

# **Summary of Discussions with Focus Groups from the Administrative Support, Storekeepers, and Administrative Occupational Group**

## **Overview of Findings**

In the administrative support, storekeepers and administrative occupational groups, the complexity levels of the work assignments and decision making are different depending on the agency's usage of these class series and its organizational structure. In one agency an employee may be classified at the lowest level in a class series, while an employee in same class series in another agency who has the same level of complexity in their work and perform similar will be classified in a higher level of the series or a classification in another series where their position is paid at a higher pay range. In addition, some agency may use all levels of the class series to incorporate their agencies' reporting hierarchy. This may result in an employee being classified at a lower level in a class series due to the reporting structure of the agency, while an employee in same class series in another work unit who has the same level of complexity in their work being classified in a higher level of the series due to their unit's reporting level is higher in the agencies' reporting hierarchy. In these situations, classification is being done based on who the employee reports to versus the difficulty level of the work being done. Finally, there seems to be trends where employees are taking on work that would be seen as being performed at a higher level classification. Inadvertently, then, it appears that some agencies create career ladders or structures that don't properly reflect the work that is being performed for the intended classification.

In addition, both the administrative support and administrative occupational groups have multiple disciplines and or different operational focus. Due to the different disciplines, employees can not easily be promoted to other operational areas inside the agency or outside the agency. The employees indicated it is better to promote employees within the same discipline area who have similar skill sets versus an individual who doesn't have these needed skills for the discipline. Example: In filling an Administrative Support Specialist position where employees needs bookkeeping experience, it is better to hire an individual with bookkeeping experience, even if it means hiring outside state service than hiring from within, versus promoting an Administrative Support Assistant who has no bookkeeping experience.

Finally, some employees indicated that there is an increasing tendency for people to leave due to lack of career opportunity or due to their skills and capabilities not being valued in their agency. Others mentioned they stay because they like the work that they are doing, and higher level classifications or increased compensation levels are not a priority for them over the enjoyment and satisfaction from the work they are doing and the people they work with.

## **Minimum Requirements**

The majority of the participants agreed that the current minimum requirements were sufficient. Some of the reoccurring comments from the participants are as follows:

### **Administrative Support –**

- Working experience in the discipline area of the position would be helpful.

- At the assistant levels most of the work is learned on the job.
- Experience in the organizational area is important at the specialist levels. Many employees said these positions should be filled internally due to the organizational knowledge needed to apply procedures, regulations and policies.

#### **Storekeeper –**

- Most of the work is learned on the job.
- Knowledge of the agencies' purchasing needs and organizational knowledge are a must at the Storekeeper III level.

#### **Administrative –**

- Organizational knowledge is important.
- Work experience in the discipline area is needed.

### **Full Performance**

#### **Amount of Time to Reach Full Performance**

Participants indicated the time it takes to reach full performance varies among positions. Employees generally agree the minimum amount of time was three months to a maximum of a year. Some participants indicated that this length of time can be dependent on cyclical or seasonal issues, depending on the particular discipline. They also indicated higher level positions in their class series will take a new employee from outside the work unit between one and three years to be capable of full performance due to need to understand agency processes, rules and procedures, learning to whom to contact, etc.

#### **Type of Supervision Received**

**Administrative Support and Storekeepers:** Participants generally agreed that they receive limited supervision and their work usually doesn't require the use of independent judgment or discretion that is outside the agency's standard operating procedures and guidelines. In most administrative support specialist, senior administrative support and storekeeper III positions, employees are given more independent judgment to act on their own discretion requiring the use of technical knowledge to resolve complex problems. Supervision exists to provide general direction, review judgments made by employees, and clarify standards, policies and procedures that are normally seen as the day-to-day work activities of a supervisor. Additional, specific instructions are given for new, difficult, or unusual assignments.

**Administrative:** Participants generally agreed that they receive limited supervision and the work requires employees to use independent judgment or act on their own discretion, requiring the use of initiative and creativity to resolve problems or interpret policy to develop solutions. As employees become more experienced, direction becomes more general and employees have greater and greater independence and accountability. Major work assignments are examined for soundness or technical judgment and for general effectiveness and adequacy. Supervision exists to provide administrative direction in the planning, organizing and implementation of the work activities, as well as to oversee the budget responsibilities, respond to legislative and media

inquiries and complaints, and to see to human resource issues. In general, the supervisors and managers handle the more potentially controversial matters, or far-reaching implications, and other administrative/managerial types of problems.

### **Supervisory/Management Approval**

Given the great deal of independence afforded with respect to making decisions regarding the scope of their work, the only issues that the participants indicated were necessary to obtain approval from their supervisors for were the following; legal determinations; personnel matters such as hiring and disciplinary issues; procedural changes; and anything that is contrary to mission or path of the agency. In addition, the Storekeeper IIIs, who had some buying authority, can purchase major supplies not to exceed over \$5,000, anything over this amount they would need to obtain higher authorization.)

**What Criteria Should Compensation be Based?** There seemed to be a consensus that performance and other personal characteristics that the employee brings to the job (such as initiative, ability to work well with others, etc.) should be one of, if not the primary criteria for the basis of compensation. There was also consensus that longevity needs part of the determination on how one is compensated. The participants indicated that this would be especially important criteria after an employee reaches full performance. Longevity coincides with an employee's continued career growth and additional responsibilities. Pay for an employees' certification or completion of specific training, where such accomplishments enhance the employee's ability to perform the duties of their position or allow the employee to perform additional duties associated with their position, was also agreed to be something that would be a benefit to positions in their classifications.

In addition, the participants indicated that they were all in favor of a system that would allow an employee to progress in pay as they progressed in their career.

# Occupational Survey Summary

## SUMMARY BY ROLES

	<b>Administrative Support</b>	<b>Storekeeper</b>	<b>Administrative</b>
<u>Participation Rate:</u>	56% of the 3628 Total positions.	38% of the 133 Total Positions	74% of the 705 Total Positions
<u>Time Worked in Occupation:</u>	Approximately 82% of the employees in this field have over 1 year or more work experience; 50% have five or more years; and 27% have ten or more years.	Approximately 72% of the employees over 3 years or more work experience; 52% have ten or more years.	Approximately 98% of the employees in this field have over 1 year or more work experience; 76.7% have five or more years; and 32% have ten or more years
<u>Education, Training and Experience:</u>	99% indicated at entry you must have acquired a high school diploma. 33% of the participants indicated need more than a high school education.	98% indicated at entry you must have acquired a high school diploma. 25% of the these participants indicated you need more than a high school	Most positions at entry will require a Some college course a and additional two years or more on-the-job training to become fully proficient.
<u>Skills:</u> <b>(Extremely or Very Important)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performing Administrative Activities</li> <li>2. Working with Computers</li> <li>3. Getting Information</li> <li>4. Documenting/Recording Information</li> <li>5. Communicate with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates</li> <li>6. Communicate with People Outside the Organization</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Processing Information</li> <li>2. Performing Administrative Activities</li> <li>3. Obtaining Information</li> <li>4. Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work</li> <li>5. Performing General Physical Activities</li> <li>6. Documenting/Recording Information</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communicating with Supervisors, Peers, or Subordinates</li> <li>2. Getting Information</li> <li>3. Communicate with People Outside the Organization</li> <li>4. Processing Information</li> <li>5. Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work</li> </ol>
<u>Work Context:</u> (Every Day)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact with Others</li> <li>2. Face to face Discussions</li> <li>3. Determine goals for your job</li> <li>4. Interaction with external customer/public</li> <li>5. Decisions affect other people</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact with Others</li> <li>2. Face to face Discussions</li> <li>3. Working with a team</li> <li>4. Decisions affect other people</li> <li>5. Making decisions without supervision</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact with Others</li> <li>2. Face to face discussions</li> <li>3. Decisions affect other people</li> <li>4. Determine Priorities of your job</li> </ol>

			5. Making decisions without supervision
<u>Level of Complexity:</u> (Level 4 or Higher)	75% - Level 3 –You gather and analyze information to determine the best course of action, based on general guidelines or rules of operations. You use your judgment to choose alternatives, many of which may be correct, but one is better than another depending on the situations	66% - Level 3 –You gather and analyze information to determine the best course of action, based on general guidelines or rules of operations. You use your judgment to choose alternatives, many of which may be correct, but one is better than another depending on the situations	30% - Level 4 -You evaluate the relevance and importance of theories, concepts, and principles. You develop different approaches or tactical plans to fit specific circumstances. Guidelines may, exist, but are flexible and open to considerable interpretation. Independent judgment, personal direction, and resourcefulness are needed to interpret and apply guidelines. 32.2% - Level 5 – Work involves the development of new guidelines and techniques, establishing criteria or developing new information. Guidelines may not exist for all situations. Considerable independent judgment, personal discretion, and resourcefulness are needed to interpret circumstances, and to make decisions in major areas where there may be uncertainty in approach, methodology, and interpretation.

<p><u>Supervision Received/Independence:</u> (Level 4 or Higher)</p>	<p>54% - Level 4 - Receive limited supervision and the work requires employees to use independent judgment or act on their own discretion. Requires the use of initiative and creativity to resolve problems or interpret policy to develop solutions. A manager may be available to provide general direction or advice, but employees usually act independently based on their own judgment.</p>	<p>45% - Level 4 - Receive limited supervision and the work requires employees to use independent judgment or act on their own discretion. Requires the use of initiative and creativity to resolve problems or interpret policy to develop solutions. A manager may be available to provide general direction or advice, but employees usually act independently based on their own judgment</p>	<p>53% - Level 4 - Receive limited supervision and the work requires employees to use independent judgment or act on their own discretion. Requires the use of initiative and creativity to resolve problems or interpret policy to develop solutions. A manager may be available to provide general direction or advice, but employees usually act independently based on their own judgment</p>
<p><u>Supervision Given:</u></p>	<p>67% - Majority of positions have no supervisory responsibilities</p>	<p>34.1% - Supervise others and where one's time is spent in supervisory tasks</p>	<p>34.7% Managing others, through subordinate supervisor, including selection, recommending terminations, performance appraisal and professional development.</p>
<p><u>Knowledge within the Field or Specialty:</u></p>	<p>57.4% - Majority of positions require at a minimum an in-depth knowledge of concepts, practices and procedures with ability to use in varied situations.</p>	<p>60% - Majority of positions require at a minimum an in-depth knowledge of concepts, practices and procedures with ability to use in varied situations.</p>	<p>58.1% Majority of positions require at a minimum an in-depth knowledge of concepts, practices and procedures with ability to use in varied situations; and 27.2% of the positions require broad and comprehensive knowledge of theories, concepts and practices with ability to use in complex, difficult and/or unprecedented situations.</p>

<p><u>Decision Making:</u></p>	<p>48.6% - Decisions may affect a work unit or area within a department/division. May contribute to business and operational decisions that affect the department/division.</p>	<p>54.5% - Decisions may affect a work unit or area within a department/division. May contribute to business and operational decisions that affect the department/division.</p>	<p>30.9% - Decisions may affect a work unit or area within a department/division. May contribute to business and operational decisions that affect the department/division 52.2% - Decisions have major implications on the management and operations of an area within a department/division. Job may contribute to important strategy, operational and business decisions that affect the department/division</p>
<p><u>Problem Solving:</u></p>	<p>1. 57.7% - Problems are varied, requiring analysis or interpretation of the situation. Problems are solved using knowledge and skills, general precedents and practices.</p>	<p>2. 63.6% - Problems are varied, requiring analysis or interpretation of the situation. Problems are solved using knowledge and skills, general precedents and practices.</p>	<p>1. 56.1% - Problems are varied, requiring analysis or interpretation of the situation. Problems are solved using knowledge and skills, general precedents and practices. 2. 41% - Problems are highly varied, complex and often non-recurring, requiring novel and creative approaches to resolution. New concepts and approaches may have to be developed.</p>

<u>Fiscal Responsibility:</u>	Only 20% of the positions require assisting in planning, monitoring and/or managing budget in functional area of a program.	40.9% of the positions require assisting in planning, monitoring and/or managing budget in functional area of a program.	Only 45% of the positions require assisting in planning, monitoring and/or managing budget in functional area of a program.
<u>Licenses/Certifications:</u>	None	None	Only 13.7 % of position requires a licenses or certification.