

Program Title: Title Consolidation Initiative

State: New Jersey

Contact: Peter J. Lyden, III

Title: Manager, Communications

Agency: NJ Civil Service Commission

Mailing Address: PO Box 317, Trenton, NJ 08625-0317

Phone: 609-292-6219

Fax: 609-984-3631

Email: Peter.Lyden@csc.state.nj.us

NJ CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION TITLE CONSOLIDATION INITIATIVE

The State of New Jersey and the 417 jurisdictions that participate in its Civil Service system began the year 2010 with over 8,000 job titles combined. Like sediment at the bottom of a river, they had accumulated gradually over the years, but now impeded the swift and safe navigation of budgetary realities. It fell upon the backs of taxpayers to tote the barge of antiquated and duplicative public sector jobs over the shoals of shortfalls.

Since taking Office, a priority for Governor Chris Christie has been to strengthen the state workforce, eliminate wasteful spending, and improve government operations. Classification reform is a key component to accomplishing the Governor's goals for a more effective government. Last year, the Civil Service Commission was tasked by Chair/CEO Robert M. Czech with reducing the State and local job titles in its classification system.

These sweeping measures required the support and participation of all stakeholders in the merit system, including State and local appointing authorities, the New Jersey League of Municipalities, and the New Jersey Association of Counties. New Jersey is one of a few states whose State-level Civil Service Commission has responsibility for State and local jurisdictions.

The Title Consolidation Initiative is a collaborative effort between the New Jersey Civil Service Commission and representatives of the local jurisdictions it serves to survey, inventory and evaluate titles with similar skills and competencies in an effort to combine as many as possible into broadly defined classes.

In approximately twelve months since the Initiative was launched, over 1,100 titles have been eliminated or combined with others. Future phases of the program include collapsing bilingual variations into the associated base title.

NJ CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION TITLE CONSOLIDATION INITIATIVE

NARRATIVE ANSWERS

1. The goals of the Title Consolidation Initiative are to eliminate barriers that appointing authorities face in the current classification system and to provide a framework that allows them greater flexibility to manage their workforces, broaden employee mobility, improve productivity, and provide more cost-effective service delivery to taxpayers.

The Initiative involves a thorough review of job descriptions and titles at municipal, county, and State levels to determine which were essential and which were duplicative, obsolete, or too specific. Rather than relying solely on Civil Service staff to make the determination, the Chair/CEO took the bold step of reaching out to a major group of the Commission's customers – municipal and county managers. Having come from local government himself, Mr. Czech recognized that stakeholders had to be involved from the start if meaningful reform were to happen. He spearheaded creation of a Title Consolidation Committee with approximately 10 members representing the Commission, municipalities, and counties. It met regularly over the first year of the Initiative to review the goals of the program and to align them with the realities of public-sector personnel management.

2. March 2010 (ongoing).

3. New Jersey's Civil Service system relies heavily on a narrow set of standards that are too rigid and cumbersome for today's human resource needs. The Title Consolidation Initiative involves reviewing titles with similar skills and competencies in an effort to combine as many titles as possible into more broadly defined classes. The goal is to eliminate the barriers that agencies currently face, and provide greater flexibility for managing a workforce based on changing organizational priorities.

4. The Title Consolidation Initiative is unique in two respects: first, New Jersey is one of just four states that have administrative oversight for civil service entities beyond the State government; second, the Initiative is a collaborative effort of the State Civil Service Commission and representatives of the county and municipal hiring agencies it serves. Instead of imposing a top-down solution, the Title Consolidation Initiative brought stakeholders into the room over a period of months to review the goals of the process and align them with the day-to-day needs of appointing authorities. Regarding title consolidation at the state level, CSC staff met with a number of agency representatives, consulted with the Office of Employee Relations (OER) on potential contractual issues, and advised unions of specific changes.

5. The Title Consolidation Initiative has no dedicated line-item budget. The Title Consolidation Committee has approximately 10 members including the Chair/CEO of the Civil Service Commission and other individuals representing the New Jersey League of Municipalities, New Jersey Association of Counties, and a cross-section of North-

South- and Central-Jersey County and municipal government representatives acting for large, medium and small local civil service jurisdictions. Internal Civil Service Commission staff in the Division of State and Local Operations is completing the administrative work of ensuring the titles consolidated have comparable knowledge, skills, abilities and experience, as well as being consistent with the Hay Evaluation schema. As titles are consolidated, affected appointing authorities utilizing the titles are contacted regarding impact on their organization.

6. See number five. Internal resources are being utilized.

7. The title consolidation effort is funded through the direct appropriation for salaries of Civil Service Commission staff. Other local government representatives and agencies serve pro bono.

8. The overall concept of title consolidation did not originate in NJ. Other states have had consolidation programs; however, our initiative is not modeled specifically after another state's program, and is a collaboration among State, county, and municipal stakeholders.

9. The New Jersey Civil Service Commission is unique because it is one of four states that have administrative oversight for civil service entities in State, County and Local government operations. This centralized approach to civil service covers over 200,000 public employees in all levels of government. Therefore, title consolidation must streamline job responsibilities to encompass similarities while acknowledging the differences. An additional element for consideration is that some titles are required by statute or municipal ordinance, which varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The goal of the title consolidation is to focus on common elements of titles versus narrow distinctions. Thus, titles that share similar functions, as well as the same type of service, class of service, education, non-supervisory experience, supervisory experience and managerial experience type, organizational level, and class code may be appropriate for consolidation.

10. The goal is to reduce the number of titles by one-third. As of this writing, approximately 1,100 titles out of nearly 8,000 have been eliminated in the first year, and the effort has supported the transformation initiatives in progress in the Departments of Environmental Protection and the Treasury and the Motor Vehicle Commission.

11. The goals and procedures of the program have remained the same since its inception.