

# **INNOVATIVE STATE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION & SALARY – OFFICE OF PERSONNEL SERVICES & BENEFITS**

### **FAST-TRACK SPECIFICATION UPDATE PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The Classification and Salary Division (CAS) within the Office of Personnel Services and Benefits (OPSB), Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM) developed a fast-track revision process to systematically review all of the State's specifications and classification descriptions, approximately 2000 in number. The goal of this process is to determine current use of the specifications, update legal references and technical terms, to simplify language within the documents, and to determine appropriateness of applicant requirements. Factors influencing the order of selection of specifications to be reviewed are the number of State employees impacted by the classifications and the date of last revision.

A coordinator oversees the specification update process, which is as follows:

- A classification series is assigned to a CAS team. The team analyst has two weeks to review, revise, and email the initial drafts back to the coordinator.
- The coordinator reviews the drafts for accuracy and clarity and makes appropriate changes. The coordinator then sends the initial drafts and a standard questionnaire to user agencies and employee exclusive representative(s), if appropriate. A two-week turnaround time is expected.
- Comments are forwarded to the team analyst who reviews and amends drafts.
- The coordinator sends final drafts to the user agencies, employee exclusive representative(s), as appropriate, and the OPSB Recruitment and Examination Division for final review, with a one week deadline for response.
- After all comments from agency and employee exclusive representative(s) are resolved, specifications are prepared for signature by the CAS Division Director.
- The Division Director does a final review and signs the specifications, indicating approval for publication.

Most of the process is completed using electronic copies and emails, limiting paper waste. As of March 1, 2010, 540 classification specifications have been updated, impacting over 30,000 positions.

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### **FAST-TRACK SPECIFICATION UPDATE PROGRAM – NARRATIVE**

1. Please provide a brief description of this program.

The Division of Classification and Salary (CAS) is a part of the Office of Personnel Services and Benefits (OPSB) within the Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM). One of the primary responsibilities of this Division is to develop and maintain a uniform and competitive classification system, including the development and maintenance of classification specifications.

The fast-track specification update program is a systematic review of existing specifications and classification descriptions to determine current use, to update legal references and technical terms, to simplify language within the documents, and to determine appropriateness of applicant requirements. This process is meant to be cost-neutral, so changes that would result in an increase in spending, such as restructuring levels in a series, are not undertaken. Major revisions also are deferred for inclusion in the normal specification revision process.

CAS team analysts review the current specifications, strike outdated language and references and add clarifying language, as appropriate. The initial draft specifications then are emailed to the user agencies for their review. If CAS has specific questions about current use, these are included in the email. Agency comments and suggestions are reviewed and may result in modifications to the drafts. During the review process, employee exclusive representatives whose bargaining unit members are affected by the specifications are given an opportunity to

comment on the proposed drafts. After consideration of the comments received, final drafts are forwarded to the user agencies for a final review and to OPSB's Recruitment and Examination Division for review of the minimum qualifications required. The projected turnaround time for each series from assignment to approval and signature is eight to ten weeks.

An added benefit of the fast-track program is that unused classifications can be identified during the review process. These classifications can be made obsolete or abolished, as appropriate.

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

This program has been operational since October 2008.

3. Why was this program created?

CAS recognized the need to refresh certain specifications, which evolved into this process and began a systematic review of all classification specifications. In addition, one of the goals of this program is to simplify language so that it is clear and easily understood by agency personnel generalists, management and supervisory staff, employees and applicants. This program also addresses concerns that some specifications were not reflective of the current use of the classifications.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?

Previously, classification specifications and classification descriptions were revised only upon agency request. The fast-track program represents the first time that an organized, thorough review of all specifications and classification descriptions has been undertaken. New procedures and forms were developed, along with a projected timeline to ensure continuity in assigning work and reviewing specifications, obtaining agency and employee exclusive

representative input, proposing final drafts and approving the updated specifications for publication. This systematic review of specifications has been well-received by agency management, personnel staff, and employee exclusive representatives. It also represents the first time the State has actively sought the input of employee exclusive representatives in this process, which has been well-received by these organizations.

5. What was the program's start up cost?

The program uses existing staff and materials. No new materials were needed to implement the program.

6. What are the program's operational costs?

With the increased use of email, operational costs of this program are negligible.

7. How is the program funded?

General funds.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

Yes.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states?

No.

10. How do you measure the success of this program?

Success is measured by the number of specifications and classification descriptions that have been revised and the total number of employees affected. Additionally, the increased utility

of the specifications and the level of customer satisfaction with the process and end product is another measure of success.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

Forms and procedures have been modified since the program began. The program also has benefited from increased participation from DBM's Recruitment and Examination Division. Feedback from that division has enhanced understanding and utility of the updated specifications for agency recruiters.