

BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD  
STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH )  
SERVICES, )  
Appellant, )  
vs. )  
DAWN CHILLERS, )  
Respondent. )

CASE NO. R-ALLO-07-003

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

**Hearing on Exceptions.** Pursuant to WAC 357-52-100, this appeal was heard by the Personnel Resources Board, MARSHA TADANO LONG, Member, on Appellant's exceptions to the Director's determination dated March 9, 2007. The hearing was held at the office of the Personnel Resources Board in Olympia, Washington, on June 19, 2007. LARRY GOODMAN, Chair, reviewed the record, including the file, exhibits, and the entire recorded proceedings, and participated in the decision in this matter.

**Appearances.** Appellant Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) was represented by Pam Pelton, Classification Manager. Respondent Dawn Chillers was presented and represented herself.

**Background.** Prior to July 2005, Ms. Chillers' was allocated to the Human Resources Consultant (HRC) 2 classification as a result of a Memo of Understanding between the Region 5 Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Human Resources Division. In this position, Ms. Chillers performed work for Region 5, but she reported to the Human Resources Division. In July 2005, the Memo of Understanding ended. As a result, Ms. Chillers' reporting relationship changed. She continued to perform work for DCFS in Region 5, but reported to the Region 5 Business Manager. Her position was reallocated downward to a Human Resources Consultant 1.

1 On September 21, 2005, Ms. Chillers submitted an updated Position Description Form (PDF) for  
2 reallocation of her position back to HRC 2. DSHS conducted a desk audit of Ms. Chillers'  
3 position and by letter dated February 27, 2006, David Cahill, Classification and Recruitment  
4 Manager, notified Ms. Chillers that her position was properly allocated to the HRC 1  
5 classification.

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7 On March 17, 2006, Ms. Chillers filed a request for a Department of Personnel (DOP) Director's  
8 review of Mr. Cahill's decision. Ms. Chillers asked that her position be reallocated to the HRC 2  
9 classification.

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11 On November 2, 2006, Teresa Parsons, Director's Review Supervisor, conducted a review of  
12 Ms. Chillers' position. By letter dated March 9, 2007, Ms. Parsons determined that Ms. Chillers'  
13 position should be reallocated to the HRC 2 classification.

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15 On March 29, 2007, DSHS filed exceptions to Ms. Parsons' determination. DSHS's exceptions are  
16 the subject of this proceeding.

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18 Ms. Chillers' position is the primary human resource contact within DCFS Region 5. She consults  
19 with and advises DCFS managers and supervisors in areas such as letters of reprimand, letters of  
20 expectations, reasonable accommodation, and the Family Medical Leave Act. She keeps her  
21 supervisor and the Regional Administrator informed about personnel issues. She consults with the  
22 Human Resource Division staff on complex issues. However, she independently reviews and makes  
23 recommendations to Region 2 management on letters of reprimand, counseling memos, corrective  
24 action plans, performance expectation plans, Performance Development Plans (PDP), and Position  
25 Description Forms (PDF). In addition, she provides training to Region 2 staff in areas such as how to  
26 provide constructive feedback to employees and the Family Medical Leave Act.

1 **Summary of DSHS's Arguments.** DSHS argues the HRC class series is intended to be interpreted  
2 by each agency and applied to address each agency's unique size and organizational structure.  
3 DSHS contends that each agency is required to determine the meaning of the words and terms used  
4 in the HRC classifications and how to apply those terms as allocating criteria within their agency.  
5 DSHS argues that, within DSHS, in order to be allocated to the HRC 2 level, a position must work  
6 for the Human Resource Division. Ms. Chillers' position is not assigned to the Human Resource  
7 Division. As a result, DSHS contends that Ms. Chillers performs routine, professional duties. DSHS  
8 asserts that Ms. Chillers provides consultation on day-to-day issues including making  
9 recommendations on letters of reprimand, counseling memos, and corrective action plans that follow  
10 a prescribed template, but she does not have signature or decision-making authority for draft  
11 compositions. Rather, the draft compositions are approved by Human Resource Division staff.  
12 DSHS contends Ms. Chillers does not perform the higher-level human resource responsibilities  
13 typically performed by HRC 2 positions and that her level of authority and scope of work fits within  
14 the HRC 1 classification.

15  
16 **Summary of Ms. Chillers' Arguments.** Ms. Chillers agrees with DOP's determination that her  
17 position should be reallocated to the HRC 2 classification. While Ms. Chillers acknowledges that she  
18 follows prescribed templates for the format of some documents, she asserts that the templates do not  
19 determine what the content of the document will be. Ms. Chillers contends that she provides  
20 professional consultation and advice to managers and supervisors on the content of the documents  
21 which is not routine in nature and should be considered HRC 2 level work. Ms. Chillers further  
22 contends that none of the Human Resource Division staff has signature authority for letters of  
23 reprimand, counseling memos, and corrective action plans because these documents are signed by  
24 appointing authorities and not by human resource staff.

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26 **Primary Issue.** Whether the director's determination that Appellant's position should be  
27 reallocated to the Human Resource Consultant 2 classification should be affirmed.  
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29

1 **Relevant Classifications.** Human Resource Consultant 1, class code 19102; and Human Resource  
2 Consultant 2, class code 19103.

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4 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification  
5 best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a  
6 measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which  
7 that work is performed. Also, a position review is not a comparison of work performed by  
8 employees in similar positions. A position review is a comparison of the duties and  
9 responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specification. This review  
10 results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of  
11 the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

12  
13 Because a current and accurate description of a position's duties and responsibilities is  
14 documented in an approved [position description form], the [position description form] becomes  
15 the basis for allocation of a position. An allocation determination must be based on the overall  
16 duties and responsibilities as documented in the [position description form]. Lawrence v. Dept of  
17 Social and Health Services, PAB No. ALLO-99-0027 (2000).

18  
19 The Human Resource Consultant classes share a common class series concept. The parties agree  
20 that Ms. Chillers' position fits within the class series concept. The question is whether the duties  
21 and responsibilities of her position best fit the HRC 1 or 2 level.

22  
23 The Definition for Human Resource Consultant 1 states, "[p]erforms routine professional human  
24 resource duties."

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26 The Definition for Human Resource Consultant 2 states, "[c]onsults with and provides assistance  
27 to managers and employees regarding human resource issues."

1 Based on the position description form signed and approved by both Ms. Chillers' supervisor  
2 and department head, Ms. Chillers' duties and responsibilities go beyond routine human resource  
3 duties. Ms. Chillers regularly consults with managers and supervisors and provides advice and  
4 assistance in a number of distinct areas of human resources. Her position fits the definition of the  
5 HRC 2.

6  
7 The distinguishing characteristics for Human Resource Consultant 1 state, in relevant part:

8 . . . Works under the regular guidance of a higher level human resource  
9 professional or manager. Supervisor typically reviews work in progress as well as  
10 outcomes, provides advice or direction regarding work procedures, and assists  
11 with work prioritization. May have a specific assignment that is mostly routine  
and of limited scope or may provide assistance on a portion of a project. . . .

12  
13 The distinguishing characteristics for Human Resource Consultant 2 state, in relevant part:

14 . . . Works under general guidance of a higher level human resource professional  
15 or manager. Supervisor typically reviews outcomes and provides advice or  
16 direction as needed. Work performed is complex rather than routine, but impact  
of decisions is generally limited. Assignments normally involve making decisions  
and judgments within established precedents. . . .

17  
18 Ms. Chillers receives guidance from higher level human resource staff for complex issues but due  
19 the nature of her reporting structure, the majority of her work is performed without guidance from  
20 other human resource staff. As noted in her position description form, Ms. Chillers receives little  
21 supervision from her supervisor and she is responsible for devising her own work methods.

22  
23 The Glossary of Terms found in the Department of Personnel's Classification and Pay  
24 Administrative Guide defines complex as:

25 Requires the use of a wide variety of rules, processes, materials, or equipment that  
26 require an application of specialized knowledge or skills. Decisions must be made  
27 independently regarding which rules, processes, materials or equipment to use in  
order to effectively accomplish work assignments.

1 While most of Ms. Chillers work in advising managers and supervisors is complex in nature, her  
2 impact is limited only due to the fact that the appointing authority retains final decision-making and  
3 signature authority over personnel issues. When providing advice and recommendations to managers  
4 and supervisors, Ms. Chillers makes recommendations, decisions, and judgments within  
5 established precedents and the confines of the rules, regulations, DSHS policies and procedures,  
6 and collective bargaining agreements. Ms. Chiller's level and scope of responsibility best fits the  
7 Human Resource Consultant 2 classification.

8  
9 In determining the proper allocation of a position, we consider, in part, the duties and responsibilities  
10 described in the approved position description form and compare them to the available  
11 classification specifications. In this case, neither the class series concept, the classification  
12 definitions, nor the classification distinguishing characteristics found in the Human Resource  
13 Consultant series address a position's reporting relationship as an allocating criterion. Therefore, our  
14 decision does not rely on who Ms. Chillers reports to but rather on the level and scope of duties and  
15 responsibilities she performs.

16  
17 Ms. Chillers' position should be reallocated to the Human Resource Consultant 2 classification.

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19 **ORDER**

20 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by the Department  
21 of Social and Health Services is denied and the Director's determination dated March 9, 2007, is  
22 affirmed and adopted.

23  
24 DATED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007.

25 WASHINGTON PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

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27 \_\_\_\_\_  
28 LARRY GOODMAN, Chair  
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MARSHA TADANO LONG, Member