

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeal and FLSA Programs

San Francisco Oversight Division
120 Howard Street, Room 760
San Francisco, CA 94105-0001

Classification Appeal Decision
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [Appellant's name]

Agency classification: Information Receptionist (Typing)
GS-304-3

Organization: [Appellant's organization]
Indian Health Service
Department of Health
and Human Services

OPM decision: Information Receptionist
GS-304-3

OPM decision number: C-0304-03-01

Carlos A. Torrico
Classification Appeals Officer

July 19, 2000
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Since this decision changes the title of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period after the date of this decision, as permitted by 5 CFR 511.702. The servicing personnel office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected position description and a Standard Form 50 showing the personnel action taken. The report must be submitted within 30 days from the effective date of the personnel action.

Decision sent to:

Appellant:

[Appellant's address]

Agency:

[Appellant's servicing personnel office]
Indian Health Service
Department of Health and Human Services

Director of Personnel
Indian Health Service
Department of Health and Human Services
Parklawn Building, Room 4B-44
5600 Fisher Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources
Department of Health and Human Services
HHH Building, Room 536E
200 Independence Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20201

Introduction

On February 7, 2000, the San Francisco Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [the appellant]. The appellant's position is currently classified as Information Receptionist (Typing), GS-304-3. However, she believes her duties warrant a higher grade level. Her position is assigned to [appellant's organization and installation], Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services. We have accepted and decided this appeal under the provisions of section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

This appeal decision is based on a thorough review of all information submitted by both the appellant and her agency. In addition, an OPM representative conducted telephone interviews with the appellant and her immediate supervisor to gather more information about the duties and responsibilities of the position. The appellant's supervisor has certified to the accuracy of the appellant's official position description (PD) number P-6058. However, the appellant believes that her PD is inaccurate, and she has been unable to resolve the matter with her agency. In such cases it is OPM policy to decide the appeal based on the actual duties that management has assigned and the appellant performs.

The appellant makes various statements about her agency and its evaluation of her position. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of her position. By law, we must make that decision solely by comparing her current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

Our fact-finding disclosed that the appellant no longer performs several major duties recorded in her official PD. They are as follows:

- Places and logs in each outgoing long distance telephone call.
- Maintains appointment books for all regular, specialty and dental clinics and informs patients of dates and times of appointments and return appointments.
- Maintains a current list of all admissions to the hospital, in order to be able to give information to visitors regarding location of patients.
- Performs miscellaneous typing duties for the departments under the Clinical Services, i.e. medical staff, pharmacy services, clinical laboratory/radiology and dental services.
- Maintains a U.S. Government Drivers Identification Card as occasional driving may be performed to deliver and pick-up mail and transport patients to or from the medical facility.
- In emergencies, accompanies patients to appropriate clinic area and department.
- Takes care of the needs of patients waiting to be seen.
- Must be a qualified typist.

We also noted that the appellant performs, as a miscellaneous duty, the posting of time and attendance records for the staff of her unit, which is not recorded in her PD. Based on the preceding findings, the appellant's official PD does not meet the standards of adequacy for PDs discussed in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*, section III.E. Therefore, the agency must revise the PD to meet that standard.

Position information

The appellant serves as Information Receptionist in the [appellant's organization] section of the tribal health facility. She operates a telephone keyboard system with eight open lines, five FTS lines, and approximately 65 extensions. She is primarily responsible for receiving visitors and callers, providing information and/or giving directions, assisting patients, and performing a variety of clerical support duties. The appellant is the organizational representative for the health facility to the general public and works from an enclosed booth in the main lobby of the facility. Her position requires her to speak in a voice of pleasing quality and clear enunciation, with a degree of tact, courtesy, poise and alertness. She directs visitors and callers to the 4 specialty clinics and 18 departments within the health facility, and provides emergency service to patients reporting to the information desk by calling for ambulance service, obtaining wheelchairs or gurneys, and contacting service providers. The appellant operates an in-house paging system and is authorized to activate the alarm system in cases of fire or disaster. She is also the first contact for emergency calls from local tribal community members and local and state law enforcement officers.

The appellant trains other employees on how to operate the desk telephone and voice mail system. She is responsible for training backup employees and tribal intermittent information receptionists on how to perform information receptionist duties. The appellant is expected to tactfully and diplomatically answer questions, or secure answers to unfamiliar inquiries. She possesses the ability to visually recognize outward signs of illnesses that require expeditious handling, and performs miscellaneous clerical duties. In conversations with the appellant and her supervisor, a percentage of time was given for each of the appellant's major duties as follows:

- Information Receptionist – 85%
- Clerical – 15%

The results of our interviews, the appellant's official PD and other material of record furnish much more information about her duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

Series, title, and standard determination

The agency has classified the appellant's position in the Information Receptionist Series, GS-304, and she does not disagree. We concur with the agency's determination. As specified in the classification standard for the GS-304 series (dated June 1961), work in that series includes all classes of positions which supervise or perform work involved in receiving and directing persons who call or visit government agencies, installations, or offices, and giving them

information in person or by telephone concerning the organization, functions, activities and personnel of such agencies, installations or offices.

The appellant performs a few clerical tasks in addition to her information receptionist work, such as typing forms and memos and posting information for time and attendance records, which are neither series nor grade controlling and thus are not evaluated in this decision. Her clerical support tasks are subordinate to the information receptionist work, which takes up to 85% of the appellant's time. We found no evidence that the appellant's work requires identifiable subject-matter or technical knowledge. This position is correctly allocated to the GS-304 series and titled "Information Receptionist." During our interview, the appellant's supervisor noted that the appellant's duties do not require a qualified typist. Consequently, the addition of the parenthetical title "Typing" to the basic title is not appropriate.

Grade determination

As specified in the standard for the Information Receptionist Series, GS-304, the principal criteria for evaluating information receptionist positions are (1) the relative complexity of the organization, programs, and functions of the agency, installation or offices served, and (2) the relative difficulty of the inquiries received and information required to be given. In general, these criteria measure the degree to which the information receptionist must (a) know and use a variety of reference sources, (b) exercise resourcefulness in tracking down information which is out of date or not immediately available, and (c) use judgment in determining how best to provide or obtain the desired information.

Information receptionist positions are classifiable at the GS-3 level when they have the characteristics described below.

Situation I:

- (a) The inquiries received and information given vary, are frequently routine and recurrent, but many cases consistently require development, through questioning on the part of the information receptionist, of the exact nature of the inquiry and the following through on inquiries which are indefinite, uncertain, or inaccurately stated, on the basis of the nature of inquiries and the judgment of the information receptionist in individual cases;
- (b) Ordinarily, the agency, office, or installation served has several organizational elements, segments, or program units, and the number of key personnel and officials served is relatively large;
- (c) There are occasional reorganizations and changes of a type requiring but few or minor adjustments in individual information clerical activities and services, or creating few or only minor recurrent problems in the direction of visitors and provision of information; or, where frequent major changes and reorganizations occur, they are of types that do not have a significant effect on individual information receptionist activities, do not require continuing adjustments in records or services, nor do they present significant problems in the direction of visitors and provision of information; for example, there are only occasional large-scale movements of

personnel or offices with attendant changes in phone numbers, room numbers, and key personnel;

(d) The offices and buildings served are so laid out or physically located in relation to each other as to create recurring problems of relatively substantial difficulty in the direction of visitors and the location of functions and personnel.

Situation II:

(a) The inquiries received and information given are consistently routine and repetitive, largely related to room numbers, telephone extensions, and names and locations of key personnel;

(b) Ordinarily, the agency, office or installation served has numerous and extensive organizational segments, elements, or program units, and the number of key officials and personnel served is very large;

(c) Frequent and extensive changes and reorganizations occur, involving relatively large-scale movements of functions and personnel, and presenting major or continuing problems in directing visitors, providing information, and adjusting individual information receptionist services;

(d) The offices and buildings served are so laid out or physically located in relation to each other as to create relatively major problems in directing visitors and providing information.

The knowledges, abilities, skills, and other qualities required at the GS-3 level are a general knowledge of the organization of the agency, office, or installation served, and good knowledge of the location of organizational units, functions, and key personnel; as required by the work situation, familiarity with the nature and availability of publications, forms and other general informational material distributed by the agency; some familiarity with the organization and functions of other government agencies, particularly those having similar or related programs; ability to understand, use, and maintain directories, personnel lists, and other guides and references; speaking voice of pleasing quality and clear enunciation; and retentive memory. Tact, courtesy, poise, alertness, and good judgment are needed in carrying on public contacts of a relatively routine, factually-centered nature.

Information receptionist positions are classifiable at the GS-4 level when they have the following characteristics:

(1) The inquiries received and information given vary widely, include the range and variety of inquiries and information characteristic of lower levels, but in a majority of cases consistently require (a) the explanation in general terms of functions of the agency served, to distinguish for visitors and callers among and between functions related to the subject of the inquiry, or to resolve confusion surrounding the inquiry; (b) the evaluation of inquiries in order to provide the most useful and appropriate information or to suggest other productive sources of specific information applicable to the nature and subject of the inquiry; and (c) resolution, by personal inquiry, of inconsistencies in available information;

(2) Ordinarily, the agency, office, or installation served has numerous and extensive organizational elements, segments, or program units, and the numbers of key personnel and officials served are very large;

(3) Frequent and extensive changes and reorganizations occur, involving large-scale changes in functions, relocations of personnel and movement of offices, creating major and continuing problems in directing visitors and providing information, adjusting information receptionist services, and maintaining records;

(4) The offices or buildings served are so laid out or physically located in relation to each other as to create relatively major problems in directing visitors and locating functions and personnel.

The knowledges, abilities, skills and other qualities required at this level are a good general knowledge of the organization of the agency, office, or installation served; good general knowledge of the location of organizational units, functions, and key personnel; good understanding of the nature and availability of publications, forms, and other general informational materials distributed by the agency; good general knowledge of the organization and functions of other government agencies, particularly those having similar or related programs; ability to understand, use, and maintain directories, personnel lists, and other guides and references; speaking voice of pleasing quality and clear enunciation; and retentive memory. Tact, courtesy, poise, alertness, and good judgment are needed in public contacts.

The appellant's position overall meets the GS-3 level as described in *Situation I*, and contains some aspects of *Situation II*, as well. Similar to *Situation I*, the inquiries received and information given varies, is frequently routine and recurrent, but sometimes requires development in order to provide the most useful and appropriate information. Like *Situation II*, inquiries also at times include questions relating to room numbers, telephone extensions, and names and locations of key personnel. Comparable to *Situation I*, there are several organizational elements or units within the tribal health facility including 4 specialty clinics and 18 departments. The appellant is required to ascertain and distinguish between inquiries covering a relatively large number of physicians, 5 specialists, 120 employees, and visitors and callers fluctuating from 50 to 150 per day. She asks general questions to determine the nature of the call or visit and the legitimacy of the inquiry. Like the GS-3 level under *Situation I*, only occasional reorganizations have occurred at the installation which have mostly been generated by the tribe assuming Indian Health Service functions. These have required only minor adjustments in individual information receptionist activities or services. With regard to the physical layout of the organization served, the position meets the GS-3 level. The installation is the sole health care facility within a 100 mile radius, and there are several other offices and functions on the tribal property where the appellant would direct callers or visitors. This can create regular problems of relatively substantial difficulty in directing individuals to the proper source of care or information. Similar to the GS-3 level, the appellant's position requires general knowledge of the functions of many departments and clinics, as well as other government agencies, in order to distinguish for visitors and callers among and between functions related to the subject of the inquiry. She must make inquiries of visitors in order to resolve any problems that they may have, particularly when dealing with non-English speaking persons, and route them to the proper location.

The appellant's position does not meet the GS-4 level. She is not required to consistently explain the functions of the health facility, to evaluate inquiries in order to suggest other productive sources of specific information available on the nature and subject of the inquiry, or to resolve, by personal inquiry, inconsistencies in the available information. Unlike the GS-4 level, the tribal health facility does not have numerous and extensive organizational elements or program units, and there is a lack of frequent and extensive changes and reorganizations. The physical layout of the health facility and surrounding offices does not create relatively major problems in directing visitors and locating functions and personnel. In contrast to the GS-4 level, the appellant is not expected to possess and apply the knowledge, skills and abilities to the degree described at the higher level.

By application of the grading criteria in the standard for the Information Receptionist Series, GS-304, we find that the appellant's position is properly graded at the GS-3 level.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Information Receptionist, GS-304-3.