

BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD  
STATE OF WASHINGTON

DONNA BYRNES,

Appellant,

vs.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS,

Respondent.

CASE NO. R-ALLO-06-005

ORDER OF THE BOARD  
FOLLOWING HEARING ON  
EXCEPTIONS TO THE  
DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

**Hearing on Exceptions.** This appeal came on for hearing before the Personnel Resources Board, MARSHA TADANO LONG, Chair, and LARRY GOODMAN, Vice Chair, on Appellant's exceptions to the director's determination dated February 17, 2006. The hearing was held at the office of the Personnel Resources Board in Olympia, Washington, on October 17, 2006.

**Telephonic Appearances.** Appellant Donna Byrnes was present and was represented by Joe Kuhn, Business Representative for Teamsters Local 117. Department of Corrections (DOC) was represented by Mary Ann Gillespie and Georgia Knowlen, Human Resource Consultants.

**Background.** Appellant's position was allocated to the class of Corrections Specialist. She submitted a Classification Questionnaire (CQ), which she signed on November 29, 2004, requesting reallocation to the Community Corrections Specialist classification.

By letter dated August 8, 2005, Respondent denied Appellant's request. On August 30, 2005, Appellant appealed DOC's decision to the director of the Department of Personnel (DOP). On November 10, 2005, Paul Peterson, the director's designee, conducted a review of Appellant's request. By letter dated February 17, 2006, Mr. Peterson determined that Appellant's position was properly allocated to the Corrections Specialist classification.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As a result of the July 1, 2005, adoption of the new occupational category for Corrections Specialists, Appellant's position was placed in the Corrections Specialist 3 classification.

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2 On March 2, 2006, Appellant filed exceptions to the director's determination. Appellant's  
3 exceptions are the subject of this proceeding.  
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5 Appellant's position is assigned to Airway Heights Corrections Center (AHCC). She is the Facility  
6 Risk Management Specialist for the AHCC. Her supervisor is Mike Klemke, Correctional Program  
7 Manager at AHCC. Appellant is responsible for managing the transition of offenders from  
8 confinement at the facility to community supervision. When an offender is released, Appellant  
9 works as part of the transition team for 60 days to assure that the offender transitions successfully.  
10 After 60 days, she no longer has responsibility for the offender in the community. After the offender  
11 has completed the transition period, the offender is placed under the supervision of a Community  
12 Corrections Officer. The transition team also includes a Community Corrections Specialist who is  
13 responsible for the offender during the 60 day period of transition from the facility to supervision by  
14 the Community Corrections Officer.  
15

16 Community Corrections Specialists and Facility Risk Management Specialists have historically  
17 performed similar work. The focus of the Community Corrections Specialists has been oversight of  
18 offenders after their release from confinement. Since passage of the Offender Accountability Act,  
19 the focus of the Facility Risk Management Specialists has been oversight of offenders prior to their  
20 release. Both positions share oversight of the offenders during the 60 day transition period.  
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22 **Summary of Appellant's Arguments.** Appellant argues that she performs the same duties as her  
23 peer who works at the Washington State Penitentiary and is allocated to the Community Corrections  
24 Specialist classification. Appellant asserts that allocation decisions should not be based on reporting  
25 relationships but on the duties and responsibilities performed by the position. Appellant contends  
26 that she performs the duties of a Community Corrections Specialist because she represents the  
27 agency on interdisciplinary committees and projects within the community, she builds the bridge  
28 between community corrections and institution staff, she acts as the backup to the institution  
29

1 hearings officer and conducts approximately four offender hearings per month, and she establishes  
2 community resources, conducts training and performs offender transports to the community.  
3 Appellant argues that the Corrections Specialist classification does not address her duties and  
4 responsibilities as the Facility Risk Management Specialist and that her position is better described  
5 by the Community Corrections Specialist classification.

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7 **Summary of Respondent's Arguments.** Respondent acknowledges that there is a lot of overlap  
8 between the duties of a Facility Risk Management Specialist and a Community Corrections  
9 Specialist. Respondent further acknowledges that neither the Corrections Specialist nor the  
10 Community Corrections Specialist fully encompasses the work performed by the Facility Risk  
11 Management Specialists. Respondent asserts that while Appellant's peer remains physically located  
12 at the Washington State Penitentiary, after her position was reallocated to the Community  
13 Corrections Specialist classification, her reporting relationship was changed and she now reports to  
14 the Community Corrections Supervisor not to someone in the institution. In addition, the focus of  
15 her position is the transition of offenders during their 60-day transition period to supervision by a  
16 Community Corrections Officer. Respondent contends that DOC has consistently allocated  
17 positions that have oversight of offenders after their release from a facility to the Community  
18 Corrections Specialist classes and have allocated the Facility Risk Management Specialists who  
19 have oversight of offenders prior to their release from a facility to the Corrections Specialist classes.  
20 Respondent argues that on a best fit basis and consistent with DOC's use of the classes in question,  
21 Appellant position is properly allocated to the Corrections Specialist 3 classification.

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23 **Primary Issue.** Whether the director's determination that Appellant's position is properly allocated  
24 to the Corrections Specialist classification should be affirmed.

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26 **Relevant Classifications.** Corrections Specialist 3, class code 350C (formerly 39150); and  
27 Community Corrections Specialist, class code 39760.

1 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification  
2 best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a  
3 measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which  
4 that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a  
5 particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a  
6 determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the  
7 position. See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

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9 The thrust of Appellant's argument centers on a comparison of the duties she performs to those  
10 performed by Bonnie Klahn, a Community Corrections Specialist working out of the  
11 Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla. While a comparison of one position to another  
12 similar position may be useful in gaining a better understanding of the duties performed by and  
13 the level of responsibility assigned to an incumbent, allocation of a position must be based on the  
14 overall duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual position compared to the existing  
15 classifications. The allocation or misallocation of a similar position is not a determining factor  
16 in the appropriate allocation of a position. Flahaut v. Dept's of Personnel and Labor and  
17 Industries, PAB No. ALLO 96-0009 (1996).

18  
19 The definition for the Community Corrections Specialist (CCS) provides that positions allocated  
20 to this class are: "[r]esponsible for two or more of the following community service activities within  
21 the Northwest, Southwest or Eastern Area: 1) serves as the Department of Corrections  
22 representative to one or more Community Corrections Boards, 2) plans and coordinates programs  
23 such as Class V, voluntary services, or volunteer coordination on a multi-office basis, 3) serves on  
24 interdivisional projects, 4) chairs disciplinary hearings, 5) hears final appeals of offender infractions  
25 and grievances, 6) serves as a member of the statewide human resource or management information  
26 system committees.

1 The distinguishing characteristics for CCS state: “[t]his class is distinguished from the  
2 Community Corrections Officer 3 class by the absence of a caseload and the responsibility for  
3 managing programs for an Area or a large segment of an Area.” Community Corrections  
4 Officers work in community corrections and manage a caseload of offenders who have been  
5 released from correctional facilities and placed in the community. Typically, Community  
6 Correction Specialists also work in community corrections but they do not oversee a caseload of  
7 offenders after the offenders have successfully transitioned into the community.

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9 The category concept for the Corrections Specialist series states: “[w]ithin the Department of  
10 Corrections, is responsible for various correctional programs as assigned, such as community  
11 service activities, institutional training, classification and treatment programs, offender  
12 grievances, institutional hearings, roster management for major institutions, contracted chemical  
13 dependency treatment services, deaf inmate program services, auditing of correctional programs,  
14 HQ intelligence and investigations, canine or; administers an investigative/intelligence operation  
15 at a major institution. Some positions may supervise lower level staff.”

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17 The distinguishing characteristics for the Corrections Specialist 3 classification state: “[t]his is  
18 the senior, specialist, or leadworker level of the series. Within the Department of Corrections,  
19 develops, coordinates, implements and/or evaluates various correctional program(s) as assigned.  
20 Prepares comprehensive reports and makes recommendations for management, identifies and  
21 projects trends, and monitors program expenditures for adherence to budgeted allocations.  
22 Positions in this class perform professional level duties covering one or more of the following  
23 correctional program areas: institutional training, CORE, COACH, offender grievances,  
24 institutional hearings (e.g., disciplinary, intensive management, administrative segregation),  
25 roster management for major institutions; administers an investigative/intelligence operation at a  
26 major institution, which may include other regional and community involvement.”

Typically, Correction Specialists work in correctional facilities and they do not continue to manage a caseload after offenders have been released from the facility. The focus of Facility Risk Management Specialist positions allocated to the Corrections Specialist category is performing liaison work between correctional facilities, community corrections offices and the community. Appellant's position fits the category concept for the Corrections Specialist classes. She coordinates the all the various components of the community transition program for individual offenders prior to their release from the facility and participates as part of the transition team during the first 60 days after the offender's release. In addition, she conducts offender hearings within the institution. Appellant is a specialist in offender risk management which is encompassed at the Corrections Specialist 3 level of the series.

Of the available classifications, Appellant's position is best described by the Corrections Specialist 3 classification. Her position is properly allocated.

### **ORDER**

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Donna Byrnes is denied and the Director's determination dated February 17, 2006, is affirmed and adopted.

DATED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2006.

WASHINGTON PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

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MARSHA TADANO LONG, Chair

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LARRY GOODMAN, Vice Chair