

Appellant works in the Program and Policy Office, a sub-division of the Program and Practice Improvement Division. The Program and Practice Improvement Division is a major sub-division of the Children's Administration Division of DSHS. The Program and Policy Office is charged with policy development and statewide coordination of policy implementation, program development and improvement for the Children's Administration within DSHS.

Appellant's supervisor is the Office Chief for Program and Policy. The Office Chief reports to the Director of the Program and Policies Improvement Division. The Director of the Division reports to the Assistant Secretary for Children's Administration, who reports to the Secretary of DSHS. Appellant's work consists of administrative support duties and some secretarial duties for the Office Chief. Her work requires a high level of coordination and understanding of her supervisor's work. Appellant's duties include:

- Receiving, assessing, assigning and monitoring staff assignments and special projects; routing information to staff; collecting and compiling data; drafting responses, resolving issues, and completing assignments as delegated by her supervisor
- Serving as a liaison between her supervisor and other staff and taking action within your assigned scope of responsibility
- Handling confidential personnel matters by researching, coordinating and tracking actions for her supervisor
- Exercising delegated signature authority for correspondence on behalf of her supervisor
- Representing her supervisor at meetings and appointments where she speaks on behalf of the office and her supervisor.

Summary of Appellant's Arguments. Appellant argues that the director's designee erred by not considering the full scope of her duties and the organizational structure of DSHS. Appellant asserts that:

- the Program and Policy Office is a major sub-division

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- The Chief of Program and Policy is a member of the leadership team, which consists of the Assistant Secretary, five division directors, one deputy director and six regional administrators
- The leadership team provides strategic planning and goal setting for the organization

The Chief also provides legislative direction and carries out legislative mandates through policy. Appellant further asserts that she provides direct support to the Chief and backfills for the Administrative Assistant 5 to the Assistant Secretary for Children's Administrations. She contends that she has the responsibility to coordinate legislative policy input as it relates to Children's within the silo of that Division. She argues that she assigns, directs, and/or coordinates special projects on behalf of her supervisor with a wide range of DSHS staff as well as outside stakeholders, legislative staff and the public. Appellant also asserts that she develops and implements new work methods, procedures and processes for the good of the Program and Policy Office. Appellant contends that the duties and responsibilities of her position exceed the level of work assigned to the AA3 classification.

Summary of Respondent's Arguments. Respondent recognizes that Appellant applies professionalism, initiative and proficient skills in performing her duties in the operations of the Program and Policy Office. Respondent argues that while Appellant provides administrative support for the various activities of the Program and Policy Office, she is not a decision-maker. Respondent further argues that Appellant's supervisor is not the head of a major sub-division within Children's Administration. Rather, DSHS argues that the Office Chief reports to the Director of the Program and Practice Improvement Division for Children's Administration. DSHS further argues that the duties assigned to Appellant's position do not meet the criteria found in the distinguishing characteristics of the AA4 class. Respondent recognizes that some of Appellant's duties may cross over to the AA4 level, but contends that the scope and impact of her work and the majority of her duties and responsibilities best fit the AA3 classification.

Primary Issue. Whether the director's determination that Appellant's position is properly allocated to the Administrative Assistant 3 classification should be affirmed.

1 **Relevant Classifications.** Administrative Assistant 3, class code 105G; Administrative Assistant 4,
2 class code 105H.

3 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best
4 describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a
5 measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that
6 work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a
7 particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a
8 determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position.
9 See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).
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11 Most positions within the civil service system occasionally perform duties that appear in more
12 than one classification. However, when determining the appropriate classification for a specific
13 position, the duties and responsibilities of that position must be considered in their entirety and
14 the position must be allocated to the classification that provides the best-fit overall for the
15 majority of the position's duties and responsibilities. Dudley v. Dept. of Labor and Industries,
16 PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-007 (2007).
17

18 Some of Appellant's duties appear to meet the level of work described in the typical work statements
19 of the AA4 classification. However, following standards are the hierarchy of primary considerations
20 in allocating positions:

- 21 a) Category concept (if one exists).
- 22 b) Definition or basic function of the class.
- 23 c) Distinguishing characteristics of a class.
- 24 d) Class series concept, definition/basic function, and distinguishing characteristics of other
25 classes in the series in question.

26 The Administrative Assistant class series does not include a category concept. Therefore we must
27 first look at the definition for the classes and distinguishing characteristics. The definition for the
28 AA4 classification provides:
29

Positions serve as the assistant on administrative matters to the head of a state agency, the head of a major sub-division or major operating location of an agency, or head of a major organizational unit such as a school, college, or major academic/administrative department.

The AA4 distinguishing characteristics indicate, in relevant part:

Positions perform higher-level administrative 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... For general government positions, secretarial or clerical duties are incidental to the administrative functions performed.

For those positions in a major organizational unit such as a school, college, or major academic/administrative department, the "unit" will typically have more than 75 full-time equivalent professional and/or classified staff; . . . OR positions serve as both sole administrative support and the executive secretary reporting to the organizational head. These positions are assigned to major units, with institution-wide responsibilities that have no assistant directors, deans or managers who would share the administrative duties of the position.

Appellant's position does not fit within the definition of the AA4 classification. She serves as the assistant on administrative matters for the Chief of the Program and Policy Office. However, the actual scope of her work does not rise to the level of higher-level administrative duties of a substantive nature. Appellant's work requires a high level of coordination and understanding of her supervisor's work, but her duties are supportive in nature and are not at the level envisioned at the AA4 level. Because Appellant's position does not meet the definition for the AA4 classification, the threshold for considering the distinguishing characteristics of the AA4 class has not been met.

The definition of the AA3 classification provides:

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

The distinguishing characteristics of the AA3 classification state:

Positions are delegated higher-level administrative support duties or positions are delegated one or more major program activities that would be performed under a second-level professional supervisor, manager or administrator in WMS Band II or

1 above or in exempt service, chief administrator, or head of a major organizational
2 unit such as a school, college, or major academic or administrative department.
3 Only one position will be allocated to an individual second-line supervisor for
4 those positions performing one or more major program activities.

5 A major program activity is defined as a function that is a major element of the
6 supervisor's job. The duty must stand alone and would create significant adverse
7 consequences if poorly performed. However, full delegation cannot occur if the
8 supervisor's position requires specialized licensure such as attorneys, medical
9 doctors, and engineers.

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

17 Incumbents in these positions represent the supervisor's and/or unit's goals and
18 interests and provide interpretation or explanation of the supervisor's policies or
19 viewpoints.

20 Appellant's position performs a variety of high-level administrative support functions, duties and
21 responsibilities, which include the oversight of the day-to-day functions and administrative
22 details/activities of the Program and Policy Office. Her higher-level duties include coordinating
23 legislative policy input, office space management, public relations/liaison activities, researching,
24 coordinating and tracking personnel actions, records management, and report preparation. While
25 Appellant's duties, responsibilities and delegated authority are important to the overall operation
26 of the office, the actual scope of her work does not meet the threshold for allocation to the AA4
27 classification. When considered in its entirety, the scope of work and the breadth of the impact of
28 Appellant's position are described by the AA3 level. Appellant's position best fits within the
29 definition and distinguishing characteristics of the AA 3 classification.

In a hearing on exceptions, the Appellant has the burden of proof. WAC 357-52-110. Appellant has
failed to meet her burden of proof. The Administrative Assistant 3 classification best describes the
overall duties and responsibilities of Appellant's position.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Terri Canopy is denied and the director's determination dated May 15, 2009, is affirmed.

DATED this ____ day of _____, 2010.

WASHINGTON PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

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