

Position Classification Plan a Base for Pay Plan

In establishing and administering pay rates for positions in the public service and apart from any other factor of salary policy, one of the most important objectives is plain equity. Under the same employment conditions, employees doing work of the same difficulty and responsibility should enjoy the same pay scale; those doing harder or more responsible work should receive more; and those doing easier or less exacting work should receive less. In a given jurisdiction the pay scale at any time for a stenographer doing a certain class of work should be the same whether the Department of Health, the Department of Highways, or the Department of Parks pays the salary. Positions involving duties and responsibilities of higher order should be compensated in due relation to those of less importance. In other words, scales of pay must be logically and consistently related to work performed.

A position-classification plan, which groups and designates positions according to the likenesses and differences in the work which they involve, provides a sound basis for accomplishing this objective. In order to put into effect the principle of "equal pay for equal work," it is necessary first to find out what the work of each position really is, and next to find out what work is, in fact, "equal." This is determined during the course of preparing a position-classification plan. Classifications and designations are controlled by a central agency serving all departments of the jurisdiction alike, and are uniform across departmental lines. Under this procedure, the fact that two positions are in the same class and have the same class title shows that their work is substantially equal. Hence, under the same employment conditions, one pay scale can be established for a class of posi-

tions with the assurance that if it is right for the whole class of positions, it is right for each individual position within the class. Similarly, the ranking sequences of the classes as set forth in a position-classification plan permits the association of higher pay scales with higher work, and lower pay scales with less exacting work. Differences in difficulty and responsibility of work can definitely be recognized by corresponding differences in pay scales. This, through the use of a position-classification plan as a base, the same pay scale is made to apply to all positions involving equal work under the same employment conditions; and different pay scales are applied in proper sequence to positions involving different work.

Experience has amply indicated that it is not possible to create or maintain anything like equitable pay conditions without developing and administering a position-classification plan to support them. They can never be brought about under a system by which the pay of each position is determined separately and on the supposed merits of the individual case. It is only by a comparison of the value of the work of any position with the work of every other position paid from the same treasury that there can be a complete application of principles of equity, fairness, and uniformity.

In practice, where no position-classification plan has been prepared and such comparisons among positions, are, therefore, not feasible, administrative and legislative officials responsible for setting pay rates are handicapped. There is nothing to tie to. The administrative officer rarely has a general view of all positions in the service; he has no convenient source of reference. He must, as well as he can, recommend the establishment of pay rates