



COUNTY OF EL DORADO

Final Classification Study Report

Sr. Information Technology Analyst- Applications/Web Development/Support

(Incumbent: Sandra Kesler)

September 28, 2018

County of El Dorado
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Table of Contents

Recommendation.....	3
Background/Introduction	3
Overview of Study Tasks	3
Classification Framework	3
General Guidelines and Definitions	4
Allocation Factors	5
Classification Analysis	5
Current Position Duties	5
Supervisor Comments	7
Comparator Classes	7
Study Findings	8

Recommendation

It is recommended that this position be reclassified to the newly proposed classification of Applications Analyst II. It is also recommended that a follow up review of this position be conducted after the mainframe systems, on which the incumbent is currently working, are eliminated.

Background/Introduction

The County of El Dorado (County) Human Resources Department (HR) conducted a limited classification study of a position allocated to the Sr. Information Technology Analyst-Applications/Web Development/Support (SITA-A/WD/S) classification and encumbered by Ms. Sandra Kesler. Ms. Kesler works in the Information Technologies Department and is supervised by a Supervising Information Technology Analyst, Walter Davies.

By way of background, in 2015 the County retained a consulting firm, Koff & Associates (K&A), to conduct a County-wide classification study. The purpose of the study was to ensure that the County's classification specifications were consistent with industry standards and that employees were in the correct classifications based on the duties and responsibilities assigned. K&A provided a final classification report to the County in May 2017.

Ms. Kesler completed a position description questionnaire (PDQ) during the initial K&A study and the consultants recommended classifying her position as an Applications Analyst II. Ms. Kesler subsequently notified HR that she did not agree with the allocation of her position. She also completed an updated PDQ in May 2018. For these reasons, HR agreed to re-evaluate Ms. Kesler's position.

Overview of Study Tasks

In conducting the classification study, HR:

1. Conducted a detailed analysis of both of the incumbent's PDQs (dated July 2016 and May 2018).
2. Conducted a telephone interview with the incumbent's supervisor to gather additional information about the position.
3. Conducted a telephone interview with the incumbent to clarify questions and gather additional information about the position and the duties performed.
4. Analyzed all of the information gathered, as well as applicable County class specification, to identify the typical duties of the position, the scope and level of work performed, and the requisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and other job-related characteristics required to perform the work.
5. Identified an appropriate classification.
6. Developed this Final Classification Study Report.

Classification Framework

The classification analysis for this study relies upon sound principles of job evaluation and classification. The approach identifies classifications that reflect distinct differences in levels and types of work as determined through the use of established allocation factors and classification concepts. This section of

the report presents the conceptual framework for the methods used by HR in analyzing a classification recommendation for this study position.

General Guidelines and Definitions

Point in Time Analysis

A classification study primarily captures the essential nature of positions at a single point in time. Therefore, recommendations cannot be based upon all possible future changes, particularly in a rapidly changing environment where organizational needs, technologies, and skill requirements are continuously evolving.

Whole-Job Analysis

For purposes of this study, HR used a whole-job analysis approach. This methodology analyzes the job as a whole, rather than by individual factors, by evaluating the core duties and responsibilities, the nature and level of work performed, and the minimum qualifications which are required to perform the work. This approach compares jobs with one another on the basis of an overall evaluation of difficulty or performance. The entire position, including the skills required, the decision-making authority, the scope, the magnitude of work, and the accountability for results, is compared as a whole to other positions.

Preponderant Duties

Classification studies often find that positions are assigned a wide range of duties and that incumbents have various levels of responsibility at any one time. Therefore, the positions must be analyzed based on their preponderant duties. Preponderance is a measure of importance; the most preponderant duties of a position are those that support the primary purpose of the position. Sometimes the most time-consuming duties of a position are preponderant; however, consideration must sometimes be given to the responsibility and complexity of certain duties that do not occupy the majority of the incumbent's time. Overall, the determination of preponderance is a judgment call based on a consistent set of factors.

Level and Not Volume of Work

Position classification is a reflection of the level of work performed by an employee; and thus, it is generally independent of volume. For example, if one employee processes double the work of another, yet the percentages of time spent on those tasks and other duties are comparable, a single classification should be appropriate for both positions. In fact, study questionnaires do not ask for, and HR would not consider, the relative productivity of employees when evaluating positions. Likewise, classifications are not distinguished by the amount of time spent by incumbents on tasks or the volume of work assigned to positions since problems of excessive workload are properly solved by redistributing work or adding employees, and not by creating new classifications.

Classify the Position, Not the Person

Classification recommendations are made based on the position being studied, not the individual occupying the position at the time of the study. In other words, the duties and responsibilities of the job are evaluated rather than the competency or personal characteristics of the employee in the job. That said, the incumbent occupying the position is **usually** considered to be the "subject matter expert" on the job, and therefore information provided by the incumbent typically carries substantial weight in the analysis. Exceptions to this might occur if an incumbent has only been in the job a short time and

therefore is not fully familiar with the job responsibilities, or if management significantly disagrees with the incumbent regarding the job expectations in which case the management perspective may have greater influence on the final determination.

Determining Classification Breadth and Depth

Classification plans generally establish classifications based on a determination of “sufficient similarity”. However, within an individual organization, sufficient similarity can be interpreted to coincide with the goals and philosophy of the organization. For example, a broad interpretation recognizes positions that share a core set of duties, but accepts substantial variation between positions, resulting in varied assignments within each classification. In contrast, a narrow interpretation might create separate narrow classifications to address such variations.

Allocation Factors

Allocation factors are standards that are used to measure job requirements of individual positions. These factors can be compared in order to measure the similarities and differences among positions. The common allocation factors used to evaluate this study position included:

- Decision Making - Consists of [a] the decision-making responsibility and degree of independence or latitude that is inherent in the position, and [b] the impact of the decisions.
- Scope and Complexity - Defines the breadth and difficulty of the assigned function or program responsibility inherent in the classification.
- Contact with Others Required by the Job - Measures [a] the types of contacts, and [b] the purpose of the contacts.
- Supervision Received and Exercised - Describes the level of supervision received from others and the nature of supervision provided to other workers. It relates to the independence of action inherent in a position.
- Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities - Defines the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform assigned responsibilities.

Classification Analysis

Current Position Duties

The incumbent, Ms. Kesler, has been a *SITA-A/WD/S* for approximately 33 months. The overall purpose of this position is to perform professional, analytical work related to the development, enhancement, modification, and maintenance of County information technology (IT) applications. In particular, the incumbent is responsible for several applications that support County payroll, human resources, and risk management functions, as well as access to Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) records. The access to DMV records have been reassigned effective September 14, 2018. Currently, these are “stand alone” applications that reside on the County’s mainframe server. However, due to the related nature and shared interests across these applications, these applications must “communicate” with each other. Changes to one application would likely impact the others as well.

The incumbent’s primary and essential job duties (based on the PDQ and interview information) are summarized in the following table.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS		
Task #	Tasks	Approximate Percentage of Time
1	Writes, revises, and maintains programs to improve application functionality, integrate functions and actions, and/or extract data; evaluates program relationship and integration issues; develops program modifications to meet specifications; designs and develops screens and menus; creates and modifies flow charges, programming logic, scripts, documentation, and coding as needed; executes testing plans to validate functionality; troubleshoots and de-bugs programs and resolves programming issues; refines data and formats final products; writes and maintains program documentation; programs/sets up queries and reports for assigned systems.	35%
2	Meets regularly with clients (departments) to discuss issues with assigned applications and systems and discuss business processes that could benefit from new or enhanced systems; gathers user requirements; analyzes existing applications and/or systems and provides recommendations for improving hardware and/or software in order to accomplish business goals; develops application and/or system specifications; coordinates with other IT staff and vendors as needed to implement design specifications and coordination across multiple platforms and technologies; develops and/or conducts training classes pertaining to the use of applications and/or systems for users and/or other IT staff;	30%
3	Performs database queries and data analyses in response to departmental requests; participates in the design, development and implementation of database structures; designs and modifies structures, tables and files.	20%
3	Participates on application development projects; assists project team members with solving technical, administrative and resource problems; serves as a point-of-contact for an IT vendor.	10%
4	Performs other related duties such as scheduling, monitoring, and checking production jobs; setting up user access permissions in applications; performing routine system backups, installations, upgrades, and/or other hardware/software support activities; setting up and installing new user desktop systems; and working with network and applications staff to set up security policies on assigned applications.	5%

During the interview with the incumbent, Ms. Kesler stated that her duties and responsibilities are consistent with the class of a Sr. Applications Analyst rather than Applications Analyst II. Specifically, Ms. Kesler said that the applications that she supports are exceptionally complex and her programming language skills (including SQL) are at an advanced level. Furthermore, as the analyst who has primary

responsibility for their development and maintenance, her role is consistent with that of a “lead worker”.

Supervisor Comments

The incumbent’s supervisor was interviewed separately and he affirmed the core duties and responsibilities described on the incumbent’s PDQ forms. However, he disagreed with her claim to be a “lead” in the work unit since she does not have direct or indirect responsibility for the work of other Information Technologies staff. He acknowledged her ability to program in multiple languages (including SQL). However, while she is responsible for maintaining several well-established systems, she is not leading nor participating in major application development projects and consequently is not performing the more complex duties of an advanced-level IT analyst.

Comparator Classes

The County is in the process of amending, retitling, and/or replacing a number of classes as part of the County-wide study process, including several in the current IT classification structure. For purposes of this review, it should be noted that one or more of the following class summary statements reflect proposed IT class concepts that are pending final approval by the Board of Supervisors.

The following were considered relevant to this classification review and were therefore used for comparative analysis purposes:

Classification Specification Content – Sr. Information Technology Analyst – Applications/Web Development/Support (Appendix A)

This is an existing County class that will be abolished during the County-wide classification study process. This class specification describes responsibility for the more difficult, complex, and specialized professional, technical, and analytical duties involving analysis of customer and system requirements, and development, implementation, and maintenance of complex web, enterprise, and/or departmental computer applications. This is an “advanced specialist” level within the IT analyst job family where employees work more independently and perform duties that require a greater level of expertise than employees allocated to the journey-level class of Information Technology Analyst-Applications/Web Development/Support. Incumbents may also provide lead direction or limited supervision to professional and support staff.

The “Examples of Typical Duties” section within the job description further articulates the associated duties and responsibilities assigned to this classification.

Classification Specification Content – Applications Analyst I/II (Appendix B)

The County has proposed that a new Applications Analyst class series be established. Applications Analyst I/II are the entry/journey level classes in the series where incumbents perform a diverse range of professional, analytical duties in the development, enhancement, modification, and maintenance of County information technology applications, including enterprise-wide, department-specific, and web-based applications. At this level, incumbents primarily design, code, modify, and test software applications and evaluate third party software to determine suitability for modification to County-specific needs. Incumbents do not supervise other professional staff, though they may provide limited and intermittent leadership on assigned projects.

The “Examples of Typical Duties” section within the job description further articulates the associated duties and responsibilities assigned to this classification.

Classification Specification Content – *Applications Analyst III (Appendix C)*

The proposed class specification for Applications Analyst II describes positions that provide lead direction to staff and perform advanced and specialized analytical duties of a professional nature in the development, enhancement, modification, and maintenance of County information technology applications, including enterprise-wide, department-specific, and web-based applications. In addition to performing the more difficult and complex applications development work, incumbents typically provide technical and functional leadership over other staff on both projects and on day-to-day assignments.

The “Examples of Typical Duties” section within the job description further articulates the associated duties and responsibilities assigned to this classification. It should be noted that one of the key differences between an Applications Analyst III and an Applications Analyst I/II is the former’s responsibility for technical, functional, and/or staff leadership duties.

Study Findings

The incumbent is currently classified as a Sr. Information Technology Analyst – Applications/Web Development/Support and is primarily responsible for maintaining several inter-related applications that support payroll, personnel, and risk management functions. Due to frequent changes in the laws and policies affecting these functions, the incumbent spends a considerable portion of her time (65%) working with department managers and staff to identify needed adjustments and making minor programming changes. She also spends approximately 20% of her time developing and conducting complex database queries to assist in client departments in meeting their business needs. Such duties are consistent with an Applications Analyst classification.

During the interview, the incumbent stated that her duties and responsibilities should be classified at the Applications Analyst III (advanced) level. However, based on the study analysis, HR staff concluded that the incumbent’s duties and responsibilities are consistent with the journey-level class of Applications Analyst II. The incumbent’s applications “development” responsibilities consist primarily of making minor changes and adjustments to well-established and relatively stable applications and platforms. Such changes, which typically involve narrow application elements with a limited scope and impact, are inherently less complex compared to the types of broad and comprehensive application development project work expected of an Applications Analyst III. It is also noted that, while the incumbent performs these tasks with relative independence, she does not assign, direct, or otherwise “lead” the work of other professional staff in performing their day-to-day work. Furthermore, she is not leading complex application development projects.

Overall, the incumbent is performing journey-level IT applications work at the Applications Analyst II level. Therefore, it is recommended that this position be reclassified to the new class of Applications Analyst II.

Finally, it is important to note that the Information Technologies Department is transitioning away from the use of mainframe applications, meaning that the systems and applications currently assigned to Ms. Kesler are being replaced by new, client-server and web-based systems. The County is currently in the process of implementing new modules of its enterprise system (Fenix) and transitioning away from the historic payroll, personnel, and risk management programs, which will no longer be needed. This

change may also have impact on the positions confidential status. Since it is unclear what role Ms. Kesler will play during this transition process and what her duties will be once the transition is completed. Therefore, it is recommended that this position be re-evaluated at that time to determine whether further reclassification is warranted.