

Humboldt County Health and Human Services Staff Services Analyst II Classification Study

SUBMITTED BY:

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I. Background/Introduction

Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) requested CPS HR Consulting (CPS HR), review one Merit System Services (MSS) Staff Services Analyst II position to determine if the position is appropriately classified and provide a recommendation as to the best classification based on the duties assigned to the position. Because of the October 1, 2019 transition of Humboldt County's Merit System positions to oversight by California Department of Human Resources (CalHR), CalHR staff was involved in the review of the Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ), interview of the incumbent, and preparation of the class study report.

II. Overview/Status of Study Tasks

In conducting the classification study:

1. CPS HR received the PDQ completed by the study incumbent, Christine Messinger, on September 27, 2019. The PDQ was reviewed by Ms. Messinger's supervisor, Heather Muller; and Assistant DHHS Director, Paul Sheppard before it was sent to CPS HR.
2. CPS HR and CalHR conducted a detailed analysis of position by evaluating the individual PDQ and the Staff Services Analyst II classification specification.
3. CPS HR contacted Ms. Messinger and set up an appointment for a classification study phone interview to clarify statements on the PDQ and to learn more about the duties performed by Ms. Messinger. Ms. Messinger was interviewed by Christine Henderson, CalHR Analyst; and Karen Rodriguez, CPS HR Senior Consultant on October 11, 2019.
4. During the phone interview, Ms. Messinger was asked questions regarding the purpose of her position, decision making authority, scope and complexity of her duties, and contact with others.
5. A phone interview was also conducted with Ms. Muller on October 16, 2019.
6. Based on MSS classification structure, PDQ content, and information provided in the interviews, a recommendation was prepared regarding the allocation of the position to an appropriate classification.
7. CPS HR developed a Classification Study Report for DHHS and forwarded to the County on October 17, 2019.

III. Analysis – Current Class Concepts

Encompassed in this study is the determination of the appropriate classification for the incumbent's Staff Services Analyst II position. When looking at the duties performed, MSS considered the incumbent's current classification, as well as Staff Services Analyst III.

Staff Services Analyst II

The Staff Services Analyst performs professional level analytical duties involving general administrative, staff development, fiscal, and/or program analytical work. Incumbents gather, tabulate, analyze, and chart data; interview and consult with departmental officials, employees, and others to give and receive information; prepare reports and make recommendations on procedures, policies, and program/functional issues and alternatives; review and analyze proposed legislation and advise management on the potential impact; make decisions in financial, and other administrative systems of average to difficult complexity; prepare correspondence; and perform other related duties as assigned.

Staff Services Analyst III

The Staff Services Analyst III leads and/or performs complex professional-level analytical duties involving general administrative, personnel, staff development, statistical, fiscal, and/or program work; and performs other work as required.

This is the advanced-journey level of the class series which may service as a lead worker over a staff support services unit by assigning, monitoring, and reviewing the work of other professional analysts engaged in general administrative, personnel, staff development, fiscal, and/or program analytical work. The position performs the more advanced and complex analytical work in the work unit. This typically includes coordinating department-wide administrative activities and/or projects. Duties require advanced and extensive knowledge pertaining to administrative service functions.

General Guidelines and Definitions

Standard Classification Factors

In order to develop classification/allocation recommendations, each position is first analyzed based on the nature of work performed. Nature of work refers to the occupation, profession, or subject matter field in which each position falls. Positions are initially grouped according to the broad occupational nature of their overall functions, responsibilities, similarities in their employment requirements, and the purposes for which they exist. Positions that perform work of a similar nature are considered to be in the same "job family." Common examples are clerical, technical, professional, supervisor, and manager job families, discussed further in the Nature of

the Work section below. Within each job family, the level of the position is then determined by evaluating it against the following factors:

- **Decision Making** - This consists of (a) the decision-making responsibility and degree of independence or latitude that is inherent in the position, and (b) the impact of the decisions (i.e., within their department and/or agency wide).
- **Scope and Complexity** - This defines the breadth and difficulty of the assigned function or program responsibility inherent in the classification.
- **Contact with Others Required by the Job** - This measures (a) the types of contacts, and (b) the purpose of the contacts.
- **Supervision Received and Exercised** - This describes the level of supervision received from others and the nature of supervision provided to other workers. It relates to the independence of action inherent in a position and the types of classifications supervised (e.g., trade, clerical, technical, professional, sworn, etc.).
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA)** - This defines the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to successfully perform assigned job duties.

These factors were carefully and consistently applied during the analysis of each position included in the scope of this study. Not all factors will be as pertinent to all positions and each factor is analyzed in accordance with the importance of that particular factor to the kind of job under study.

Sufficient Similarity

It is easy to see that several positions belong to the same class when the duties are identical. In practical application, however, the duties and responsibilities of positions need not be identical in order to be placed in a common class. Instead, classification plans generally place positions into classes based on a determination of “sufficient similarity.” However, within an individual organization “sufficient similarity” can be broadly or narrowly interpreted. A broad interpretation recognizes positions that share a core set of classification factors, but accepts substantial variation between positions, resulting in broad classes. In contrast, a narrow interpretation might create separate narrow classes to address such variations.

Whole-Job Analysis

For the purposes of this study, CPS HR used a whole-job analysis approach. This approach compares jobs based on an overall evaluation of difficulty or performance. The entire position including the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, the decision-making authority, the scope of work, the magnitude of work, and the accountability for results, is compared as a whole to other positions. In addition, the overall scope of work (or whole job) is used to determine

consistency in titling protocol across departments and allocation to appropriate levels by looking at the holistic impact agency wide.

Preponderant Duties

Classification studies often find that positions are assigned a wide range of duties and that incumbents have various levels of responsibility at any one time. Therefore, the positions must be analyzed based on their preponderant duties. Preponderance is a measure of importance, and the most preponderant duties of a position are those that support the primary purpose of the position. Sometimes the most time-consuming duties of a position are preponderant; however, consideration must sometimes be given to the responsibility and complexity of certain duties that do not occupy the majority of the incumbent's time. Overall, the determination of preponderance is a judgment call based on a consistent set of factors applied fairly and equitably across the classification structure.

Level of Work, Not Volume of Work

Position classification is a reflection of the level of work performed by an employee and is generally independent of volume. For example, if one employee processes double the workload of another, yet the percentages of time spent on those tasks and other duties are comparable, a single classification should be appropriate for both positions. In fact, study questionnaires do not ask for, and the consultants do not consider, the relative productivity of employees when evaluating positions. Likewise, classifications are not distinguished by the amount of time spent by incumbents on tasks or the volume of work assigned to positions since problems of excessive workload are properly solved by redistributing work or adding employees, not by creating new classifications.

Classification of the Position, Not the Employee

Position classifications should be consistent regardless of who holds the position. As such, a classification study should classify positions, not the incumbents to the positions. Furthermore, a classification system should not consider the capabilities of individual employees or the efficiency and effectiveness of an incumbent. The classification system should not measure how well an incumbent performs in the position but, rather, it should assess the actual duties assigned to the employee. Thus, classification is not a tool to reward individual achievement, nor should classifications be created simply to reward length of service.

Position versus Classification

Position and classification are two concepts that are often thought of as interchangeable but, in fact, have very different meanings. In a classification plan, a position is assigned a group of duties and responsibilities performed by a single person. Sometimes the word "job" is used in the place of position. In contrast, a classification may contain only one position, or it may consist of several positions. When there are several positions assigned to one classification, it means that the same

job title is appropriate for each position because the scope, level, job duties, and responsibilities of each position assigned to the classification are sufficiently similar (but not necessarily identical); the same core knowledge, skills, abilities, and other requirements are appropriate for all positions; and the same salary range is equitable for all positions within the classification.

IV. Recommended Position Allocation

This section of the report includes a detailed analysis and write up for the position included within this report.

■ Incumbent:	Christine Messinger
■ Current Classification:	Staff Services Analyst II
■ Recommended Classification:	Staff Services Analyst III
<p>Discussion: The primary purpose of the incumbent’s position is to inform county residents about the department’s programs and services by writing and issue news releases, scheduling ad conducting media interviews, fielding other public inquiries and creating content for all of the department’s social media.</p> <p>Ms. Messinger’s PDQ listed her duties as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field incoming media inquiries from local and national media outlets, including television, radio, magazines, newspapers, and internet; and determines how best to handles each inquiry including whom to assign tasks; - 25% • Assigns work to designer and manages layout an production of all print and digital communications, including fliers, brochures, internal and external website content, etc. Reviews all layout before finalizing products. As editor-in-chief of the DHHS newsletters, writes original content, managers and reviews all submitted content and photos and manages workflow and production of internal and external publications; - 25% • Assigns staff to work on media inquiries and internal/external requests, answers staff questions and provides guidance. Reviews all social media posts for appropriate messaging, clarity and content. Assists in problems solving to avoid escalating to Manager; - 20% • Reviews and produces new and updated DHHS website content on various programs and services offered. Provides direction on placement of content on the website, reviews staff work and provides feedback to staff regarding quality and quantity of work; – 15% • Meets with Manager daily to go over group and individual priorities and tasks and liaises between Communication Group staff and Manager. Assigns work to staff and provides input on staff performance for evaluations; – 15% 	

Ms. Messinger stated that when her Manager's duties expanded to include responsibility for Emergency Preparedness about one year ago, she assumed a lead role over the media work group. She works closely with the manager to keep her informed; but makes final decisions unless she feels items are extremely controversial.

Ms. Messinger's supervisor (Heather Muller, Program Manager) indicated that Ms. Messinger's role has become more strategic and more directive following a 2018 restructuring of the media group and the additional of emergency preparedness responsibilities to Ms. Muller, which left her less time to focus on media. Ms. Messinger stepped into the role of lead worker and handles both daily work and project management, along with workflow assignment and coordination, and complex narrative analysis and response.

Conclusion:

Ms. Messinger performs complex and advanced analytical work in addition to having a lead worker role over other analytical staff in the Media work group. Ms. Messinger's duties are appropriate for the Staff Services Analyst III classification.

Recommendation:

Reclass the position to Staff Services Analyst III.

V. Next Steps

Please follow the county policy on reclassification of a position. The position included in this study was analyzed based on the information provided in the PDQ, collected in the incumbent interview, and supplemental information provided by the incumbent's supervisor.

Please review this report and contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Karen Rodriguez at (916) 471-3348 or email krodriguez@cpshr.us.