

## NON-REPRESENTED CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION STUDY FAQs

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## 1. Questions Regarding the Study in General

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### **Why is the City engaging in this project?**

The City wants to ensure that the valuable work employees do is properly described to provide for competitive compensation. The existing classification and compensation system:

- has not been comprehensively evaluated or updated as a whole in nearly 20 years;
- does not consistently describe the work of non-represented employees nor accommodate non-supervisory professional or technical career tracks;
- does not provide sufficient detail regarding the scope and degree of required supervisory responsibilities;
- may not provide appropriate compensation that reflects the market.

Finally, it is a best practice to regularly evaluate and update classifications and compensation because work and the employment market are always changing.

### **How will this Study benefit the City?**

- Recruitment – assists in recruiting the best specific talent needed for the work.
- Employee Development – provides the foundation for training and succession planning.
- Communication – helps create an environment of communication and accountability between supervisors and subordinates.
- Compensation – allows the pay program to be based on accurate classifications, leading to equitable pay.
- Employer of choice – all of this contributes to an enhanced City reputation, which in turn attracts the best employees.

### **My job is represented by a union. Will I be able to participate in the Study?**

No, this classification and compensation study is for non-represented classifications only. Compensation for represented classifications is outlined in their respective collective bargaining agreements.

### **How long will the Study take?**

The Study is expected to be completed by June 30, 2018, and presented to City Council for consideration. If Council votes to accept the recommendations in the Study, implementation can begin and will require a number of months to accomplish.

## 2. Questions Regarding the Position Description

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### **What is a Position Description (PD)?**

A PD is a comprehensive description of the work performed by an individual position, documented by the incumbent performing the work (or a supervisor or manager of a vacant position), and approved by their supervisor.

### **What is the difference between a Position Description (PD), Classification Specification / Description (Class Spec), and Job Description?**

Although the terms are often used interchangeably, they are not the same thing. A PD is used to describe an individual employee's unique body of work. A Class Spec is a general description covering the work of many different PDs with similar requirements, levels of authority, complexity, and scope of work. The term Job Description is applied to both PDs and Class Specs, depending upon the organization.

### **What are the benefits of PDs?**

For Employees:

- Provides a clear understanding of parameters of work assignments, responsibilities and authority.
- Allows employees to receive recognition for the unique experience, education and skills they bring to their job.
- Outlines specific requirements that differentiate each position from another.

For Directors/Managers/Supervisors:

- Provides a tool for communication of work expectations for each individual employee.
- Serves as a foundation for employee development, succession planning, performance management and training opportunities.
- Allows supervisors to maximize on resources (knowing the full breadth of their employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities).
- Simplifies the classification/reclassification process.

For the City:

- Improves overall reputation of the City by enabling employee development and creating an environment of communication between supervisors and their subordinates.
- This communication and understanding attracts top talent and reinforces the “employer of choice” concept.

### **How will my PD be used in the Study?**

The PD is a critical component of the Study. It serves as the foundation from which new classifications are written and the compensation structure is developed. Going forward, it is the tool used to classify all new work and reclassify changed work as well as set compensation.

### **What are the other uses of a PD?**

PDs will be reviewed and updated during every performance evaluation. A new or updated PD will be required for any classification or reclassification request. The PD will also be used for recruiting employees.

## **3. Questions Regarding the Classification Specification Description (Class Specs)**

### **Why did the number of non-represented classifications go down from about 450 to 150?**

Broad, generic class specs will better serve the City and employees in two important ways. First, generic classifications will facilitate the City's ability to develop and manage the non-rep workforce because class spec language will allow employees to move and grow within their current classification without the need for a reclassification. Second, by streamlining the number of class specs that have to be managed, the City will be able to review and update the classification and compensation structures on a regular basis (and not wait another 20 years).

### **How is a Classification (Class Spec) different from a Position Description (PD)?**

A Class Spec is a general description covering the work of many different PDs with similar requirements, levels of authority, complexity, and scope of work. A PD is used to describe an individual employee's unique body of work. [See Question 2. above]

### **What if I don't have the exact same education or amount of experience described in the new class spec?**

The minimum qualifications section of the class spec begins with the statement, “Any combination of education and experience that is *equivalent* to the following minimum qualifications is acceptable.” This means the hiring bureau/office may define what “equivalent” means for their needs in keeping with the spirit of the class spec. It allows for flexibility in hiring a wide variety of experience and educational backgrounds.

## 4. Questions Regarding Allocations

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### What is an Allocation?

Allocation is the action of assigning a position (based on the work described in either a PD or classification request form) into a Classification.

### Why was the communication of allocations postponed?

The communication date was pushed out several times to allow thorough responses to questions and concerns. These are critical decisions and it is important to ensure everyone has the information they need to understand the process and the remaining steps in the Study.

### When and how will I receive my allocation notice?

On Tuesday, December 5, 2017, you will receive an email detailing your allocation in the new classification structure as well as information on what to do if you disagree with the decision. You will also receive this same information in hard copy through the mail at your home address.

### What if I believe my allocation is incorrect?

There are three situations in which an employee may disagree with their allocation:

1. Since you last submitted a position description, you moved into a new job and classification either through transfer or a recruitment / promotion and you are doing work different than described in the PD filled out by the prior incumbent.
2. Since you last submitted a position description, your job has gradually changed and you were not reclassified; you may have received higher-level responsibilities, more staff to supervise, or more complex projects. This may have been a natural evolution of your job or as a result of reorganization.
3. Your job has not changed since you last submitted a position description, but you disagree with the allocation.

In any of these situations you may take advantage of the *reconsideration process* (see below).

### What is the reconsideration process and its timing?

Requests for reconsideration must be received in Class Comp by **December 22, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.** Any requests received after this date will not be considered.

According to the HR Administrative Rules, following the notification of allocation, employees have 14 calendar days to request a reconsideration of the allocation decision. Since you will receive your notification both in an email and the US mail, the 14-day period starts when the mail is expected to be delivered to your home. That means the final date for submitting a request for reconsideration is December 22, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

To request a reconsideration in either of the first two situations described above, you must complete a new [position description](#) clearly outlining the changes in your work since your last PD, and get your supervisor's signature indicating they agree with the new description of work. In addition to the new PD, you must also complete the [Reconsideration Form](#) to describe in detail specifically why the new classification does not fit the work you do as outlined in your PD. You should use the class spec as a comparison tool to explain why it does not cover your work. The explanation should not be about the quality or quantity of your work, but should focus on the essential duties, scope of decision-making authority, and direct supervision of staff (if applicable).

If your situation falls into the third category described above, you do not have to complete a new position description. Simply re-submit your previously submitted PD along with the completed [Reconsideration Form](#) containing the explanation of why the new classification does not fit your work.

All reconsideration requests should be sent in an email to Kim Epling in Class Comp [kim.epling@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:kim.epling@portlandoregon.gov).

**When will I receive the decision on my reconsideration request?**

All requests for reconsideration will be reviewed and analyzed as quickly as possible. As soon as a decision has been reached, you will be notified of the outcome. Depending on the number of requests received, you may not receive a decision until March 2018.

**What if my reconsideration request is denied and I still disagree?**

Employees have the right to appeal the decision to the Civil Service Board. Those hearings will be scheduled according to the availability of the Board. The Civil Service Board has two options when it considers appeals of classification. The Board may agree that the City's decision is correct and that will end your appeal. The other option is if the Board agrees that you have substantiated your appeal request, the Board will return the allocation decision to the HR Director for an additional reconsideration. The Civil Service Board does not have authority to make any decisions about classification.

**Does my supervisor have to approve my request for reconsideration?**

If you are requesting a reconsideration because your work has changed and you are completing a new Position Description, your supervisor must sign it prior to submitting your request for reconsideration. If your PD is not changing and you are requesting a reconsideration, your supervisor does not have to approve the request for reconsideration. [*See reconsideration process above for more details.*]

**What if I am out of the office during the reconsideration time period (December 5-22)?**

Time extensions will be granted for those out of the office during this period. Contact one of the members of the [Class Comp team](#) for more information and to obtain an extension. If you do not request an exception by December 22, 2017, you will not be granted one. Naturally, extenuating circumstances will be considered.

**What if I don't like the name of the new classification to which I am allocated?**

The new classifications are streamlined and improve how work is described. They are broader and more generic so require generic names. Everyone is welcome to use working titles that better fit the work you do, as long as your supervisor supports it.

**What if my position has been reclassified since I last submitted a PD?**

If a position was reclassified after the submission of a PD, the allocation was based on the description of work provided when the position was reclassified.

**What if I am underfilling, overfilling, or temporarily assigned to a position?**

All positions were allocated based on the information provided in the PD which described the work of the base position. If you are overfilling or underfilling that base position, we will make any necessary adjustments when implementation of the Study begins. The same is true for temporary assignments.

**When will the change in my classification occur?**

This study is conducted in phases. It is during the classification phase that you receive notification of your allocation in the new proposed (still draft) classification structure. The allocation is simply a holding place for when the Study is complete and presented to Council for approval. No changes will occur until all phases of the Study are complete, including the Compensation phase, and Council has approved the final recommendations.

## 5. Questions Regarding Compensation

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### **When do we receive compensation information?**

The compensation phase is scheduled to be complete June 30, 2018. You will receive information as it is available in email updates and on our [website](#).

### **Why do we not receive compensation information when we receive our classification information?**

The compensation market survey could not begin until there was agreement on what work you are doing. If data was gathered prior to finalizing the classifications, that data would become inaccurate (or invalid) every time a classification was edited or revised. Furthermore, any market data collected before the classification work was complete would have to be updated to reflect any changes that occurred in the market in the meantime.

### **I believe my new allocation will pay me less money. What can I do about that?**

First, you should wait for the final Study to be published to see if your concern is accurate. If so, you can talk to your supervisor about opportunities to expand and grow your job. The compensation will be set based on how our comparable market pays for the work described and does not consider the quality or quantity of that work.

### **What if my current pay exceeds the top of the new pay range to which my classification is assigned?**

In this rare occurrence, the employee's pay will be red-circled until the pay range catches up to their pay. This means they will not receive merit increases or COLAs (cost of living adjustments). However, in this situation, no employee's pay will be cut.

### **What if my current pay is below the minimum of the new pay range to which my classification is assigned?**

This will also be a rare occurrence. If it happens, there will be a recommendation to City Council that the employees' pay be raised to the minimum of the new pay range.