

T0: Personnel Board

FROM: Sarah Olson, Human Resources

SUBJECT: Program Assistant 1 – Housing Operations Unit

DATE: April 7, 2015

At the request of the Housing Operations Unit Director Augie Olvera, a study was conducted of two Program Assistant 1 positions (Compensation Group 20, Range 11), held by S. Amos and V. Kutz. These positions provide a high level of administrative support and programmatic responsibility relating to federal housing assistance programs and activities. After reviewing the duties and responsibilities associated with these positions, as seen in the attached position descriptions, I conclude that the two positions should be recreated as Program Assistant 2 positions (Compensation Group 20, Range 12), and that the incumbents should be reallocated to the new positions.

The class specification for Program Assistant 2 indicates that it is responsible administrative support and advanced-level secretarial, basic program coordination, and staff supervision work in a department, division or other independent program unit and employees are

...responsible for coordinating clerical and administrative support, performing and coordinating secretarial functions for the program head, and performing a variety of specific program related functions. The work typically involves interpreting, developing and/or applying operating policies, systems and procedures; performing and/or coordinating a full range of standard and complex administrative support functions at least comparable to the Program Assistant 1 level; and carrying out a number of additional program functions which require specialized program knowledge, independent decision-making; and responsibility for specific operating procedures and systems development and communication.

These two positions report directly to the Housing Administrative Coordinator. These positions must clearly understand, interpret, and implement Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandates and Community Development Authority (CDA) policy requirements. These duties require independent judgment in making final eligibility determinations, to include performing a detailed analysis of applicant information, consistency in application, and ensuring that decisions meet program needs and requirements. A thorough review is required in evaluating and verifying materials obtained from the applicant, employers, landlords, banking institutions, and criminal background checks, (checks that are requiring 3 to 4 more screening tools than in prior years). These positions independently determine if additional investigation of items are required (reviewing court files, police reports, contact with other housing authorities, etc.) After a review of all information obtained, these positions independently approve or deny applicant eligibility for housing programs. At all steps of the process, these positions are responsible for sending correspondence to applicants advising them of their status (in great detail) and responding to general questions regarding their eligibility. If denied, applicants have a right to appeal the decision at an informal hearing before a hearing examiner.

Therefore, these positions must ensure that the documentation on which their decision was based is accurate and complete. In addition, there has been an increasing number of court cases due to a higher rate of Housing denials and in that case, both positions must coordinate hearings and educate Hearing Officers and provide detailed evidence.

These two positions are also responsible for managing and maintaining multiple program waiting lists. The Housing Unit currently has a waiting list of about 2,000 applications for Public Housing, and the Section 8 program has a waiting list of over 3,000. In addition, there have been new initiatives such as Section 8 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing, Section 8 Family Unification, and the Section 42 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. These new initiatives involve the creation and management of many new program admission and eligibility processes, as well as new waiting lists. Changes also involve learning several different federal and IRS regulations. For example, with Veterans Section 8, V. Kutz must work with the VA Hospital and Dane County Human Services and a new Social Worker for every applicant. Most recently, both positions helped in the implementation of an online application system and this entailed working with Information Technology. There was a successful implementation of the Section 8 online application system and the goal is to have multi-family and public housing online in May of 2015. With the new online system, applicants have access to their application status throughout the process.

These positions must work closely with the multiple Program Site Managers to determine vacancy needs for public housing and coordinate a timely selection of qualified applicants from the waiting list. These positions must also determine any needed occupancy exceptions and coordinate any special needs cases or reasonable accommodations.

Due to the reporting requirements of these HUD programs, these positions are also responsible for compiling data, maintaining records and preparing various types of reports to include applicant status and eligibility. In addition, they assist the Unit Director and Managers in the collection and analysis of data. Accuracy and completeness of reporting determines the City's rating with HUD, which in turn can affect the City's subsidy levels.

Most recently these positions have taken on leadership responsibilities in the training and coaching, coordinating daily work assignments and clerical support activities of the Housing Receptionist and two hourly Clerk Typists.

From the above description, the primary function of these positions is to provide direct implementation and coordination of federal housing assistance programs administered by the CDA. The classification of Program Assistant 2 is to recognize those positions which provide significant support to a department/division program. These positions require a more in-depth knowledge of the program in question and allow the positions to function with a higher degree of independence.

Most recently, a study was completed in the Engineering division for a Secretary 2 that moved into a Program Assistant 2 classification. These two Program Assistant 2 positions are similar to

Ms. J. Pien, (the Engineering Program Assistant 2) in that she is charged with prequalifying contractors that work with the City. Her responsibilities included providing appropriate forms and templates for contractors to use for applications and being the primary communication liaison for contractors during the application process and reviewing and approving certificates for insurance, bonds and letters of credit related to public works contracts.

Because of the reasons outlined in this memo, I recommend the Program Assistant 1 positions, occupied by S. Amos and V. Kutz, be recreated as Program Assistant 2 positions and the incumbents be reallocated.

We have prepared the necessary Resolution to implement this recommendation

Editor's Note:

Compensation Group/Range	2015 Annual Minimum (Step 1)	2015 Annual Maximum (Step 5)	2015 Annual Maximum +12% longevity
20/11	\$43,598	\$48,802	\$54,658
20/12	\$44,672	\$50,097	\$56,109

cc: Augie Olvera—Housing Program Manager
Natalie Erdman—CDA Executive Director
Lisa Daniels—Housing Administrative Coordinator
Greg Leifer—Employee and Labor Relations Manager
Mike Lipski—HR Services Manager