

**Southeast Public Health Leadership Institute
Leadership Project Proposal**

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Project Title: Improving Classification and Compensation for Public Health Nutrition Personnel in South Carolina.

Abstract: The purpose of this leadership project is to update and improve the current position classification used by the State of South Carolina for the nutritionist class titles. The South Carolina Budget and Control Board's Office of Human Resources (OHR) revised the classification and compensation system in 1995. However, the current class titles are outdated and are not reflective of the current positions for public health nutrition personnel in South Carolina.

Introduction and Background: In 1995, the South Carolina Budget and Control Board's Office of Human Resources (OHR) began a strategic review of the classification and compensation system used by State agencies for evaluating levels of work and administering pay for state government employees. As a result, 2,500 job titles reduced by over 70% to approximately 800 and the numbers of pay grades reduced from 50 to 10. Key goals of the review were to eliminate unused classes and consolidate existing classes into fewer, more general job classes to simplify the job classification process; create fewer and broader salary ranges; and allow agencies greater flexibility to award pay increases to employees.

July 1996 was the implementation date for the new class titles and the pay bands system. The Classification and Compensation Reform Plan consolidated public health nutrition positions into four (4) titles (Nutritionist I – IV) and Pay Band 3 through 6. Although the system accomplished the goal of consolidating class titles and salary ranges, the system is now outdated based on the public health nutrition positions as they exist now.

The problems identified with the current classification and compensation system are: 1) Regional Directors of Nutrition manage staff and programs at the region level but there is not a Director of Nutrition title; 2) Nutritionist IV, Band 6 is used for Regional Director of Nutrition, Central Office Nutrition Consultant, registered dietitians (RD) providing direct client services, registered dietitians supervising a staff of RDs and providing direct services, public health nutritionists delivering population-based services related to policy and environment; and 4) Regional Nutrition Directors are classified up to two steps below other member of the regional management team with similar duties and responsibilities creating significant gaps in compensation; and 4) the nutritionist titles are under the K series that includes technical, trade and food services positions requiring only a high school diploma and related work experience to qualify for the positions.

Project Description and Objectives:

Goal: Revise and improve the existing classification and compensation system used to reflect the current practice of public health nutrition positions in South Carolina.

Objectives:

1. By April 1, 2007, review and update Nutritionist I, II, III and IV job specifications.
2. By April 1, 2007 write job specifications for Nutrition Manager Position and Regional Director of Nutrition.
3. By May 1, 2007 present overview of proposed changes to stakeholders and revise job specifications as necessary.
4. By June 1, 2007, present to Health Service Human Resources Director and DHEC Office of Personnel Services for review.
5. By July 1, 2007 present proposal for revised nutrition series to Health Services Senior Leadership Team.
6. By August 30, 2007 forward package to Budget and Control Board Human Compensation and Classification Consultant.

Task List:

1. Revise class specifications for other Professional and Technical Service positions.
2. Review and revise class titles currently in use.
3. Present proposed to nutrition changes to stakeholders in other state agencies.
4. Create a Regional Director of Nutrition class titles in Band 7 or Band 8.
5. Create Public Health Nutrition Consultant/Nutrition Manager title.
6. Write job specifications for current and proposed nutrition class titles.
7. Propose moving the nutrition class titles to Professional and Technical Services (E Series) to all stakeholders.
8. Prepare proposal for review and approval by the Health Services Human Resources and the Senior Leadership Team.
9. Submit proposal with approvals to DHEC Office of Personnel Services.
10. Submit Proposal to Budget and Control Board Office of Human Resources for review, approval and implementation.

Results: Project Objectives:

Objective 1 - Review and Update Nutritionist I, II, III and IV Job Specifications

In collaboration with the Regional Directors of Nutrition, Central Office Nutrition Consultants and other Nutrition Program Managers, a review of the positions in each class title was performed. The classifications requiring the most revisions are the Nutritionist III and Nutritionist IV, and creating a Nutrition Director title. Within the Nutritionist IV classification, there are eight (8) distinct types of positions ranging from registered dietitians delivering direct services such as medical nutrition therapy to high-risk clients to regional and central office management positions. Appendix 1 summarizes the existing class titles and the changes proposed to the series.

Objective 2 - Write Job Specifications for Nutrition Manager Position and Regional Director of Nutrition – In Process

The Public Health Foundation (PHF) in collaboration with the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND) published the document, *Personnel in Public Health Nutrition for the 1990's*. PHF developed the document for administrators, personnel directors and analysts and others establishing positions and employing nutritionists. The publication defines the major duties, functions, knowledge, skills and abilities of public health nutrition personnel. Benchmark position descriptions for local and state positions in public health nutrition are available in the document. This guide also contains a history of public health nutrition and details how this specialty area of dietetics evolved. The document was used as the foundation for developing new position descriptions. Although the guide is fifteen years old, its material is still applicable to public health nutrition positions today. The guide is currently undergoing revisions but has not been published.

In the discussions with the Budget and Control Board Human Resources Consultant, it was clear that further education on the role of public health nutritionists was required. This guide, although written in the 1990's was invaluable in the discussion/negotiations with the HR Consultant. Since this guide was written for personnel officers, it provided the benchmark positions descriptions necessary for revising the State nutrition series specifications.

Objective 3 - Present Overview of Proposed Changes to Stakeholders and Revise Job Specifications as Necessary - Accomplished

Internal stakeholders reviewing the revised job specifications included the regional nutrition directors, central office nutrition consultants, nutrition program managers, division directors, bureau directors, human resources director, the personnel director and the Health Services Leadership Team.

Clearly, the regional directors, consultants and nutrition managers will benefit from creating a nutrition director title. Financial compensation is not the primary concern but professional recognition through a title that appropriately reflects the duties of a regional nutrition director and other nutrition program managers.

Objective 4 - Review by the Health Services Human Resources Director and DHEC Office of Personnel Services - Accomplished

The Health Services Office of Human Resources Director reviewed and approved the proposal prior to the final review by the Health Services Senior Leadership Team. The guidance of Office of Human Resources Director was invaluable throughout the proposal process.

Objective 5 - Proposal Approved by Health Services Senior Leadership Team – Accomplished

Approval by the Senior Leadership Team was required before presenting the proposal to the DHEC Office of Personnel and the Budget and Control Board Class and Compensation Consultant.

Objective 6 - Submit Proposal to Budget and Control Board Human Compensation and Classification Consultant - Accomplished

After meeting with the Compensation and Classification Consultant, the Director of Personnel and his staff, the Office of Human Resources Director, there was general agreement on the changes needed to the nutrition series. The Classification and Compensation Consultant requested copies of the eight (8) types of positions in the Nutritionist IV class title and salary data for nutrition director positions in the state. Obtaining salary data was challenging because both the state and nutrition community are relatively small. Most human resources directors only provided hiring ranges to maintain the confidentiality of employee salaries.

At this time, the Classification and Compensation Consultant is working on the revisions to the class specifications but I have not been able to obtain a timeframe for implementing the changes state nutrition class specifications.

Successes and Barriers

A proposal to the Human Resources Division of the State Budget and Control Board to revise the class specification for public health nutritionists requires approval at many levels within the Health Services Deputy area of South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, the agency's personnel director and as well as by other state agencies using the position classifications. Without the endorsement of most stakeholders, the proposal could have remained caught up in the bureaucracy.

Several factors contributed to the success thus far of the proposal to change the nutrition class specifications. First, in 2006, the South Carolina State Legislature passed a law to protect the registered dietitian title and help consumers identify the credentialed and licensed nutrition professionals. This newly enacted law helped to build support for incorporating the language of the law into the state job descriptions.

Building support, seeking input from stakeholders and incorporating key recommendations into the proposal strengthened the document. The DHEC Human Resources Director played a key role in designing a solid proposal. Input from the director help me address concerns that could have been raised from a human resources/classification and compensation perspective prior to presenting the proposal to the DHEC Personnel Director and the Budget and Control Board Classification and Compensation Consultant.

The Senior Leadership Team's (SLT) endorsement of the changes to the series was critical to advancing the proposal. Prior to meeting with the SLT, several meetings occurred with my manager, who is also a member of SLT, to discuss the proposal in detail, answer his concerns and receive his approval to seeking the endorsement of the entire leadership team.

Although it is never possible to anticipate all the concerns/issues generated by a proposal to revise an entire class series, working through the arguments for and against the changes helped me prepare the discussion points for opposing views.

The fiscal impact of the changes on the regions and the inequity created by revising the nutrition director position from a Band 6 to Band 7 but not doing the same for Social Work and Health Education Director Positions were the two overriding concerns expressed by the Regional Health Directors.

The fiscal impact on the regions is negative due to salary adjustments awarded to nutrition directors in 2006-07 because of critical shortages and lagging salaries for public health nutrition personnel. The Regional Nutrition Directors were notified in advance that when a reclassification is approved, no additional salary increases will be awarded. Reclassifying the nutrition directors positions to the higher band that more appropriately reflects the level of job responsibility can be done without another salary increase. I polled each member of the nutrition management staff and everyone expressed support for receiving the salary adjustment prior to the position reclassification.

During the presentation to the Health Services Senior Leadership Team, the need to address the issue of appropriately classifying the Social Work and Health Education Director positions to Band 7 was acknowledged. SLT members agreed to address Health Education and Social Work positions but recommended proceeding with the nutrition proposal and not waiting to submit all three at the same time.

Conclusions:

Reflecting on this project several, the key benefits for the nutrition staff are improved morale and recognition for the nutrition director's level of responsibility through appropriate position classification and a nutrition director title. This title and classification issue has cycled around frequently as a high priority from staff in both service and management positions.

Submitting the proposal to change the nutrition series will pave the way to address the same issue with the health education and social work director positions. Historically, the agency's Personnel Director was reluctant to initiate changes for one series without including all three in the proposal. The Personnel Director was a significant obstacle to submitting proposals for reclassification for nutrition, social work and health education.

The initial reform of the South Carolina Classification and Compensation System created significant inequities in management positions particularly at the regional management

team level. Ten years later, DHEC and the Budget and Control Board are working together to address some of the problems created by the initial reform of the system.

Evaluation of Leadership Development:

Ten colleagues received evaluation forms and (6) responded to my request for evaluating my performance on the project.

A rating of 5 on a scale of 1 (low) – 5 (high) was given on questions 1 – 3 from all respondents.

1. My overall leadership on the proposal to revise the nutrition series classifications.
2. How would you rank my ability to negotiate/compromise?
3. How would you rate my leadership ability in building internal and external support for the project?
4. Please recommend at least one additional recommendation you would offer to help me improve my leadership abilities?
5. What skills did you observe that were least effective or most effective in completing this project?

The comments on questions 4 and 5 were:

- No recommendations; did a great job.
- Demonstrated perseverance and patience
- Detail-oriented in her process
- Continue to build rapport and provide direction among and between regional nutrition directors and central office staff
- Most effective; ongoing communication with staff, engaging leadership regarding importance of staff and critical need development for nutrition, using opportunity of licensure and nutrition care process to enhance effort
- Least effective the amount of time it took to accomplish
- Excellent job getting proposal to SLT
- Negotiated so that the proposal is mostly favorable for the nutrition staff
- Excellent job building internal & external support
- Gathered information and listened to all before acting; able to use the information from all of her resources to get the nutrition class specifications approved
- Most effective skills completing this project - patience and perseverance

Leadership Development Opportunities:

Though this leadership project, I wanted to improve my negotiation and collaboration skills, and build alliances with key stakeholders to support revising the nutrition series class specifications.

In assessing the skills I hoped to develop during the leadership project, there are several points I will discuss. Through this project, there were many times I needed to step back

and reflect on what I was attempting to accomplish. After reading the book, *Leadership on the Line*, taking the “balcony” position helped me to gain perspective on the process and progress of the project. Taking the balcony position allowed me to assess potential opposition, identify key supporters, build alliances with stakeholders, anticipate some of the concerns about the proposal, and prepare responses.

In building negotiation skills, I dedicated a significant amount of time to determining what areas of the proposal I considered non-negotiable and what points were open to negotiation. In the past, I was not clear about what I could give up and often produced an all or nothing result.

Taking time to research the background of the personnel system changes by reading the report, *Reform of the SC Classification and Compensation System*, on the changes to the State Personnel system was invaluable to understanding the background and intent of the changes to the systems. From the document, it was evident that human resources directors and staff provided the bulk of input into reforming the system. Input from directors and managers who were directly involved in hiring personnel was not incorporated into the process. Clinical dietetics and institutional food service management duties were the basis for developing the existing nutrition class specifications. The current position specifications inadequately reflect the duties of public health nutrition personnel. DHEC employs over eighty-five percent of the State employees in Nutritionist II, III and IV positions. Based on this information, I focused on enhancing knowledge regarding the unique role of registered dietitians in public health at every opportunity.

Working on the leadership project reinforced the necessity to build support for projects ahead of time. I dedicated a great deal of time to discussing the project with staff, managers, and human resources staff ahead of time. Reviewing the proposal with a professional associate with human resources experience in the private sector was very useful. Frequent progress reports to the nutrition directors, consultants and program managers kept them informed on the status of the project and offered the staff many opportunities for input into the process.

Full disclosure to my counterparts, the State Directors of Health Education and Social Work Directors, was important because this proposal was moving forward without addressing similar reclassification needs for the regional directors, consultants and program managers for their discipline areas.

Getting to Yes was the book I read as an activity for my professional development plan. Although I am not completely at “yes” and the result has not yet been achieved, I am very satisfied with the progress of the proposal at this point.

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO NUTRITION (KB) SERIES

1. Properly Classify Nutritionist Positions

- a. Change to the E Series classifications with other credentialed and licensed professionals
- b. KB Series composed of primarily trade & technical positions
- c. Nutritionists and boat captains are the only jobs in the KB series required to have a degree
- d. Use titles:
 - i. Nutritionist II (KB40) - Home Economist
 - ii. Nutritionist III (KB45) - Non-RD Nutritionist

2. Create a Registered Dietitian Director classification in Band 7

- a. Central Office Nutrition Consultant
- b. Nutrition Program Manager
- c. Regional Directors of Nutrition Services and WIC

3. Use Registered Dietitian Title for Band V, VI and Proposed Registered Dietitian Director Position in Band 7

- a. Due to new State law licensing of registered dietitians (RD)
 - i. Effective July 1, 2006
- b. Use new titles:
 - i. Registered Dietitian I – Band 5 (current Nutritionist III)
 - ii. Registered Dietitian II – Band 6 (current Nutritionist IV)
 - iii. Registered Dietitian Director – Band 7

4. Add Master's degree to classification Registered Dietitian II Band 6 and Proposed Registered Dietitian Director Band 7 positions

5. Add to the State Position Specifications Registered Dietitian I, II and Registered Dietitian Director, *valid State of South Carolina license is required.*

Fiscal Impact:

1. *Regional Directors of Nutrition and WIC* received salary adjustment with Critical Public Health Staffing (CPHS) funds. No additional salary adjustment is required.
2. Evaluation of six (6) positions in Central Office is required to determine if reclassification to Band 7 merits an adjustment in salary.

Summary of State of South Carolina Position Specifications for Nutritionist Series

Current State Class Titles	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Requirements
Nutritionist I Band 3 KB35	Entry-level for dietitians	Bachelor's degree in home economic, home economics education, human ecology, family & child development, dietetics, food & nutrition or institutional mgt.
Nutritionist II KB40	Home Economists and second level of dietitian profession in state government	Bachelor's degree in Home Economics, Home Economics Education, Family and Consumer Science, family and child development, human ecology, dietetics, food and nutrition or institutional mgt.
Nutritionist III KB45	Entry-level and journeyman level for registered nutritionists (dietitians)	MS degree in public health nutrition, community nutrition, dietetics, or nutrition or a BS degree in nutrition, dietetics, community nutrition and experience in a clinical, public health or institutional setting; or MS degree in any field and eligibility for registration by the American Dietetics Association; or a BS degree in any field, eligibility for registration by ADA and experience in clinical, public health or institutional setting.
Nutritionist IV KB50	Coordinate, manage or supervise complex nutrition services for specialized programs or units; functions as a consultant at the central office level, functions as a director of all nutrition programs within a public health district; or serve as assistant to the State Director of Public Health Nutrition	BS degree in nutrition, , dietetics, or community nutrition and experience in clinical, public health or institutional setting; BS degree in any field, eligibility for registration by ADA and experience in a clinical, public health or institutional setting. <i>(requirements for the top position of the series, KB50, are less than those required for the KB45)</i>

Summary of DHEC Position Specifications for Nutritionist Series

Class Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Requirements
Nutritionist I Band 3 KB35 Not used by DHEC	Plans and develops menus, instructs food service personnel in preparing and serving meals.	Bachelor's degree in home economic, home economics education, human ecology, family & child development, dietetics, food & nutrition or institutional mgt.
Nutritionist II Band 4 KB40	Group education, low risk nutrition counseling.	Bachelor's degree in Home Economics, Home Economics Education, Family and Consumer Science, family and child development, human ecology, dietetics, food and nutrition or institutional mgt.
Nutritionist III Band 5 KB45	1. Low to moderate risk nutrition counseling, group education, supervising breastfeeding program. 2. Nutritionist supervising NUTR-II	1. Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree in public health, community nutrition, dietetics, food and nutrition (<i>non-RD nutritionist</i>)
	3. Entry-level registered dietitians delivering high risk nutrition care and medical nutrition therapy	2. Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree in public health, nutrition, community nutrition, dietetics, food and nutrition or a related field and status as a registered dietitian.
Nutritionist IV Band 6 KB50	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct services for registered dietitians providing medical nutrition therapy in specialized programs 2. Direct services plus supervising lower level nutrition staff 3. Public Health Nutritionist population-based interventions 4. FSNEP Program Coordinator 5. Central Office Nutrition Consultants 6. Central Office Nutrition Program Manager supervising Other Central Office Consultants 7. Dietetic Internship Director 8. Regional Director of Nutrition and WIC 	Master's degree in public health, community nutrition, dietetics, nutrition, food and nutrition or a related field.

Summary of DHEC Position Specifications for Nutritionist Series

Class Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Requirements
Nutritionist I Band 3 KB35 Not used by DHEC	Plans and develops menus, instructs food service personnel in preparing and serving meals	Bachelor's degree in home economic, home economics education, human ecology, family & child development, dietetics, food & nutrition or institutional mgt.
Nutritionist II Band 4 KB40	Group education, low risk nutrition counseling	Bachelor's degree in Home Economics, Home Economics Education, Family & Consumer Science, family & child development, human ecology, dietetics, foods & nutrition or institutional mgt.
Nutritionist III Band 5 KB45	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low to moderate risk nutrition counseling, group education, supervise breastfeeding programs 2. Nutritionist supervising NUTR-II 	1. Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree in public health, community nutrition, dietetics, food and nutrition.
Registered Dietitian I Band 5 New	3. Entry-level registered dietitians delivering high risk nutrition care and medical nutrition therapy.	Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree in public health, nutrition, community nutrition, dietetics, food and nutrition or a related field and status as a registered dietitian with a valid State of SC license.
Registered Dietitian II Band 6 New	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct services for registered dietitians providing medical nutrition therapy in specialized programs. 2. Direct services plus supervising lower level nutrition staff 	Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree in public health, community nutrition, dietetics, nutrition, food and nutrition or a related field, plus status as a registered dietitian with a valid State of SC license.
Registered Dietitian Director Band 7 New	1. Central Office Nutrition Consultant	Bachelor's degree and 5 years or a Master's degree in public health, community nutrition, nutrition, dietetics, food and nutrition or related field, plus minimum of 4 years related work experience and status as a registered dietitian with a valid State of SC license.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Manage nutrition services program or unit 4. Director of nutrition services in multi-county region 	Bachelor's degree and 7 years or a Master's degree in public health, community nutrition, nutrition, dietetics, food and nutrition or a related field plus minimum of 6 years related work experience and status as a registered dietitian with a valid State of SC license.

