



**Classification and Compensation Plan Policy**

**PURPOSE**

The salary and benefits provided by Grand Traverse County are for the purpose of obtaining and retaining competent individuals to perform the services the County provides to our citizens. The County will provide salaries on the basis of internal equity and external competitiveness as it is fiscally able to do so.

**POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**Definition**

The Classification Plan provides a complete inventory of all positions in the County and accurate descriptions and specifications for each class of employment. The plan standardizes titles, duties, and responsibilities, provides a sound basis for establishing and maintaining an equitable pay system and provides uniform qualification standards for employment and promotion.

**How jobs are compared?**

Comparing and ranking jobs that are quite dissimilar can be a very difficult task. To do this, the County needed a system that was:

- Internally fair (equal pay for equal work)
- Competitive with jobs outside the County
- Flexible and easily administered
- Well communicated and understood

The County has chosen to use a point-factor system, established in 1990 by a consultant, with language modified by an employee committee in 1998. Factors of significant value to Grand Traverse County were identified and are described in this plan. Weights were assigned to each of the factors based on the importance to the organization. Points, based on a 1,000 point scale, were distributed to each of the classifications. Classifications were then grouped into grade levels. It is important to remember that only the work content required for each job is considered in evaluation of the position. The personal attributes and/or performance of the employee who fills the job does not play a role in this process. The job being measured should be viewed in light of its normal or standard activities and accountabilities, not on the basis of an unusual, one-time task or assignment.

**Factors, weights, and distribution of points**

<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>WEIGHTS</b>	<b>#LEVELS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Education	12%	5	24	48	72	96	120
Work Experience	9%	4	4	23	45	68	90
Freedom of Action	14%	5	28	56	84	112	140
Mental Capacity	20%	5	40	80	120	160	200
Job Impact	14%	5	28	56	84	112	140
Communication	18%	5	36	72	108	144	180
Supervision	9%	4	23	45	68	90	
Physical Risks	4%	3	13	27	40		
	100%						

### **How are new classifications added to the plan?**

When a department head requests a new job, they shall submit a Job Task and Responsibility Questionnaire detailing job tasks to Human Resources. Human Resources shall review the request for placement into the proper classification. If the job does not reasonably fit into a current classification, the department head, Human Resources, and others as needed, shall develop a new classification description based on the job tasks, and the Human Resources Director shall determine point factors for recommendation.

### **What if a point factor is in error?**

Jobs change over time, and in an attempt to keep point factors accurate, Human Resources shall go over both the classification description and point factors with Department Heads for all jobs at least every five years.

### **How are salary schedules determined?**

The Board of Commissioners, during the budget process, approves adjustments to the salary schedule to keep salaries in line with cost of living as determined by the Consumers Price Index and Detroit Index for the prior June. The index amount is reduced by the increased cost of health coverage and the cost of any benefit improvements purchased by the individual bargaining group.

### **What if the market indicates a different wage range?**

Internal equity is the basis of the classification plan, however, external market is also important to confirm that our salary schedules are in keeping with our identified employer market in order to recruit and retain qualified employees. Therefore we will survey the market:

- At least once every 5 years for benchmark classifications
- Whenever difficulty in recruitment or retention becomes a factor
- At the request of the County Administrator or Director of Human Resources

### **Any questions?**

We believe that our people are our most important resource. The County's salary administration program is designed to provide you with a more effective, objective and fair compensation system. If you have any questions about the classification or compensation system, feel free to talk with your supervisor or call the Human Resources Department.

## **FACTOR DESCRIPTIONS**

### **EDUCATION**

This factor measures the minimum level of formal schooling as required by the job description for the position. The job description is established at an entry level which provides a reasonable expectation that the employee will be successful on the job. The factor does not address knowledge or skills acquired as a result of work experience, nor does it address orientation programs or internships.

1. This job requires communication skills (grammar, punctuation, written organization), arithmetic skills (operations using fractions and decimals), and/or other skills that are normally acquired through high school level courses, or through vocational/applied skills courses. These skills are used in activities such as basic typing, completion of schedules and records, and the operation of equipment. Requires a high school diploma or GED equivalency.
2. The job requires knowledge of a specialized nature, normally acquired through a general high school education and specialized training such as that acquired in the first year of college, technical, or business school and which cumulatively is viewed as equivalent to a minimum 24 credit hours of college level training.

3. The job requires advanced training such as that acquired in the first two or three years of college, technical or business school. If the job requires an associate's degree it should be rated at this level.
4. The job requires a professional level of knowledge in a specialized field, equivalent to that which is normally acquired by completing a regular four year college program. If the job requires a bachelor's degree it should be rated at this level.
5. The job requires a professional level of knowledge in a specialized field, equivalent to that which is normally acquired by completing a post-bachelor degree. If the job requires a master's degree it should be rated at this level.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

This factor measures the minimum level of previous work experience related to the job as required by the job description for the position. The job description is established at an entry level which provides a reasonable expectation that the employee will be successful in the job. Individuals do not get additional points for experience which exceeds the minimum required by the job description.

1. Related experience up to one year.
2. Minimum one year experience in an area or combination of areas required by the job description.
3. Minimum three years' experience in an area or combination of areas required by the job description.
4. Minimum five years' experience in an area or combination of areas required by the job description.

## **FREEDOM OF ACTION**

Freedom of Action measures the extent to which decision making, on a routine basis, is controlled by existing policy, procedures, and instructions and the amount of discretion allowed without supervisor involvement. Initiative is expected from all employees in maintaining a workflow.

1. Work is routine and well covered by existing policies, procedures or instructions, and supervision is readily available.
2. Employee performs the work independently within established policies and procedures, and supervision consists of general instructions in new assignments with advice and assistance normally available.
3. Employee exercises considerable discretion for independent decisions based on technical or professional knowledge, with a manager available for consultation in difficult situations.
4. Work is accomplished with freedom to establish, implement and oversee policies in a department or selected division restricted only by broad county wide policies.
5. Job has the freedom to oversee and implement policies that affect the county organization. Coordinates the planning for many large and diverse organizational components with substantial discretion in determining course of action.

## **MENTAL COMPLEXITY**

This factor measures the complexity of issues to be resolved. Complexity is defined as the level of "thinking process" that is required to gather data, analyze situations, make plans, solve problems, make decisions and/or be creative.

1. The methods used in carrying out planning, problem solving, or decision making are defined by standard practices or procedures. A supervisor or coworker is contacted if a task is outside the scope of standard practice.
2. Job tasks require gathering and analysis of information which may be varied. Completion of task may require subjective judgment within defined parameters. Supervisor may be contacted if task is outside scope of technical knowledge.
3. Job tasks require interpretation, analysis, and anticipation of effect. Diverse tasks or situations must be analyzed, solved, and remedial action taken for modification or adaptation as required.
4. Complex issues must be analyzed and planned ahead of execution, frequently without precedent. Trends must be evaluated to reach sound conclusions and frame recommendations on specific matters.
5. Substantial time and effort must be devoted to researching, obtaining and organizing needed data and information. Issues frequently involve analysis of abstract problems which affect the county as a whole or a large division, and where effects are not readily predictable.

## **JOB IMPACT**

This factor reflects the opportunity for decision making and the impact from those decisions. The degree of impact is the extent to which proper or improper performance of duties and responsibilities can either contribute to or interfere with the day to day operations and long term direction of the County, and or its citizens.

1. The duties and responsibilities of the job will have little impact on the image or financial stability of the county and/or the well-being or rights of its citizens. Errors are picked up in subsequent operations.
2. The duties and responsibilities of the job have limited or short term impact on the image or financial stability of the county and/or the well-being or rights of its citizens. Errors will affect the work of others to the extent of requiring time and effort to trace and correct.
3. The duties and responsibilities of the job will have moderate impact on the image or financial stability of the county and/or the well-being or rights of its citizens. Errors would be difficult to detect but have limited public impact.
4. The duties and responsibilities of the job will have significant and/or long term impact on the image or financial stability of the county and/or the well-being or rights of its citizens. Significant impact may include actions or recommendations that affect the safety, life, or incarceration of an individual, or major financial decisions.
5. Critical goals and objectives would not be achieved. The interests of County government would be adversely and very seriously affected.

## COMMUNICATION

This factor measures the level of interpersonal and communication skills required in handling business relationships, both internal and external, that are essential to adequate performance of the job and the frequency with which the skill is used.

1. Job duties require interpersonal and communication skills with internal associates regularly, generally on routine matters such as furnishing or obtaining information.
2. Regular customer contact usually in routine situations such as obtaining and/or providing information, may refer difficult contacts to a supervisor.
3. Job requires regular communications with customers that are of a service nature involving the ability to present problems and/or resolve questions. Employees are expected to handle difficult contacts.
4. Frequent customer contacts which require considerable public relations skills. Contacts involve non-routine problems and require in-depth discussion and/or persuasion in order to gain concurrence or to resolve case problems and gain cooperation.
5. Frequent contacts in which the employee may act as a principal spokesman for the County and/or be authorized to make commitments on behalf of the County in important matters.

## SUPERVISION

This factor measures the level of authority and span of control of the position in supervising or managing the job performance of other county employees, including the professional development and discipline of staff. Jobs which involve the occasional direction of other employees "in the absence of the supervisor or manager" are not considered to have supervisory or managerial authority.

1. Regularly coordinates, organizes and assigns the work of others. This may include one or more employees, volunteers or non-employees doing the same or closely related work.
2. Working Supervisor who may perform the same duties and responsibilities of his/her subordinates, and/or other distinct non-supervisory duties, while having delegated authority to begin disciplinary actions and guide staff in professional development goals.
3. As a supervisor, has the authority to make important personnel decisions or to "effectively recommend" such decisions, including hiring, disciplinary actions, and promotions. Develops training programs and guides staff in professional development goals.
4. A department head level having full supervisory authority in important personnel decisions including hiring, disciplinary actions, termination and promotion. Additionally, is responsible to initiate, coordinate and evaluate work processes for a particular division or department. May have supervisors between him/her and departmental staff.

## PHYSICAL RISKS

This factor measures both the regular physical demands and hazards of the job, including visual concentration, repetitive motion, manual labor, and exposure to safety and health hazards that cannot be eliminated by use of safety devices or recommended safety practices.

1. Job tasks offer regular opportunity for movement, including sitting, standing, walking, some lifting and carrying, visual attention at a computer screen, and operation of machines and equipment. Exposure to accidents and health hazards are unlikely. Most office and administrative positions are classified at this level.
2. Job requires frequent physical effort required in lifting, carrying and moving materials and equipment. Job tasks, such as field work, produce exposure to injuries such as minor burns, cuts, abrasions or falls. Little or no health hazard is involved.
3. Job requires significant strength or stamina in order to perform regular manual labor or job tasks, produce exposure to serious injuries such as cuts, burns, or fractures obtained from use of equipment, hazardous materials, and contact with dangerous people, etc., or to significant health hazards.

## TERMINOLOGY

**Job:** The assigned group of tasks for each employee (specific assignment), i.e. "Small Claims Clerk", used for identification within a department only, not always given a title.

**Job Task List:** List of tasks for a specific assignment prepared by the Department Head/Supervisor for each specific position, used for employee understanding of their job and to determine proper classification. This can be done through the Job Task and Responsibility Questionnaire.

**Classification (or Class):** Title of a group of jobs with similar requirements and tasks, i.e. "Secretary".

**Classification (or Class) Descriptions:** Sometimes called Job Descriptions or Position Descriptions, finalized by Human Resources, and used for determining factor levels in the Classification Plan.

**EEO Group:** Broad collection of similar classifications as defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, i.e. Administrative, Professional, Technical, Paraprofessional, Service/Maintenance, Administrative Support, Skilled Craft, and Protective Service.

**Factors:** Various items determined to be of value in determining Compensation.

**Weight:** The amount of value given to each factor, the weight of all factors will total 100%.

**Factor levels:** Various levels within each a factor. Each Classification should fit one level in each factor better than any other level. Each job within the classification may not fit the level, but the preponderance of the jobs in the Classification should.

**Points:** Each factor level is assigned a number of points, calculated by the weight given the Factor and the number of factor levels within the factor. The total of all points is 1,000.

**Grade:** Grouping of Classifications within specific point spreads. Each grade is assigned a salary level, determined originally by market comparisons of benchmark jobs to counties of similar population size and the larger local employers.

**Benchmark job:** One to three specific jobs within each Grade which has a market comparable readily available. All benchmark jobs shall be surveyed against the market at least once every five years.

**Market:** When one particular classification within a grade is found to be way off in the market (usually determined by difficulty in recruiting), it may be assigned a market multiplier to bring it up (or down)

to market. Such market multiplier will be removed at any time that the market is found to change to fit the County's internal comparable.

**Internal Comparison:** The comparison to other county positions, this is the first and most important item in the review of any classification for appropriate factor levels.

## **PROCESS FOR REQUEST FOR SPECIAL EVALUATION**

### **BY AN EMPLOYER OR THEIR SUPERVISOR**

Sometimes jobs change suddenly, but more often jobs change gradually over a period of time. If, at any time during the year, you believe that your job tasks and responsibilities have changed significantly:

- A. Employees/supervisors will review the employee's task list as identified on the Job Task and Responsibility Questionnaire. (HR strongly recommends that all job assignments have a task list) for changes that have occurred in the employee's job. (This could be a group of employees who have the same job assignment)
- B. If (rule of thumb) at least 25% of the employee's time is spent in new tasks that do not fit the current classification, the employee/supervisor should document these changes and present them to the Department Head.
- C. The Department Head will give careful consideration to the request, reviewing the task changes, comparing to the classification description of the current job and to other classifications that may more closely fit the job. The Department Head will forward the request to HR along with documentation only if they feel that there is merit for review.
- D. HR will review and meet with the Department Head, and others as needed, to review the documentation and determine if the job:
  - Better fits another classification - the Department Head will then present a Staffing Plan Amendment to the County Administrator or designee
  - Doesn't reasonably fit any existing classification - determine appropriate point factors for recommendation of a new classification
  - Still reasonably fits the current classification - Department Head will respond to employee/supervisor as appropriate

### **SHIFT OF JOB TASKS FOR AN ENTIRE CLASSIFICATION**

When a Department Head or Human Resources feels that there has been a substantial shift in job tasks of all or most jobs assigned to a classification OR point factors do not fit the classification description:

- A. HR will meet with all the Department Heads who have staff assigned to the classification in question to review the task list changes to revise the classification description.
- B. If the change is significant, HR will recommend amendment to the Point Factors to the County Administrator.

### **How about dollars?**

The total factor points determines the grade, which determines the wage range on the appropriate pay scale. The new pay rate shall be determined by the Compensation policy. If the reclassification is to a higher grade, the policy for Promotion shall be followed. If the reclassification is to a lower grade, current employees will be grandfathered in their current wage range. It is up to the department to find funds in their budget to cover any increased expense.

Note: This policy may differ for those employees who are members of recognized unions, organizations, or associations. Any questions related to the content of this policy, or its interpretation, should be directed to Human Resources.