The Human Resources Department is pleased to announce that it will lead the Unified Personnel System (UPS) through a comprehensive Classification and Compensation Study in 2017. Compensation is naturally a key part of the employment relationship. So it is important that we remain broadly competitive in the local employment market and that each classification is compensated appropriately and equitably for the work performed.

Proper compensation and classification alignment enhances employee engagement and satisfaction and serves to assist our efforts to attract and retain the best talent. We will select a qualified, experienced consultant who will assist in evaluating where we currently stand in these regards as well as identify strategic opportunities for improvement.

The study will help us to:
- Ensure our competitiveness within the greater employment market for attracting and retaining employees
- Define and value job classifications that correspond to the work being done
- Rethink the way we design and manage our total employee reward experience
- Be proactive in our planning rather than reactive to external influences, as during the Great Recession
- Ensure that pay policies and practices are applied equitably
- Develop and expand opportunities for career development and career ladders

**Background**

The objective is to enable the Unified Personnel System (UPS) to determine if jobs are classified correctly and compensated equitably and competitively.

A comprehensive classification and compensation study was last conducted by Temple and Associates, an external consultant, in 2004 and the recommendations were implemented in 2005. That study was followed by periodic cyclic classification reviews and salary studies conducted by trained Human Resources (HR) internal staff. Since the last comprehensive study, a series of events have impacted UPS employees and the work being performed by many of them. The Great Recession resulted in a significant number of employees being “bumped” into different departments and different work roles. The recession also caused a reduction of approximately 1,000 positions, and in some cases, organizational changes that included the elimination of some services and departments, the consolidation of some departments, and the subsequent uncoupling of most of those consolidations.

**Overview**

The proposed study will include the following primary components:
- A classification study
- A compensation study
- A review of pay administration policies and practices

**The Classification Study**

This involves conducting job analysis and evaluating current job classifications, and updating existing class specifications. This study will examine job content and focus on the requirements of the job and the work that is performed. It’s important to note that the job analysis examines the position, and not the talents and qualifications, of the person in the position.

There are several possible outcomes to a classification study.
- Job analysis may determine that a position is in the correct job classification.
- The position may be reclassified into a job classification which pays the same, more, or less than the current job classification.
- Or analysis may determine that a new job classification needs to be created.

Reclassification actions may occur when there has been a substantive change (increase or decrease) in the general purpose, scope and essential functions of the position. Note that the focus of a reclassification is the position and changes which must be significant, substantial and permanent rather than associated with a temporary assignment.

Reclassification of a position does not automatically result in a salary increase. Positions may be reclassified upward, downward, or laterally.

**The Compensation Study**

The compensation study will involve a comprehensive market salary survey of targeted public and private sector organizations. The survey will include pay grade minimums and maximums, number of incumbents per classification, actual average salary, and supplemental (certification) pay or other pay additives, in order to capture total cash compensation.

Results of the compensation study will be used to design a pay program that is fair, equitable, and competitive with both public and private sector employers in the surrounding geographic market area from which the County recruits—in order to attract, engage, reward, and retain quality employees.

The study will also examine pay equity issues, identify corrective solutions as needed, and provide recommendations for strategies to avoid problems with pay equity in the future.

**The Pay Administration Review**

This involves a review of the County’s current compensation rules and guidelines, with recommendations for changes that will ensure that compensation remains competitive in future years.

The results will help the County determine if existing pay administration policies and practices are equitable, competitive with other organizations, and support the growth, development, and career progression of our workforce.

**Next Steps**

Human Resources is in the process of launching a Request for Proposal (RFP) and will begin accepting bids from consulting organizations. After a consultant has been selected, the study is expected to be completed within 12 months. Your participation in this study will be needed and, when the time comes, we encourage you to participate fully and openly with the study process.

Please be on the lookout for more information in future editions of The Pen.