

Maryland Judiciary 2014 Classification and Compensation Study

Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

1. What is the classification and compensation study? Why is it being done?

We are conducting a review of the Judiciary's job titling structure, pay ranges, and compensation policies. The purpose and goals of the study are to:

- Determine the market competitiveness of the current pay ranges, compensation policies, and benefit programs.
- Evaluate the classification structure and job descriptions.
- Develop recommended changes to the compensation programs and policies designed to enhance the Judiciary's ability to recruit and retain Judiciary staff.

2. Who is conducting the study?

Segal Waters Consulting, a national human resources consulting firm located in Washington, D. C., is conducting the study.

3. How will the classification and compensation study be carried out? What is the methodology?

The study has the following components:

- A total compensation market study that will collect market information on pay ranges and benefits programs provided by other state court systems, local area public sector employers, and private sector entities.
- A classification analysis that will evaluate the duties, responsibilities, and minimum qualifications of jobs at the Judiciary.
- Recommendations regarding potential revisions to the Judiciary's classification structure and pay programs designed to maintain market competitiveness and facilitate internal pay equity.

4. What is the timeline for the study?

We anticipate the study will be completed in July 2015.

5. Which jobs are included in the study?

All jobs in the Judiciary will be included in the study, with the exception of judges, elected Clerks of the Court, and positions that are seasonal or temporary positions (such as interns).

6. How might the study affect my job? Could my job be upgraded or downgraded as a result of this study?

At this time, it is impossible to know the study's findings and outcomes. Our goals are to have classification structures and compensation programs that are market competitive, internally equitable, and that facilitate the successful recruitment, retention, and recognition of qualified staff at the Judiciary. Pay increases or reclassifications may be considered, but are not guaranteed. Nevertheless, no employee's salary will be reduced as a result of the study.

7. How will the results of the study be communicated?

Results will be communicated directly to your administrative official by the State Court Administrator's Office and the Judiciary's Human Resources Department once the study results are complete.

8. Why did the Judiciary hire an outside consultant to do this study? Don't we have the expertise to do this internally? Doesn't the Human Resources Department have this kind of data already?

We considered various options regarding the best way to conduct an independent and objective system-wide study. Typically, comprehensive studies on this scale and projected timeframe, which involve collecting and analyzing information on hundreds of classifications, require the resources of an external consultant.

9. I thought the Administrative Office of the Courts conducted a similar study a few years ago. What happened with that study? How is this one different?

The former study was done nearly 15 years ago. It was a compensation study, while this study encompasses both compensation and classification.

10. How can I get more information about the study?

If you have additional questions, please contact the HR classification and compensation staff at 410-260-1733 or email ocsa-hris@mdcourts.gov

Questions about the Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ)

1. How will employees participate in the study?

To collect information on current duties and responsibilities, employees have been asked to complete a Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ). The PDQs include open-ended questions and multiple choice statements to collect information about essential job duties and responsibilities, required knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, reporting relationships, working conditions, etc.

2. How will I know when to complete a PDQ?

Employees will receive an email asking them to complete a Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ). You can also find a copy of the PDQ on the classification and compensation study website: <http://mdcourts.gov/hr/classificationstudy/forms.html>

3. Will I be allowed time from my job duties to complete the questionnaire?

Yes, please schedule with your supervisor to ensure adequate coverage.

4. How do I download the PDQ to my computer?

The PDQ is a Microsoft Word fillable form that will be attached to an email. After you open the document, just "Save As" to your desktop or a folder in your computer. Once it is saved to your computer, you can work on it and save your work.

5. I do not have a computer because I don't work at a desk. How do I complete the PDQ?

Your supervisor will make a computer available to you to ensure that you have the opportunity to complete the PDQ.

6. Can employees complete a PDQ as a group?

Yes, but only if you share the exact same classification title and exact same immediate supervisor. If you complete a PDQ as a group, all employees in that group must list their names on the first page of the questionnaire.

7. What do I do with the PDQ once I have completed it?

When you have completed your PDQ, you should forward it to your immediate supervisor. Supervisors are asked to review and provide additional information about the job, but they may not change or edit your responses.

8. What happens if my supervisor does not agree with my answers on the PDQ?

Your supervisor does not have to agree with your answers. Your supervisor may see something that you have overlooked and add it in the Supervisor Comments section. Supervisors have been asked to share their comments with employees and to discuss what they have added.

9. What is the timeframe for the PDQ process? What are the deadlines?

Employees are asked to complete a PDQ and email the completed questionnaire to their supervisors as soon as possible. Supervisors should complete their sections and email the completed questionnaire to ocsa-hris@mdcourts.gov no later than September 30, 2014.

10. Will I be able to see what my supervisor has written on my PDQ?

We are encouraging supervisors to share their PDQ comments with employees. Remember – this process is intended to collect information on the typical duties, responsibilities, and requirements associated with the **classification**, not the person.

11. I have several supervisors. Which one should receive and review my PDQ?

You should send your completed PDQ to the person who is responsible for conducting and signing your performance appraisal.

12. Will my responses to the PDQ be kept confidential? Who will see my completed questionnaire?

The HR department and the outside consultants will use the PDQs to review the job titling structure and to update classification descriptions. The information you provide will be used only for this study and no other purpose.

13. Is completion of the PDQ mandatory or voluntary?

This is a voluntary process. We hope that all employees will want to contribute to the study that is designed to enhance our classification and compensation programs.

14. Is the PDQ a performance review?

No. The PDQ process is intended to collect information on the duties, responsibilities, and requirements associated with classification titles. We are not evaluating the performance or qualifications of any individual employee.

15. I recently submitted a PDQ to the HR department. Why can't you use the information I provided in that document?

The Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) is different from the PDQ form used by the HR Department for individual classification reviews. To collect information in a standard, consistent format, we ask that employees complete this new document for this study.

16. I have a classification review pending with the HR department. What happens to my request during this classification and compensation study?

The classification review is on hold until this study has been completed.

17. Why do employees have to complete a questionnaire? Can't you just use the job descriptions?

Many of our job descriptions have not been updated in a long time. In some positions, the work currently performed may not accurately be reflected in the current job description. The PDQ process will assist the study team and the consultants to write new job descriptions.

18. How long does it take to complete the PDQ?

We estimate that it should take about an hour to complete the Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ). The supervisor's review section should take less than half an hour.

19. I am currently working in an acting (interim) role or I am working on a temporary assignment. When I complete the PDQ, which duties should I include – my "regular" job or the acting/interim/temporary job?

Since the PDQ is designed to collect information about the duties, responsibilities, and minimum requirements associated with each classification title, we ask that you provide information about your regular job that corresponds with your classification title.

20. I have a question about a specific section of the Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ). Where should I direct my questions? Who do I contact if I need assistance in filling out the PDQ?

If you have a specific question about the PDQ, please contact the HR classification and compensation staff at 410-260-1733 or email ocsa-hris@mdcourts.gov.

Questions about the Market Study

1. What is included in the market study?

The market study will identify the "market rate" for selected jobs at the Judiciary, as well as the prevailing practices associated with paid leave programs, health benefits, retirement programs, and other elements of total compensation.

2. Is this study being conducted to justify pay cuts or benefits reductions for Judiciary employees?

No. The purpose of the study is to have an objective and comprehensive analysis of our pay and benefits programs, as well as to update a job classification system that has been in place for many years. The Judiciary wants to ensure we provide competitive and equitable compensation to employees and to remain an employer of choice, while continuing to be a responsible steward of public funds.

3. Where is the market data coming from? Who are we comparing ourselves to? What organizations are you surveying?

The market study will seek pay and benefits information from other state court systems that are identified as peers or benchmarks from comparable Mid-Atlantic regions. Since many of the jobs at the Judiciary are not necessarily court-specific, we are also surveying local area governmental entities (mostly county governments). In addition, we are including data from local area private sector entities (both for-profit and non-profit organizations).

4. Will cost of living be taken into consideration in the market study?

Yes. The comparable regional state geographic adjustments will be applied to market data from organizations outside of Maryland.

5. Will the market study include both public sector and private sector employers?

Yes. We are comparing ourselves to both private sector and public sector organizations.

6. What jobs are included in the market study? Why aren't you including all job titles?

The Judiciary has over 300 classification titles. It is not practical to request other employers to provide pay information on all job titles. Consequently, we have identified benchmark jobs that represent the variety of occupational categories and pay levels at the Judiciary to determine whether our current pay ranges and benefits programs are market competitive.

7. What if my job is found to be under paid or over paid compared with the market?

No employee's salary will be reduced and no positions will be eliminated as a result of this study.