and hiring for five positions that she supervises. She is responsible for training these employees, providing work direction, completing performance evaluations, approving absences and use of paid and unpaid leave, approving time sheets, checking work, and guiding employees in correcting errors.

Ms. August oversees and coordinates the day-to-day office support functions including reception, mail services, car pool scheduling and maintenance, and support for the social workers by developing court orders and other legal documents. Ms. August also contracts with businesses to remodel offices/cubicles and to purchase equipment. She is responsible for equipment purchase and maintenance, and setting up work areas for new employees. Ms. August plans and prioritizes her work to meet internal and external deadlines.

Ms. August uses independent judgment to accomplish her assignments and solve problems. For example, Ms. August confirmed during the review conference that she directly reports to the Area Administrator, Ms. Ursula Petters, within the Bremerton office of the Division of Children and Family Services of DSHS. Ms. August stated her position supports Ms. Petters and the other employees in the office. Ms. August indicated she is responsible for providing information to Ms. Petters and has daily contact to address new and continuing issues.

The **Typical Work** statements for this class state:

Acts as liaison to other departments; resolves problems that arise between unit personnel and persons served, both within and outside of the unit;

Develops and implements procedures, forms, work methods, schedules, job priorities, etc., to be followed by those supervised and coordinates workflow therein;

Develops and prepares reports related to the activities of the unit;

Coordinates and supervises others involved in the activities of the unit including the development, preparation and maintenance of departmental records, databases, statements of income and expenditures and summaries of departmental operation;

Communicates instructions from technical and administrative supervisors;

Consults with appropriate management regarding clerical requirements and makes recommendations regarding necessary budgeting of unit to accommodate staffing, equipment, supplies, and facility costs; prepares budget recommendations and monitors budget;

The description of the **Typical Work** responsibilities of this class and Ms. August's assigned responsibilities listed on the Position Description Form are similar. Ms. August acts as the on-site Human Resources person and ensures that all the hiring paperwork is completed when new social workers are hired; she checks ID and signs I-9 forms when necessary. She ensures that the phones, internet connections, and access/ID badges are ready and the work area cubicle is

set up with a computer and other equipment for each new employee on the first day. She resolves problems that arise between unit personnel and others. Ms. August completes office supply and local and state equipment inventories and completes the process for disposing of unneeded equipment. She maintains inventory and accounting for the ferry passes and ORCA (bus) passes distributed to clients.

Ms. August created and uses an Access program to track "exception requests" for the office. This record includes the child's name, case number, the nature of the exception request, dollars involved, and whether or not the request is approved. This history database is used as a check for what resources previously were approved or denied for a specific client. Ms. August stated during the conference that the clients of this office are often hostile as their children may be removed from them or services they are asking for cannot be provided.

It is evident that Ms. August's position plays an integral role in ensuring quality service delivery to the Bremerton office's administrator, professional staff and clients. However, a position's allocation is not based on an evaluation of performance but rather the majority of work assigned to a position. Therefore, based on the overall scope of her assigned duties, the Office Support Supervisor 2 classification best matches Ms. August's position. Her position should remain allocated to the class of Office Support Supervisor 2.

Ms. August has indicated that her second level supervisor, Mr. John Marsh, has approved salary range 41 for her position. The Classification and Compensation Plan does not allow flexibility for setting salaries outside the designated salary for each classification. For positions allocated to the Office Support Supervisor 2 classification, the salary is set within range 40.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.10(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to the Washington Personnel Resources Board. Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The mailing address for the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) is P. O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington 98504-0911. The PRB Office is located on the 3rd floor of the Raad Building, 128 10th Avenue SW, Olympia, Washington. The main telephone number is (360) 407-4101, and the fax number is (360) 586-4694.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

Cc: Ursula Petters, Supervisor
Dorothy Hibbard, DSHS HRS
Jennifer Lyles, DSHS HRS
Lisa Skriletz, SHR

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

CLAUDIA AUGUST v DSHS
ALLO-14-024

List of Exhibits

A. Claudia August Exhibits

1. March 17, 2014 clarification letter
2. Letter of appeal received by Director's review March 11, 2014
3. DC35 PDF as submitted to Deputy Regional Administrator, John March
4. Administrative Assistant 3 (range 39)
5. Office Support Supervisor 2 (range 40)
6. Office Support Supervisor 3 (range 43)
7. Administrative Assistant 4 (range 46)
8. Region 3 Organizational Chart (minus Bremerton)
9. Salary ranges 39-46
10. September 2, 2014 letter to Director
11. Administrative Assistant 3 classification specification
12. Office Support Supervisor 2 classification specification
13. Office Manager classification specification
14. Office Manager job announcement (Seattle)
15. Exception Request Database example with email explanation to Director's review

B. DSHS Exhibits

1. Allocation determination letter, PDF, Organizational chart, PAR and Assessment of Observed Job Performance
2. Office Support Supervisor 1 classification specification
3. Office Support Supervisor 2 classification specification
4. Office Support Supervisor 3 classification specification
5. Office Manager classification specification
6. DSHS Administrative Policy 18.13
7. WAC 357-13-085

C. Class Specifications

1. Office Support Supervisor 1 classification specification
2. Office Support Supervisor 2 classification specification
3. Office Support Supervisor 3 classification specification
4. Office Manager classification specification
5. Administrative Assistant 3