



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
STATE HUMAN RESOURCES | DIRECTOR'S REVIEW PROGRAM
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May 25, 2017

TO: Connie Goff
Rules and Appeals Section Chief

FROM: Christa Biasi
Director's Review Specialist

SUBJECT: Ragene Christensen v. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-16-079

DIRECTOR'S DETERMINATION

This position review is based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to June 22, 2016, the date that DSHS Human Resources (DSHS HR) received Ragene Christensen's request for a reallocation. As the Director's Review Specialist, I carefully considered all the exhibits. Based on my review and analysis of Ms. Christensen's assigned job duties; I conclude her position is properly allocated to an Administrative Assistant 2 (AA 2).

BACKGROUND

On June 22, 2016, Ms. Christensen submitted a Position Review Request (PRR) (Exhibit B-2) to DSHS HR requesting reallocation from Office Assistant 3 (OA 3) to an AA 3.

By letter dated September 26, 2016, Dorothy Hibbard, Classification and Compensation Specialist, notified Ms. Christensen that her position has been reallocated to an AA 2 (Exhibit B-1).

On October 7, 2016, OFM HR received Ms. Christensen's request for a Director's Review of DSHS HR's allocation determination (Exhibit A-1).

On May 11, 2017 a Director's Review Conference was held via telephone. Present at the conference was Ms. Christensen, Ms. Hibbard, Tim Arkoosh (New Supervisor) and Addley Tole, Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE).

RATIONALE 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. 3722-A2 (1994).

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

This position is located in Region 1 North within the State Operated Living Alternative program within DSHS. During the review period, Ms. Christensen reported to Brendan Akoosh, Developmental Disabilities Administrator (DDA).

POSITION PURPOSE

According to the Position Description Form (PDF, Exhibit B-3) submitted with the PRR (Exhibit B-2), the position purpose is stated as follows:

Under the direction and supervision of a State Operated Living Alternative (SOLA) Developmental Disabilities Administrator, this position provides support for the SOLA Administrative office. To include clerical services, and assistance for the purpose of facilitation of department managers/supervisors and/or relieving the manager and/or staff members of day-to-day clerical responsibilities. This may include making travel arrangements, scheduling meetings, recording meeting minutes, transcribing minutes, coordinating financial documents, employee record keeping.

Duties and Responsibilities PRR (Exhibits B-2)

30% Coordinate Client Financial Accounts:

Primary contact for billings and finances. Receive billings, inspect bills for any discrepancy, make any necessary phone calls regarding billings in dispute, allocate billing portion equitably to clients, order checks from each client's payee, and pay the bills in a timely manner to insure no late charges. Complete each client's eligibility review, to maintain Client eligibility for health care and food stamps. Inspect medical billings to ensure insurance, and give any insurance information as needed. Open and close accounts with utility vendors as needed with client moves, and new house openings. Complete the Residential Allowance Requests needed to ensure clients have the funds to pay for their housing and bills. I maintain records of all billings and equitability records per State Government General Records Retention Schedule.

30% Reconciliation of Client personal financial ledgers

Conduct a monthly financial audit of client finances. Ordering personal check requests the clients have made from each client's personal payee. Reconcile client's daily personal financial transactions. Insuring the checks the clients and client's assigned financial person ordered were spent on the items the client specified. Inspecting each receipt from each client's purchases, and ensuring that the assigned financial person has entered each receipt on the appropriate ledger, and each check and expenditure is accounted for. Ensuring all cash money is accounted for with appropriate receipts, and is placed on the appropriate ledgers. Training assigned financial persons when they are assigned, and retrain as needed and requested by employee's supervisor. Passing on to appropriate Authority any discrepancies found to ensure that no financial exploitation occurs. Make changes on forms, ledgers, and trainings as needed to

comply with WAC and SOPs [Standard Operating Procedures]. Maintain records of all financial expenditures per State Government General Records Retention Schedule.

20% Preparing A19 and Purchase orders, and maintaining fiscal accounts

Preparing A19s and purchase orders for payment to maintain staff NAR, NAC licenses and CPR certification. Maintain staff NAR/license expiration records. Provide new staff with the applications necessary to apply for needed licenses to work for SOLA. Conduct searches to authenticate staffs licenses. Prepare and send Purchase orders and A19s to the appropriate fiscal entity to pay rent subsidies, and one of our home's Respite portion. Evaluate and compare costs of supplies and equipment, and order them as needed. Maintain fiscal records of all orders, payments, and accounts received, per State Government General Records Retention Schedule.

15% Travel, TEMS [Travel and Expense Management System]

Maintain record of employee phone numbers and address. Process employee reimbursements through the SOLA Imprest fund. Maintaining TEMS accounts, submit trip and reimbursement requests, make travel arrangements for Managers, and employees. Provide support to supervisor and program manager, coordinate office operations, answering phones, and maintaining contacts and relationships with needed entities. Maintain Office equipment. Ensuring confidential Faxes/phone calls/and mail remains confidential, and are given to the intended recipient. Serve as a liaison between supervisor and staff. Collecting needed data from staff. Assist with QA as needed creating internal forms, and any new forms needed to ensure updates in WAC and SOPs.

5% Maintaining Client files, and working with the public

Ensuring that the public is greeted in a friendly professional manner, provide information about our program. Receive, separate, and file all paperwork concerning client Dr. appointments, Guardianship papers, legal papers, insurance papers, MARs, diagnosis, community integration, work information, releases of information, and consent forms. Maintain these files per State Government General Records Retention Schedule.

SUMMARY OF MS. CHRISTENSEN'S PERSPECTIVE

Request for a Director's Review (Exhibit A-1)

Ms. Christensen stated in her Request for Director's Review that DSHS HR indicated one of the main allocating factors was that she did not report to a second-line supervisor. Ms. Christensen further explained that her role within the SOLA program in Region 1 is to support staff at all levels, including Sheila Simpson, Region 1 Program Manager.

Ms. Christensen stated that she provides support to Ms. Simpson by preparing A19s, purchase orders and termination letters for her signature. She also arranges all travel, submits all travel reimbursements, acts as liaison between Ms. Simpson and the public and staff and arranges interviews with prospective employees. Ms. Christensen further explained that until Mr. Arkoosh was hired she had always reported to Ms. Simpson who would meet the definition of a second line supervisor.

Review Conference

During the review conference Ms. Christensen stated that she provides administrative support for the Region 1 SOSA program. In her role she assists those living in SOLA homes with paying their rent, paying their bills and other necessities of living such as groceries. She ensures the bills are paid equitably between clients. In addition to these duties she also ensures the clients have money management plans and are living within their respective plans.

In addition to assisting with the clients that live in the SOSA homes, Ms. Christensen also works with onsite staff to verify they have the proper employment credentials. She also works at coordinating client needs with the onsite staff and ensuring onsite staff is aware of the money management plans. Ms. Christensen explained she approves all bills to be paid by clients without higher level approval. She also provides some training to staff related to client billing.

Ms. Christensen also stated during the conference that she prepares the A19s for Ms. Simpson's signature and also drafts termination letters for staff, prepares weekly meeting minutes, travel reimbursements and ensures Ms. Simpson is aware of any new issues. Ms. Christensen also began performing first level reconciliations. However, Ms. Christensen does not have signature authority nor has she been delegated to act in Ms. Simpson's stead.

SUMMARY OF DSHS'S PERSPECTIVE

Determination Letter (Exhibit B-1)

In the determination letter, Ms. Hibbard, Classification and Compensation Specialist, reviewed Ms. Christensen's PRR (Exhibit B-2), the PDF that she submitted with her PRR (Exhibit B-3) and the PDF on file at the time of the request for position review (Exhibit B-4).

In her determination letter (Exhibit B-1), Ms. Hibbard outlined her interview with Ms. Christensen which took place on July 13, 2016. During the interview, Ms. Hibbard indicated Ms. Christensen stated that she reviews bills for accuracy and splits them equitably by client (this included quarterly bills as well), manages client's monthly finances, conducts yearly eligibility reviews, pays clients rent and is responsible for responding to and managing the biennial audit by the State Auditor.

Ms. Hibbard also stated that Ms. Christensen manages the financial aspects of the office work for SOLA. This includes processing A19s, paying credit card bills, ensuring payment for the Respite portion of a SOLA home, preparing and submitting purchase orders for staff certifications/licenses and keeps records of certifications. These duties according to Ms. Hibbard also included ordering office supplies for the office and SOLA homes and, at times financial training for staff. Ms. Hibbard outlines a number of other duties performed by Ms. Christensen in her role within the Region 1 SOLA program which includes general office support duties such as answering phones, processing mail and filing.

Over the course of the desk audit Ms. Hibbard also interviewed Branden Arkoosh who was Ms. Christensen's supervisor during the review period. Mr. Arkoosh agreed with the statements made by Ms. Christensen in her PRR. Mr. Arkoosh further stated the duties performed in SOLA are client driven and Ms. Christensen helps support management. Mr. Arkoosh further stated Ms. Christensen composes letters, maintains client and employee files, takes meeting minutes and performs financial and other office support duties.

Ms. Hibbard compared Ms. Christensen's duties to her current class at that time, the Fiscal Technician Series and the Administrative Assistant (AA) series. Ms. Hibbard stated Ms. Christensen did not meet the class specifications for the Fiscal Technician series because she did not support professional classes in the fiscal analysis occupational category. Ms. Hibbard said the same is true for the Fiscal Specialist as Ms. Christensen's direct manager is not a fiscal or business management manager.

Ms. Hibbard also compared the duties performed by Ms. Christensen to the AA series. Ms. Hibbard stated:

In comparing your duties to the first three levels of the Administrative Assistant series, I find the best fit at the Administrative Assistant 2 level. You perform technical work that can be traced to originate from your supervisor's duties and responsibilities. Your work in providing the financial support for the clients is derived from your supervisor's duties to ensure that clients are cared for and services provided support their needs. You have the authority to pay clients' rent, set up utility accounts for the houses, and the authority to purchase needed supplies and equipment for the homes within the SOLA as well as those needed for the SOLA office. The Administrative Assistant 1 level is not appropriate, because it does not take into account the delegated authority you have. The Administrative Assistant 3 level is not appropriate because it requires that you support a second-line supervisor. Your supervisor is a first-line supervisor.

Ms. Hibbard determined that, based on the various classes and comparison of duties performed by Ms. Christensen the AA 2 job class was the best fit for the overall duties performed by Ms. Christensen.

COMPARISON OF DUTIES TO CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

I carefully reviewed the exhibits submitted by the Parties. Allocating criteria consists of the class specification's class series concept (if one exists), the definition and the distinguishing characteristics.¹ Typical work is not an allocating criterion, but may be used to better understand the definition or distinguishing characteristics.

Based on the analysis and the job specifications reviewed by Ms. Hibbard, I agree the Fiscal Technician and the Fiscal Specialist classes do not fit the intent of the duties performed by Ms. Christensen. I also find the duties performed by Ms. Christensen exceed the intent of an OA 3 and she therefore should not be allocated to that class. In comparing the Washington General Service classifications, I find the best class for the duties performed by Ms. Christensen to be that of the AA series.

¹ In *Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University*, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-08-020 (2008), the Personnel Resources Board (Board) stated that the following standards are the hierarchy of primary considerations in allocating positions: a) Category concept (if one exists); b) Definition or basic function of the class; c) Distinguishing characteristics of a class; and d) Class series concept, definition/basic function, and distinguishing characteristics of other classes in the series in question.

Administrative Assistant 2

Definition

Provide administrative and staff support services for a section or unit with delegated authority to act in supervisor's absence in areas of substance.

Administrative Assistant 3

Definition

Positions perform varied administrative and secretarial support duties or positions are responsible for one or more major program activities under a second line supervisor.

As stated in *Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University*, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-08-020 (2008), the first consideration for allocating into a class series is the Category Concept also known as the Class Series Concept. The AA series does not have a Class Series Concept. I therefore must look to the Definitions of the relevant classes in order to make a determination which class best describes the majority of duties performed by Ms. Christensen.

The Definition for the AA 2 states, "Provide administrative and staff support services for a section or unit with delegated authority to act in supervisor's absence in areas of substance." In this matter Ms. Christensen's duties meet this statement. The main function of her position is to provide support to the SOLA program manager and to Mr. Arkoosh. She schedules meetings, reserves meeting spaces, prepares purchase orders and A19s for Sheila Simpson, her second line supervisor. In addition, Ms. Christensen prepares correspondence for Ms. Simpson's signature, maintains contacts and researches and orders supplies and office equipment.

Conversely, the AA 3 Definition states, "Positions perform varied administrative and secretarial support duties or positions are responsible for one or more major program activities under a second line supervisor." Ms. Christensen does perform a variety of administrative and secretarial duties for the Region 1 SOSA program. However, she is not responsible for one or more major program activities. Rather, Ms. Christensen is responsible for the overall function of the office and provides administrative and secretarial support. She therefore is not responsible for "one or more major program activities."

Since it appears that Ms. Christensen meets the Definition of both the AA 2 and AA 3 I must look to the Distinguishing Characteristics for guidance. The AA 3 is distinguished from the AA 2 by the performance of "higher-level" administrative duties. The higher-level administrative duties are defined within the Distinguishing Characteristics of the AA 3 class as:

Higher-level administrative duties are duties of a substantive nature that are appropriate to be performed by the supervisor, manager, administrator, or professional level employee but have been delegated to the administrative assistant to perform. Areas may include but are not limited to, the following: budget development and/or management, expenditure control, office space management, equipment purchases, budget development and/or management, public relations, personnel administration, records management, and report preparation.

In this matter, Ms. Christensen has not been delegated the higher-level duties that would normally be appropriate for Ms. Simpson and Mr. Arkoosh to perform. This is also outlined in Ms. Christensen's PRR (Exhibit B-2) and her PDFs (Exhibits B-3 and 4). For example, Ms. Simpson's PDF (Exhibit C-8) states she is responsible for planning and leading the SOLA program for Region 1, approves program expenditures (signing A19s prepared by Ms. Christensen) including overtimes, etc., supports clients with diverse intensive needs, develops, implements and monitors comprehensive quality improvement, etc. All of these activities are considered "higher-level administrative duties of a substantive nature."

Furthermore, the Distinguishing Characteristics for the AA 2 state in part:

These positions may be distinguished from lower level classes by addition of the delegation of authority to act for or in the regular place of the superior in substantive areas, and/or supervision of some professional or several clerical subordinates and a formal reporting alignment identifying the position as the principal administrative assistant to the superior who is at the first professional supervisory level or above.

During the review period Ms. Christensen reported to Mr. Arkoosh who is the first professional supervisory level. Ms. Christensen has been delegated duties such as approving client expenditures as they relate to rent, power and other living costs. She works to assist the employees working in SOLA to ensure their certifications are current, she arranges travel for her superiors, prepares travel reimbursements and provides other clerical and secretarial support duties as needed. While these duties are important to the Region 1 SOLA program, they are not considered "higher-level administrative duties of a substantive nature."

Ms. Christensen asserted that even though she reported to Mr. Arkoosh throughout the review period she still performed a myriad of duties for Ms. Simpson. Because of these duties, Ms. Christensen stated she met the Definition and Distinguishing Characteristics for the AA 3 that required she perform her duties under a "second line supervisor" as stated in the Definition or that she performed her duties "under a second-level professional supervisor, manager or administrator in WMS Band II or above or in exempt service, chief administrator..." as stated in the Distinguishing Characteristics. Although this argument is fine on its face, one must look at the statements in their totality and Ms. Christensen must be delegated the higher-level administrative duties as outlined in the AA 3.

As stated previously, in *Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-08-020 (2008)*, an incumbent must meet the definition of a class when allocating based on the majority of duties. Ms. Christensen meets the definition of the AA 2 and a majority of her duties are being performed at this level.

After careful review of the information contained in the file and the review conference, I have determined the primary function of Ms. Christensen's position and the majority of her duties in their entirety fall within the scope and level of responsibility in the stated Definition and Distinguishing Characteristics for the AA 2 class. Therefore, her overall level and scope of assigned duties and responsibilities are consistent with AA 2 level work and therefore the best fit.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(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 PO 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.

c: Ragene Christensen, Appellant
Dorothy Hibbard, Classification and Compensation Specialist
Addley Tole, WFSE

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

Ragene Christensen v DSHS
ALLO-16-079

LIST OF EXHIBITS

A. Ragene Christensen Exhibits

1. Letter of appeal
2. Letter from Sheila Simpson
3. Current ORG chart
4. ORG chart when DDA was created
5. ORG Chart before DDA was created
6. Yakima SOLA ORG chart
7. A19 created for Sheila Simpson, rent supplement
8. CPR instructor license I maintain for Sheila
9. CPR equipment ordered for Sheila
10. phone billing for Sheila
11. Copier charges for Sheila's signature
12. Fire Extinguisher inspection/replacement order for Sheila
13. Example of equipment order for Sheila
14. Example of supply order for Sheila's Signature
15. Imprest fund for Sheila
16. Example of Licensing payment, order, and expiration for Sheila
17. Example of letter done for Sheila
18. Example of RAR done for Sheila
19. Example of TEMS and Travel for Sheila
20. Example of Transitional Return to Work assigned to me
21. Example of Finance Ledgers completed with Sheila

B. DSHS Exhibits

1. Position Review Response letter – sent 9/26/16
2. Position Review Request – received 6/22/16
3. QZ57 Position Description – received 6/22/16
4. QZ57 Position Description – received 9/10/13
5. 7/13/16 notes from phone meeting with Ragene Christensen
6. 7/14/16 notes from phone meeting with Brendan Arkoosh
7. Office Assistant 3 Class Specification
8. Administrative Assistant 1 Class Specification
9. Administrative Assistant 2 Class Specification
10. Administrative Assistant 3 Class Specification
11. Fiscal Technician 1 Class Specification
12. Fiscal Technician 2 Class Specification
13. Fiscal Specialist 1 Class Specification

C. Class Specifications

1. Office Assistant 3
2. Administrative Assistant 1
3. Administrative Assistant 2
4. Administrative Assistant 3
5. Fiscal Technician 1
6. Fiscal Technician 2
7. Fiscal Specialist 1
8. PDF Shelia Simpson