



United States  
**Office of  
Personnel Management**

Washington, DC 20415

**Classification Appeal Decision  
Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [Name of appellant]

**Agency classification:** Administrative Support Assistant (OA)  
GS-303-7

**Organization:** [Appellant's organization/location]  
United States Marshals Service  
U.S. Department of Justice

**OPM decision:** GS-303-7  
(Title at agency discretion, with inclusion  
of parenthetical title OA)

**OPM decision number:** C-0303-07-09

/s/ Judith Frenzel -for

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Robert D. Hendler  
Classification and Pay Claims  
Program Manager  
Center for Merit System Accountability  
Human Capital Leadership  
and Merit System Accountability

June 14, 2006

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Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

**Decision sent to:**

[Appellant's name and address]

Assistant Director for Human Resources  
Human Resources Division  
United States Marshals Service  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Washington, DC 20530-1000

Director of Personnel  
U.S. Department of Justice  
JMD Personnel Staff, Room 1110, NPB  
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## **Introduction**

On January 30, 2006, the San Francisco Field Services Group of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted a classification appeal from [name of appellant]. On May 9, 2006, we received the agency's complete and revised administrative report. The appellant's position is currently classified as Administrative Support Assistant (OA), GS-303-7, but she believes it should be classified as Prisoner Support Specialist, GS-301-9. The appellant works in the [appellant's organization/location], United States Marshals Service, U.S. Department of Justice. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

## **General issues**

The appellant makes various statements about the classification review process conducted by her agency, and compares her duties to a higher graded, two-grade interval position within her organization. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S. Code 5106, 5107, and 5112). In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of her position. Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others, which may or may not be classified correctly, as a basis for deciding her appeal. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison. Because our decision sets aside any previous agency decision, the classification practices used by the appellant's agency in classifying her position are not germane to the classification appeal process.

The appellant's agency has primary responsibility for ensuring that its positions are classified consistently with OPM appeal decisions. If the appellant considers her position so similar to another that they both warrant the same classification, she may pursue the matter by writing to her agency's headquarters human resources office. In doing so, she should specify the precise organizational location/installation, classification, duties, and responsibilities of the position in question. If the position is found to be basically the same as hers, the agency must correct its classification to be consistent with this appeal decision. Otherwise, the agency should explain to her the differences between her position and the other.

## **Position information**

Both the appellant and her supervisor have certified to the accuracy of the appellant's official position description (PD) [number]. The appellant's position serves as the focal point for coordinating prisoner movement for her District, which handles more individuals than any other District in [name of state]. She receives criminal writs, court orders, detainers, Judgment and Commitment orders, and requests for prisoner movement. She verifies the accuracy of those documents and supporting information concerning individual prisoners to ensure they are sent to the proper destinations and via the appropriate mode of transport, coordinates with submitting offices and institutions to resolve discrepancies, and institutes actions as requested. Her coordinating duties include working closely with staff of the Bureau of Prisons, Probation Offices, Parole Commissions, and other United States Marshals Service Officers in designating and transporting prisoners to and from local, state, and Federal institutions and correctional

facilities. The appellant arranges for the production of prisoners in Federal Courts at specific dates and times; coordinates the movement of prisoners by the agency's buses, vans, and the weekly Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System (JPATS) airlift to contract facilities, the Metropolitan Correctional Center, county jails, etc. She is responsible for preparing the appropriate documents to effect the moves, and inputting into various automated tracking systems to monitor prisoners' movements throughout the system, ensuring that trip manifests are accurate, and verifying that individuals have arrived at the designated locations. She ensures that the orders of the courts are given proper priority and that deadlines are met.

In reaching our classification decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant and her agency, including her official PD which is incorporated by reference into this decision. In addition, to help decide the appeal we conducted separate telephone interviews with the appellant and her supervisor.

### **Series, title, and standard determination**

The agency has classified the appellant's position in the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, but the appellant believes it should be assigned to the Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series, GS-301. The GS-301 series includes positions that perform, supervise, or manage non-professional, two-grade interval work for which no other series is appropriate. The work requires analytical ability, judgment, discretion, and knowledge of a substantial body of administrative or program principles, concepts, policies, and objectives. The administrative work of this series involves skills such as analytical, research and writing ability, and requires the application of judgment typically demonstrated by substantial, responsible experience, or that equivalent to a college level education.

The Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-303, includes positions that perform or supervise clerical, assistant or technician, one-grade interval work for which no other series is appropriate. The work requires knowledge of the procedures and techniques involved in carrying out the work of an organization, and involves application of procedures and practices within the framework of established guidelines.

Classification guidance in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards* and *The Classifier's Handbook* describe distinctions between positions properly classified in two-grade interval administrative series and those classified in one-grade interval support series.

Administrative positions (two-grade interval) are involved in work primarily requiring a high order of analytical ability. This ability is combined with a comprehensive knowledge of (1) the functions, processes, theories, and principles of management and (2) the methods used to gather, analyze, and evaluate information. Administrative positions are involved with analyzing, evaluating, modifying, and developing basic programs, policies, and procedures that facilitate the work of Federal agencies and programs.

In contrast, support positions (one-grade interval) perform work that follows established methods, procedures, and guidelines, and may require a high degree of technical skill, care, and precision. The work can be performed based on a practical knowledge of the purpose, operation, procedures, techniques, and guidelines of the specific program area or functional assignment. Support personnel typically learn to do the work on the job and also may attend specific training courses related to their work.

We find that the appellant's position does not meet the GS-301 series definition as the duties do not require a high order of analytical ability or a comprehensive knowledge of management principles and theories or analytical methods and techniques. Her work does not require knowledge of a substantial body of administrative or program principles, concepts and policies, nor does it involve extensive skills in research methods and writing ability. The appellant performs technical work that directly supports a function of the U.S. Marshals Service. She arranges for the production of prisoners in Federal Courts at specific dates and times, verifies the accuracy of all documentation, and tracks and coordinates the movement of prisoners by bus, van, and the weekly Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System (JPATS) airlift. She uses judgment in choosing, interpreting, or adapting available rules, regulations, standards, and guidelines to specific situations and in identifying and applying regulations. Although she reviews and verifies the accuracy of supporting legal documents concerning individual prisoner movement, the focus of the review is on ensuring the proper destination and method of transportation, rather than reviewing them for legal accuracy requiring in-depth technical knowledge of legal process as included in GS-986 Legal Assistance work. Her duties do not meet the intent of two-grade interval administrative work. They match one-grade interval technical work typical of the GS-303 series which is based on a practical knowledge of the purpose of the function supported and the program's operations, procedures, techniques and guidelines. Like the GS-303 series, her work involves specialized duties for which there is no more appropriate occupational series established.

There are no titles specified for positions in the GS-303 series. Therefore, the agency may construct a title in keeping with the nature of the support work performed. In doing so the agency should adhere to the position titling guidance contained in the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*. We note that the appellant's work requires knowledge of office automation systems and a qualified typist to perform word processing duties. Consequently, the agency should add the parenthetical title "Office Automation" abbreviated as (OA) to the official title selected. To grade the appellant's technical support work, we have applied the criteria in the Grade Level Guide for Clerical and Assistance Work (the Guide). Because the appellant's office automation duties represent lower level work, and are neither series nor grade controlling, we have not evaluated their grade level in this decision.

### **Grade determination**

The Guide provides grade-level criteria for administrative support work. Clerical work is defined in the guide by examples of preparing, receiving, reviewing, and verifying documents; maintaining office records; and compiling information for reports. Assistance work is defined as technical work that supports the administration or operation of the programs of an organizational unit, and requires a working knowledge of the work processes and procedures of an administrative field and the mission and operational requirements of the unit. The record shows that the appellant primarily performs assistance work. The Guide uses two classification factors to evaluate the work of a position: (1) Nature of Assignment which includes knowledge required and complexity of the work, and (2) Level of Responsibility which includes supervisory controls, guidelines, and contacts. Our evaluation by application of the two classification factors in the Guide follows.

### *Nature of Assignment*

At the GS-7 level, which is the highest level for this factor described in the Guide, work consists of specialized duties with continuing responsibility for projects, questions, or problems that arise within an area of a program or functional specialty as defined by management. Work assignments involve a wide variety of problems or situations common to the segment of the program or function for which the employee is responsible. Decisions or recommendations are based on the development and evaluation of information that comes from various sources. The work involves identifying and studying factors or conditions and determining their interrelationships as appropriate to the defined area of work. The work requires knowledge and skill to recognize the dimensions of the problems involved, collect the necessary information, establish the facts, and take or recommend action based upon application or interpretation of established guidelines. It requires practical knowledge developed through increasingly difficult on-the-job training or experience dealing with the operations, regulations, and principles of the assigned program, function, or activity.

The appellant's position meets, but does not exceed, the GS-7 level. Like that level, as the sole individual responsible for continually coordinating prisoner movement, she performs specialized duties in support of the District's overall prisoner accountability program. Her work assignments involve a wide variety of problems or situations common to her segment of the program such as short lead-times, problems in transit, determining need for temporary assignment to a holding institution, dealing with generally inadequate documentation concerning foreign entry, emergency situations (sickness, pregnancy, danger) or similar situations. Like the GS-7 level, each of her assignments consists of a series of related actions or decisions she must take to determine when, where, and how movement will be done prior to completing the work. Based on her knowledge of Federal criminal process procedures and relevant writs, warrants, and other court documents and orders, she must determine the most appropriate method of transportation of individual prisoners. This includes preparing the necessary manifests and supporting documents considering complicating factors or conditions such as illness (where she must arrange in transit medical aid at a secure facility) or high-danger risk, coordinating with foreign government representatives for movement to a foreign country, planning for space availability for ground or air transportation, and determining departure dates covering 108 correctional facilities nationwide where individuals may be sent. Throughout this process she inputs data into the agency's prisoner tracking system so transit and arrival at the final destination is monitored.

Like the GS-7 level, her decisions are based on gathering and evaluating relevant information from various sources including local, state and Federal jurisdictions. Complicating her work is the fact that her District contracts with state and local courts to provide prisoner movement, thus she must be knowledgeable of their unique requirements for transportation, and ensure the agency is reimbursed for its services. All of her duties require the skill and practical knowledge to recognize the breadth of the problems, collect and review necessary documents and determine missing information, establish the factual information, and take action based upon her knowledge of the agency's established guidelines for the program area.

### *Level of Responsibility*

At the GS-7 level, which is the highest level for this factor described in the guide, the supervisor makes assignments in terms of objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The employee

independently completes assignments in accordance with accepted practices, resolving most conflicts that arise. Completed work is evaluated for appropriateness and conformance to policy. Because the employee at this level encounters a wide variety of problems and situations, guidelines used are complex and require choosing alternative responses. Guides such as regulations, policy statements, and precedent cases, tend to be general and descriptive of intent, but do not specifically cover all aspects of the assignments. They apply less to specific actions and more to the operational characteristics and procedural requirements of the program or function. Employees must use significant judgment and interpretation to apply the guides to specific cases and adapt or improvise procedures to accommodate unusual situations. At the GS-7 level, contacts and purpose of contacts are to serve as a central point-of-contact to provide authoritative explanations of requirements, regulations, and procedures and resolve operational problems or disagreements affecting assigned areas.

The appellant's position meets, but does not exceed the GS-7 level. Like that level, her supervisor assigns work by defining the objectives, priorities and deadlines. As the only employee responsible for prisoner transport, she independently completes assignments and resolves most conflicts that arise. The supervisor evaluates completed work for appropriateness of conclusions or recommendations, consistency, relevance of supporting material, and compliance with policies and requirements. Guidelines used by the appellant include U.S. Marshals Service procedures, policies, and manuals. Like the GS-7 level, these tend to be general in nature focusing on procedural requirements rather than specific actions, so the appellant must exercise judgment in interpreting, adapting, and applying them to specific case issues, problems, or unusual situations. Like the GS-7 level, the appellant functions as the District's central point-of-contact in providing authoritative and definitive explanations to staff on the requirements, regulations, and operational procedures governing all elements of prisoner transport.

### *Summary*

By application of the grading criteria in the Guide, we find that the nature of the appellant's assignments and her level of responsibility meet, but do not exceed, the GS-7 level. Therefore, the position is graded at that level.

### **Decision**

The proper series and grade of the appellant's position is GS-303-7. Selection of an appropriate title is at the discretion of the agency, with the inclusion of the parenthetical title (OA).