

# The Basics of Classification

Wisconsin State Civil Service is divided into two separate systems: the unclassified and the classified.

Unclassified positions include all state officers elected by the people, officers and employees appointed by the Governor, the faculty and academic staff of the University of Wisconsin System, and Justices of the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

The classified service comprises all positions not included in the unclassified service. Currently, there are more than 36,000 classified positions in the State of Wisconsin. Each of these positions is assigned to one of more than 2,100 classifications available in the Wisconsin Civil Service Classification Plan.

## **The Classification Plan**

A classification is a grouping of positions that perform similar duties and responsibilities, such as Accountant or Management Information Specialist.

The Classification Plan is made up of classes described in class specifications and their appropriate pay range assignments. A classification specification exists for every class. In accordance with Wisconsin Administrative Code ER 2.04(2), class specifications are the basic authority for the assignment of positions to a class. Class specifications define the nature of the work of the class through the use of any or all of the following: definition statements, examples of work performed, allocation patterns of representative positions, and statements of inclusion or exclusion.

The Classification Plan is reviewed, revised and updated primarily through personnel management surveys. Surveys are used to create, revise or abolish classifications in response to legislative, programmatic, organizational and technological changes. Surveys are also used to maintain the state's competitive position in the external labor market.

## **Why is Classification Important?**

The classification of a position has critical impact on the position and on the person (the incumbent) who fills that position. The six main areas of impact are: compensation, external market comparison, internal equity, recruitment, bargaining unit representation, and Fair Labor Standards Act Exclusion.

**Compensation** – The pay rate of any employee is directly linked to the class to which his or her position is assigned. Classifications, not individual positions, are assigned to pay ranges. Each classification in Wisconsin is assigned to a pay range which has a minimum and a maximum. Some types of pay adjustments, such as negotiated market adjustment or a parity adjustment, are based on the employee's classification title.

**External Market Comparison** – Using classification titles, Department of Employment Relations personnel can conduct external market comparisons with positions in the private sector and in other public sector employment to ensure that the State of Wisconsin as an employer pays its employees consistently with the “going market rate.” It is the State’s goal to be a median or average employer neither lagging behind nor leading the market significantly.

**Internal Equity** – Classification is the main mechanism for guaranteeing those employees performing equal work receives equal pay.

**Recruitment** – Classification identifies a set of duties and groups the positions performing those duties together so that examinations can be developed to fill all related vacant positions. The classification of a position also determines its Affirmative Action Job Group, which may impact on recruitment procedures and efforts.

**Bargaining Unit Representation** – Classification determines whether a specific position is: 1) represented by a formal agreement or contract between a recognized bargaining unit and the State of Wisconsin; or 2) considered to be nonrepresented. Classification further determines which bargaining unit represents the particular position. Examples of represented positions include Attorney, Program Assistant, Teacher and Nurse Clinician. Nonrepresented positions include those designated as supervisory, confidential or management.

**Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Exclusion** – Classification helps to determine if the incumbent in a position is to be considered exempt or nonexempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA.