

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



Dallas Oversight Division
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22
Dallas, TX 75242

Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [appellant's name]

Agency classification: Housing Manager
GS-1173-11

Organization: Housing Office
Naval Air Station
[geographic location]

OPM decision: Housing Manager
GS-1173-11

OPM decision number: C-1173-11-02

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon
Bonnie J. Brandon
Classification Appeals Officer

3/9/99
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).

Decision sent to:

[appellant's name address]

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368 South Avenue
Pensacola, FL 32508-5124

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Introduction

On November 18, 1998, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [the appellant]. Her position is currently classified as Housing Manager, GS-1173-11. However, the appellant believes that the duties performed warrant the position being upgraded to GS-1173-12. The position is assigned to the Housing Office, Naval Air Station (NAS), Department of the Navy, [geographic location]. We have accepted and decided her appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

To help decide the appeal, an Oversight Division representative conducted phone audits of the appellant's position on January 15 and 16, 1999. The audits included interviews with the appellant and the immediate supervisor. In reaching our classification decision, we have reviewed the audit findings and all information of record furnished by the appellant and the agency.

General issues

The appellant's position was downgraded as a result of a Department of the Navy consistency review. The appellant does not contest the title or occupational series of her position. She disagrees with the agency's evaluation of factors 2, 3, and 5.

The appellant believes that her position is distinctive from other housing managers in the agency due to the existence of a new housing initiative called the Public-Private Venture Program (PPVP) that is being piloted at NAS [geographic location]. She indicates that since it is the first such program, no specific guidelines concerning the responsibilities for coordinating, managing, or reporting requirements were available. Through our fact-finding, we found that guidance from higher authority was provided concerning the operations of this visible program and that in some cases it was a "learn by doing" approach. However, because the PPVP is a housing program, related regulation, policy, and procedure could readily be adapted to meet the needs of the new initiative. As it relates to the appellant's position, the work associated with the implementation of the PPVP is not considered regular and recurring and, therefore, is not a foundation of the position. Specific work examples offered by the appellant concerning the PPVP are addressed under each factor in the Grade Determination section of this decision. Furthermore, the appellant also states in much of her written record and in her interview that more complex duties relating to the PPVP would occur later in 1999. As stated in section G of appendix 4 in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, OPM will decide an appeal on the basis of the actual duties assigned by management and performed by the employee. Therefore, we have evaluated the duties actually performed by the appellant and have not considered projected duties for her position.

Position information

The appellant is assigned to position description (PD) number []. The appellant, supervisor, and agency have certified to the accuracy of the position description. We found the PD to be adequate for classification evaluation.

The appellant is responsible for the management, operation, and maintenance of government-owned family housing units and mobile home spaces under the control of the NAS [geographic location], including utility systems, roads, grounds, streets, and related facilities. The housing management program includes on-base military housing for families, quarters for unaccompanied personnel, mobile home lots, and associated utilities, streets, roads, and grounds. The appellant is also responsible for administering and monitoring the off-base housing referral service to locate rental housing suitable for military personnel. The appellant conducts housing requirements surveys; interprets, establishes, and implements housing assignment, inventory, utilization, and management policies; formulates plans and programs for major and minor improvements, repairs, and maintenance; ensures the formulation and submission of budgets for housing funds; and ensures that controls to allocate and monitor the expenditure of funds are developed and maintained. The appellant also ensures that required facility inspections are conducted prior to, during, and after occupancy and advises base officials on all matters and issues related to housing management. The appellant receives direction from the Facility Manager, GS-1640-13, who assigns work in terms of broadly defined functions. The appellant directly and indirectly supervises a subordinate staff of 7; however, supervisory duties take less than 25 percent of the appellant's time.

Series, title, and standard determination

The Housing Management Series, GS-1173, covers positions whose duties involve either managing or assisting in managing one or more family housing projects, billeting facilities, or other accommodations such as transient or permanent individual and family living quarters, dormitory facilities, and restricted occupancy buildings including adjacent service facilities and surrounding grounds. Positions in this occupation require a variety of housing management and administrative knowledges and related practical skills and abilities in a number of housing-related activities. The appellant's position involves the management, operation, and maintenance of Navy owned or controlled family and unaccompanied housing units and mobile home spaces, utility systems, grounds, streets, and related utilities at NAS [geographic location]. The appellant's position is properly placed in the GS-1173 series. The title authorized in the Housing Management Series, GS-1173, standard for positions at GS-9 and above is *Housing Manager*. The appropriate standard is Housing Management Series, GS-1173, dated September 1981.

Grade determination

Since supervisory duties account for less than 25 percent of the appellant's time, the position cannot be evaluated using the General Schedule Supervisory Guide.

The GS-1173 standard is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are placed in grades on the basis of their duties and responsibilities and the qualifications required as evaluated in terms of nine factors common to nonsupervisory General Schedule positions.

A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the

indicated factor levels. For a position factor to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor-level description in the standard, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect which meets a higher level. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard.

The appellant disagrees with factors 2, 3, and 5. We have reviewed the agency determination for factors 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 and concur with its findings. Therefore, our evaluation will address only those factors with which the appellant disagrees.

The following is our evaluation of the position in terms of the criteria.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the extent to which completed work is reviewed.

At Level 2-4, the housing supervisor sets the overall objectives and establishes the resources available. The employee and the supervisor jointly establish project deadlines, the scope, and level of work to be accomplished. The employee is responsible for planning and carrying out assignments, resolving the majority of the conflicts that arise, coordinating the work with others as needed, and interpreting policy on own initiative in terms of established objectives. Completed work is reviewed from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility with other work, or effectiveness in meeting objectives or achieving expected results.

At Level 2-5, the supervisor provides administrative directions with assignments in terms of broadly defined missions or functions. The employee is responsible for independently planning, designing, and carrying out programs, projects, studies, or other work. The results of the work are considered technically authoritative and normally accepted without significant change. If the work is reviewed, the review concerns such matters as fulfillment of program objectives, effect of advice and influence of the overall program, or the contribution to the advancement of technology. Recommendations for new projects and alteration of objectives are reviewed in terms of the availability of funds and other resources, broad program goals, or national priorities.

The appealed position meets Level 2-4 in that the appellant is responsible for planning and accomplishing work related to the application of housing management program objectives and policies at her installation. These responsibilities include operation, maintenance, improvements, and repair of housing, grounds, streets, and utility systems. She is also responsible for the assignment and utilization of on-base housing; conducting surveys to determine housing requirements; and administering the off-base housing program and the inspection program for on-base housing. Although the appellant works very independently and is the technical expert in her field for NAS [geographic location], her assignments consist of more than broadly defined mission statements. She

conducts her program within the policies, procedures, and objectives established by Navy for administering its housing program. While the published policies and procedures may not completely apply to all situations, the existence of these published program policies, as well as the existence of the NAVFAC Southern Division, which has responsibility for approving policy changes and providing advice and assistance, supports crediting Level 2-4. Level 2-4 fully recognizes the level of expertise, independence, and policy interpretation that are typical of the appellant's position.

The appealed position does not meet Level 2-5. The appellant does not independently plan and design the agency's, i.e., Department of the Navy's, housing program and policies. Instead she interprets and determines the application of policies and independently plans and manages the local housing programs. While the appellant exercises a high degree of independence in managing the housing program, the mission and function of the organizational unit is well-defined, as opposed to broadly defined, and is subject to review by the supervisor. The appellant believes her work with the Private-Public Venture Program (PPVP) to be descriptive of Level 2-5. Although the program is a new undertaking by NAS [geographic location] and is not well-defined, the appellant has not demonstrated the responsibility for *independently* planning, designing, and carrying out the program. Instead, guidance is received from NAVFAC Southern Division and the NAVFAC Headquarters, which has responsibility for guidance and policy implementation concerning the PPVP. This and the extent to which the program objectives and policies are established at a higher level keep the appellant's position from meeting the full intent of Level 2-5. Furthermore, the supervisor stated that the appellant is not considered technically authoritative in the PPVP. Instead, the work involved is reviewed closely by the immediate supervisor and major decisions are made in consultation with officials in the chain of command.

Level 2-4 and 450 points are credited.

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them.

At Level 3-3, the employee is provided a number of agencywide regulations, standards, handbooks, guides, and other materials related to major housing activity areas. These materials do not normally directly address specific work assignments or unusual issues that may arise, or they lack sufficient detail on many elements of housing management operations on which to base management decisions and actions. The employee is required to use judgment and initiative in selecting, interpreting, and applying the guides and, where necessary, make compromises and adaptations within the intent of the guides to meet established housing objectives. The employee must also evaluate the impact of the application of standard agency practices and procedures on housing operations and recommend changes to address new or unique situations or correct deficiencies.

At Level 3-4, the work is characterized by the availability of agency policies, program management guides, legal opinions, and precedents covering the management, use, and operation of housing projects and facilities. These guides are normally inadequate for contending with the unusually

difficult problems related to the broad management planning typically encountered at this level. The employee is required to select, adapt, and apply housing policies and principles to assignments where precedents are not directly applicable to the coordination of work forces and resources or the negotiation of major issues and conflicts where available precedents are generally not applicable. Work at this level also requires the development of new operating techniques and selection of approaches in evaluating management programs, housing trends, or developments.

The appealed position meets Level 3-3. The appellant uses a variety of Federal regulations, agency general policy, and program guides applicable to the major aspects of administering the installation housing management program. These materials do not address all of the possible situations that the appellant may routinely encounter in managing the housing program. The appellant uses judgment, initiative, and experience in selecting, interpreting, and applying the available guidance and making compromises and adaptations, where warranted, to resolve unusual problems encountered during the course of her work. The guidance permits a sufficient degree of flexibility for adaptation and interpretation to resolve problems encountered at the installation level. The appellant provides input and recommends changes to policies and reviews proposed changes to policies and procedures.

The appealed position does not meet Level 3-4 in that the guidelines used by the appellant cover most situations and are not subject to *significant* interpretation or adaptation. The appellant believes that her work with the PPVP meets this level in that there were no clearly established guidelines or policies in place. However, our fact-finding shows that guidance concerning operation of the PPVP was routinely given by NAVFAC Southern Division. Out-of-the-ordinary and complex questions were elevated up the chain of command or directly to NAVFAC Southern Division. The appellant cited data collection and reporting involved in the PPVP as an example meeting Level 3-4. Specifically, the appellant was instructed by higher headquarters to collect survey information. The appellant received only basic instruction for the collection of data, i.e., type of information needed. She had to provide the concept and coordinate for the collection and presentation of the reporting data. This assignment clearly fits within the description of Level 3-3 and does not reflect the level of difficulty described at Level 3-4. Additionally, the appellant is not responsible for the development of new operating techniques which is a requirement of Level 3-4.

Level 3-3 and 275 points are credited.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work in terms of purpose, breadth, depth of housing assignments, and the effect of the work product and services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-3, the primary purpose of the work is to plan, schedule, coordinate, and monitor the operational management and efficient use of housing projects, facilities, and resources; analyze problem areas; and recommend or implement corrective measures based on housing program requirements. The work involves dealing with a variety of occupancy related problems, formulation

of directives, and evaluation of the adequacy of services provided. It affects the efficiency of the operation of the housing program and the living conditions of the families being housed.

At Level 5-4, the employee functions as a specialist with expertise in housing techniques and methodology and, in this capacity, provides advisory services on specific problems, projects, programs, and functions to other agency organizations. The focus of the work at this level is on the development of management programs and criteria related to the application of agency housing policies. The work impacts major segments and activities of the agency's housing policies and programs.

The appealed position meets Level 5-3 in that the primary purpose of the work performed by the appellant is the administration, control, and management of housing related operations and activities involving facilities located at NAS [geographic location]. In this capacity, the appellant is responsible for the full range of housing activities including ensuring installation level conformance with agency housing policies; serving as a technical expert to advise installation officials on methods, processes, and agency policies relating to management, maintenance, operation, and utilization of housing; monitoring the utilization of housing facilities and resources; and analyzing problems and recommending solutions or implementing corrective measures for unusual or unique occupant problems. The appellant's work affects the efficient operation of housing services at the installation and the living conditions of military personnel and their families.

Level 5-4 is not met. The appellant is not responsible for providing advisory services on housing management techniques and methodology to other organizations as is required at this level. Her work also does not affect major segments and activity areas of the agency's, i.e., Department of the Navy's, housing policies and programs. The appellant serves as the installation's technical expert on matters involving the local housing program for NAS [geographic location] which provides housing for members of other service branches. As a result, the appellant has contacts with civilian housing personnel or military supervisors of other service branches to resolve problems involving differing housing policies or infractions of Navy housing rules by the service member. These contacts may also be to discuss policies implemented by NAS [geographic location] which are of interest to housing officials at other military installations. However, these contacts are for the purpose of exchanging information regarding the solution to a specific local problem, not providing advisory services to another agency regarding the management of its housing program. While the appellant provides input and comments concerning her daily operations of the PPVP to higher headquarters, the focus of her work is the operation of the local housing programs (including the PPVP), not the development of housing management programs and policy at the agency level for use by other housing specialists.

Level 5-3 and 150 points are credited.

Summary

In summary, we have evaluated the appellant's position as follows:

	Factor	Level	Points
1	Knowledge Required by the Position	1-7	1250
2	Supervisory Controls	2-4	450
3	Guidelines	3-3	275
4	Complexity	4-4	225
5	Scope and Effect	5-3	150
6	Personal Contacts	6-3	60
7	Purpose of Contacts	7-3	120
8	Physical Demands	8-1	5
9	Work Environment	9-1	5
TOTAL POINTS			2540

The appellant's position warrants 2540 points. Therefore, in accordance with the grade conversion table in the GS-1173 standard, the position is properly graded at GS-11.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Housing Manager, GS-1173-11.