

Classification Reform: Lessons Learned from a Sample of Public-Sector Organizations

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Classification Reform Background

- Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963
- Narrow job classes defined by narrow knowledge, skills and abilities
- Move toward broader classes that provide more flexibility
- Move from traditional KSAs to competency models

Classification Reform Background

Reasons Organizations Broadband:

- Recruiting and retention
- Create a performance-focused organization (part of pay-for-performance)
- More autonomy for managers
- Simplification
- Operate more like the private sector
- Others have been successful

Broader Classes:

- Allow for more flexibility in classification and compensation
- Are not as easily outdated

Competency Models

Competency Models are:

Aggregate of observed behaviors and knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that differentiate high and low performers and positively impact the organization (Schoonover, 1998)

- **Aligned with organizational strategies, values, and mission**
- **Broader in scope than KSAs**
- **More flexible than KSAs**
- **More enduring than KSAs**

Potential Pitfalls

Broadbanding (e.g., Arnold & Scott):

- Compensation inflation
- Less opportunity for promotion

Competencies:

- Often ill-defined
- Can be too broad to be descriptive
- Incomplete competency models

State of Georgia

- Developed G-Comps
- Serves as a Dictionary for agencies within state
- Agencies have flexibility in using the dictionary, but agency level competencies are still linked back to dictionary
- Some variability in how it is used
- Overall, pleased with what it has done to align HR functions, jobs

Florida Department of Transportation

- Identified 16 broad occupational groups and six classes in each group
- Replaced minimum experience and education qualifications with specific KSAs
- System allows for salary movements through the pay range, bonuses, and rewards for extra effort
- Was very successful
 - Much of this was due to involvement of stakeholders, including unions at every step

Washington State

- New system integrates competencies with skills and abilities across all functions (e.g., recruitment, assessment, selection, performance management, succession planning)
- Began implementing broader classes
- Hiring requirements will focus on specific positions, rather than broader classes
- Broadening pool by moving from minimum qualifications to desirable qualifications

National Security Agency

- Moved from expansive lists of positions to work roles
 - Focus on basic set of work requirements
 - Name that is meaningful to those who fill role
 - Name of corresponding job family
 - Concise narrative (e.g., primary duties and tasks)
 - Legally mandated licenses or certificates
 - Physical, environmental and equipment requirements
 - List of critical competencies

- NSA collected self-ratings from all employees on common competency taxonomy

- Developed profiles to be used for career development

Competency Dictionary Practices

Attribute	Core/Cross-occupation				Competencies Vary by Level					
	Michigan	Georgia (subteam)	G COMPS II)	Montana*	DOL	Hennepin County	Govt of Canada	Public Service (Canada)	Washington	OPM (MOSAIC)****
Identification/ Definition of roles										
Organization	Core	Core	Core	Core	1. Front Line 2. Support staff	1. Employees 2. Directors 3. Managers 4. Supervisors	Middle Managers	1. Deputy Minister 2. Assistant Deputy Minister 3. Director General 4. Director 5. Manager 6. Supervisor	1. Professional Level 2. General/ Mid level/ HR	1. Professional/ Administrative (a. General b. Technical) 2. Clerical/ Technical 3. Leadership Effectiveness 4. Leadership Update 5. IT Occupations and Specialty 6. Trade and Labor 7. Science and Engineering
Competency Definitions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Number of Competencies	12	13	32	46	38	15	20	7	27	
Competency Clusters			X	X		X	X	X		
Number of Competency Clusters			8	6		6	5	4		
Behavioral Indicators				X	X**	X			X	
Competency profiles										
Proficiency Scale		Y		X						
Number of proficiency scale points		5		5						
Performance Scale	X	X	Y				?	X		
Number of performance scale points	3	2	5				?	2		
Methodology		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Describes uses of competencies		X	X	X				X	X	
Described HR functions that use competencies		X	X	X				X***	X	X

Lessons Learned

➤ INVOLVE STAKEHOLDERS

➤ Have a communication plan

➤ Train managers

➤ Pilot test

➤ Don't be too ambitious

➤ Expect to make changes!