



State Personnel Office

Classification Plan

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State Personnel Board

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Introduction

State Personnel Board Rule 1.7.3.8(A) NMAC requires the State Personnel Office Director, pursuant to direction from the Board, to establish, maintain and, in conjunction with state agencies, administer a classification plan for all positions throughout the classified service. State Personnel Board Rule 1.7.3.7 NMAC defines “classification plan” as a document developed by the Director and approved annually by the Board, that describes the Board’s classification philosophy and is the foundation for ensuring consistent application of the philosophy.

In addition to the classification philosophy and the methods used to ensure its consistent application, this Classification Plan provides a brief history of the State Personnel Office classification system, recent changes and goals for the classification system.

Classification Philosophy and Classification System Objectives

The classification philosophy of the State Personnel Office is to provide a uniform and flexible classification system that meets the needs of its customers and allows state agencies to recruit, retain, and motivate a quality workforce to provide efficient and effective services to all New Mexicans.

In support of this philosophy, the objectives of State Personnel Office’s classification system are to:

- Systematically group jobs into occupationally and quantifiably distinct classifications based on similarities in duties, responsibilities, and requirements; and
- Ensure all classified service positions are assigned to their appropriate classification; and
- Be adaptable to change; and
- Establish a clear process for implementing classification studies.

History of the Classification System

The Personnel Act of 1961 established a system of personnel administration “based solely on qualification and ability” intended to “provide greater economy and efficiency to the management of state affairs.” NMSA 1979, Section 10-9-2. In the context of the time, and as an alternative to the political spoils system it replaced, the Personnel Act, and the State Personnel Board Rules that implement it, have been extremely successful in creating and maintaining a public service employment system for New Mexico State government for the last 50 years.

Over those decades, adjustments were made to the classification system as necessary. A major reclassification project in 2001 (“NM.HR.2001”) significantly reduced the number of classifications that existed at the time, eliminating numerous superfluous and overlapping classification titles, many of which were being used to enable the promotion or retention of just a single employee. At the same time, however, based on the federal government’s Standard Occupation Classification system (“SOC”), which the New Mexico State Legislature had adopted as the best-known classification practice at the time, NM.HR.2001 also incorporated three job levels into each classification as per the SOC system, regardless of whether three job levels existed in the classified service. The vast majority of job classifications within the State had, and have, only one level, where the work performed by the single-level position accomplishes the full range of responsibilities of the job. As a result, a good number of classifications continued to go unused after NM.HR.2001.

In 2010, a new classification descriptor format was adopted to include job knowledge, skills, and minimum qualifications, which did not exist prior to that time. In addition, a supervisory level was added across existing job families to prevent perceived abuse of the supervisory pay differential.

In 2016, the State Personnel Office began a focused effort to improve the competitiveness of New Mexico classified service jobs in certain market sectors. A series of classification studies in support of a new classification structure that organizes classifications into occupation-based job families was implemented. The ten job families, approved by the State Personnel Board, and implemented were:

- Architecture
- Attorney
- Business
- Corrections
- Engineer, Surveyor
- Water Resources
- Healthcare, Healthcare Physicians
- Information Technology
- Peace Officers
- Scientist
- Social Services

In 2024, an overall review of the classification system was performed. The New Mexico State Personnel Office (SPO), the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), and the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) supported the study across five core areas: Personnel Act Review, Process Review, Benefits and Compensation Benchmark Analysis, Job Classification Review, and Stakeholder Engagement and an Employee Survey. A Job Architecture initiative was recommended; this can be defined as a framework for organizing and structuring jobs or a logical system for organizing like jobs together. It supports the job analysis process, facilitates identifying

professional development needs, makes career paths clearer for employees, improves workforce data reporting and analysis, and makes benchmarking compensation to the external market easier. Key components of Job Architecture include Job Families, Job Sub-Families, Career tracks, Job Levels, and Job Titles. Career tracks enable employees to understand their career mobility within an agency, a division, and a classification series.

After Job Architecture was implemented on August 2nd, 2025, the total number of classifications was 897.

See Appendix A-D for all final Job Architecture implementation documents and the complete job catalog.

Looking Ahead: Job Architecture & Classification

Overall, the changes that were implemented from the new job architecture framework are designed to modernize the HR system, improve classification accuracy, and enhance the overall talent experience in the State of New Mexico. The State Personnel Office maintains that this is a foundation that is not person or employee-specific but rather position/role-specific. Ongoing standards that were established and maintained during the implementation, resolve that changes to titles and title assignments were/are based on responsibilities defined in the documented classification descriptors, not an individual's performance, education, experience, or longevity in a role. All employees were/are aligned to a level consistent with the position's current scope of work. Responsibilities and reporting relationships were not redefined as part of the implementation of the new framework.

As we look ahead, the SPO compensation and classification division are excited to build upon the foundational elements implemented by the Job Architecture initiative. This new system has streamlined classification processes, making them more transparent and consistent across the organization. By clearly defining roles and responsibilities, a more structured and equitable framework that supports career development and progression now exists. The title glossary, along with career track leveling, presents HR professionals with a system for identifying the needs of their agency. Supporting guidance on the identification of the correct title and level is now available before a change request is made. See Review of Job Architecture Components below:

Job Family

- Highest-level organizing of work type
- Jobs are first organized in job family group based on the broad nature of work performed

Job Subfamily

- Sub-category organizing of jobs within a Job Family
- Jobs will be organized in job sub-families based on the specific nature of work performed

Career Track

- Jobs Categorized based on Career Track
- Management jobs (people managers), Professionals (individual contributors), Support or Technical job.

Job Level

- Organize by Job's Level within its Career Track
- Descriptors and qualifiers are defined for each level from entry to the most senior, in both managerial and non-managerial career tracks

Job Title

- Job Relates to its Classification of All Above Elements
- Multiple positions / employees can be linked to one job, helping standardize the titles

These advancements will not only improve operational efficiency but also foster a positive and inclusive workplace culture. By utilizing the new system to its full potential, the goal of attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse and talented workforce can be achieved.

Ensuring Consistent Application

It is the State Personnel Office's overarching goal to maintain the integrity of the classification system by consistently applying the classification philosophy and carrying out the classification system objectives. The State Personnel Office does this through rigorous job analysis, detailed classification descriptor design, individualized position assignment, and meticulous classification studies.

Job Analysis

The purpose of job analysis is to determine the essential functions of a job. The State Personnel Office is responsible for conducting job analysis for all positions in the classified service.

The job analysis process involves analytic, systematic, detailed collection, examination, and interpretation of information about each job's tasks and responsibilities. The State Personnel Office does this through a combination of interviews with subject matter experts ("SMEs") and managers. Typically, SMEs are incumbents currently performing the tasks associated with the job. They are selected by an agency as the people with the most knowledge in the performance of the essential duties of the classification. The State Personnel Office will request the SMEs to describe the functions of the job, their current job tasks, and any knowledge or skills their current job tasks require. Additional communication with agency management and human resources representatives concerning the functions of the job may also be sought.

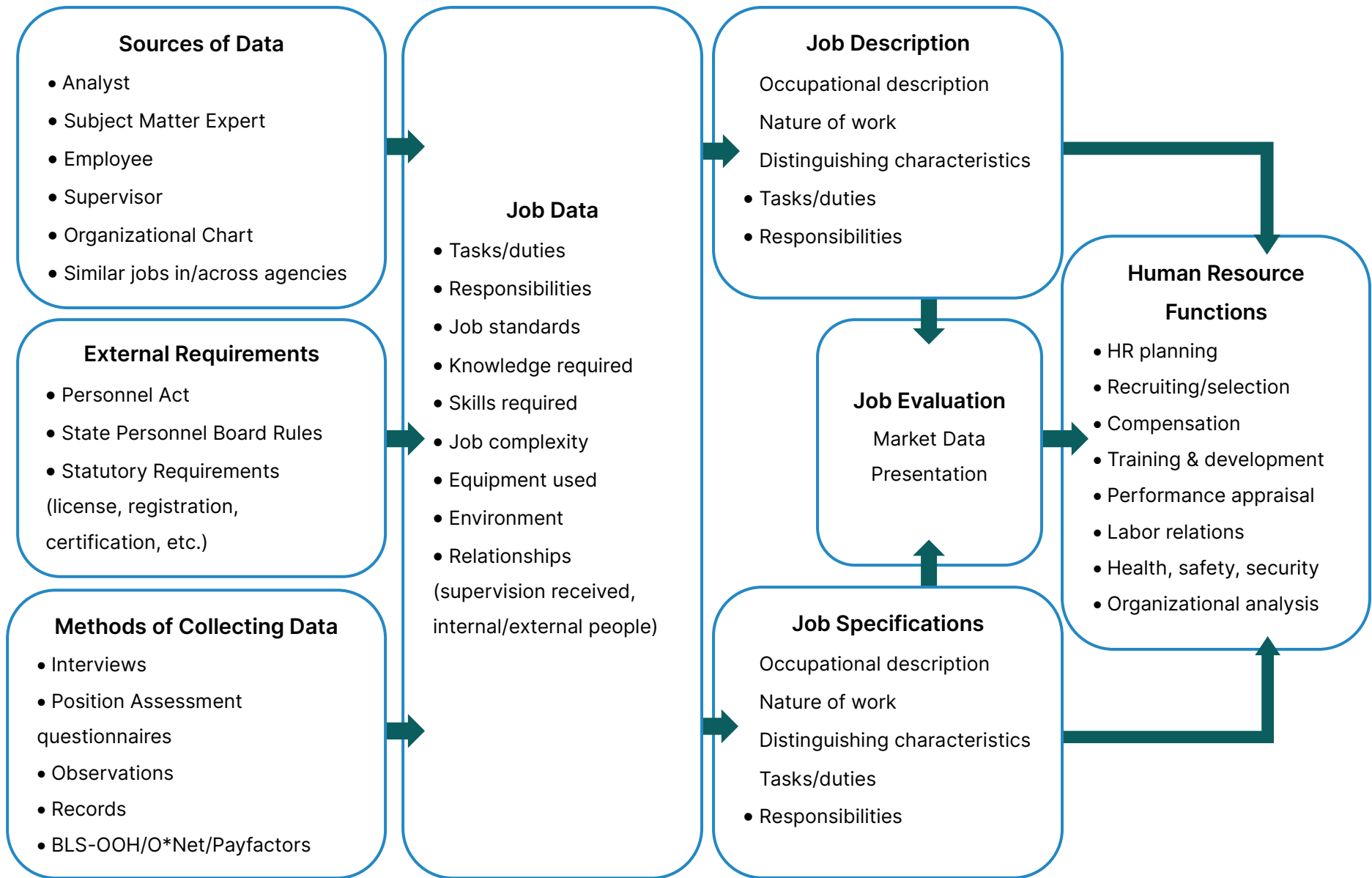
The job analysis process not only identifies the essential functions of each job, which is critical to creating a methodical classification system, it also provides agency human resources with updated and reliable job information. This enables agencies to make better employment and management decisions, save money, increase productivity, comply with federal and state law requirements, and take a systematic approach to the selection of qualified candidates.

Job Evaluation

The goal of the job evaluation review committee is to establish the relative importance of jobs to the classified service or, in other words, to understand the value of each job's work to the employer.

The State Personnel Office is responsible for conducting a job evaluation review for all new classifications in the New Mexico classified service. The State Personnel Office appoints a job evaluation committee to review the process to establish all newly created or revised classifications. See State Personnel Board Rule 1.7.4.9(A) NMAC.

The Process: Classification Development and Job Analysis



Classifications and Classification Descriptors

Utilizing job analysis and job data, the State Personnel Office groups jobs into occupationally and quantifiably distinct classifications based on similarities in job responsibilities and requirements, with the goal of appropriately capturing and categorizing the work being performed throughout the classified service.

Job classification descriptors are written to provide a comprehensive understanding of each occupation's purpose, nature of work, distinguishing characteristics, and minimum and recommended qualifications. As the direct product of job analysis, classification descriptors provide management with the tools to accomplish many human resources functions. Depending on Agency utilization, a proper classification descriptor can guide managers in determining the applicable duties and responsibilities to assign a position or employee, as well as in designing an employee's performance appraisal and career development plan. Classification descriptors, along with performance history, can be used to develop recruitment strategies for job postings and as benchmarking tools to measure job applicants against.

The **distinguishing characteristics** provide detailed examples of work performed in the occupation. Where there is more than one level in each classification, the examples of work performed are intended to be cumulative for each higher level of work.

Recommended education and experience for full performance describe the education and experience one would generally expect to find in an employee who can perform the full range of duties and responsibilities on the first day on the job. These qualities are not minimum qualification requirements and serve only as a guide to managers for recruitment, selection, placement, performance appraisals, and career development.

The **minimum qualifications** indicate the minimum education and experience requirements to be hired into the job. Where applicable, the statutory requirements describe the licensure, certification, diploma, or other legally required criteria necessary to be hired into the classification.

The **conditions of employment** outline specific qualifications, such as licensure, that may be necessary for a given role at a certain agency. These conditions may vary depending on each agency's utilization of the classification unlike minimum qualifications that are standard across agencies. The **working conditions** describe the environment and stresses reasonably expected in the occupation. The default **FLSA Status** (Fair Labor Standards Act Status) describes the classification's recommended FLSA designation under the Act and the statutes and rules of the Federal Department of Labor.

The **established date** is when the State Personnel Board adopted the job classification. And the **revised date** is when the job classification descriptor was subsequently approved by the Board following the most recent revision or modification.

Position Assignment

Position assignment refers to the assignment of a classified service position to a particular classification.

The State Personnel Director is required, in conjunction with state agencies, to ensure that each position in the classified service is assigned to the classification that best represents the duties assigned by the employer and performed by the employee. See State Personnel Board Rule 1.7.3.9(A) NMAC.

The placement of a particular job within a particular occupational classification (and at any of its levels) is based solely upon the way an agency utilizes the position, and the way work is organized within an agency, such as the duties that management assigns to a particular function to carry out a part of its mission. Under the new Job Architecture for the classified service, employees who manage people will be categorized under the Management track. These managers must oversee people, not programs. Contract employees or 1099 employees cannot be included in the count of full-time employees that a manager is required to supervise

Classification Changes

There are several mechanisms by which changes can be made to classification descriptors and classifications, keeping the classification system responsive to the needs of state agencies.

The State Personnel Office Director can authorize the deletion of unused classification descriptors and revisions to existing classification descriptors. See State Personnel Board Rule 1.7.3.8(C) NMAC.

An Agency can also request a classification study. Classification studies are typically requested when a classification no longer adequately captures the work being performed. An agency may also request a classification review or classification re-evaluation. Not only are classification reviews and evaluations already part of the classification study process, but that initial review and evaluation is conducted with the input of the agency. See State Personnel Board Rule 1.7.3.8(E) NMAC.

Some common reasons for conducting classification studies include:

- Substantial changes in the type of work or essential functions being performed by a classification;
- Changes in organizational relationships and responsibilities, including industry and technology evolution;
- Changes in professional certification/credential requirements (e.g., licensure) for a classification; and
- Creation or identification of a new job, the duties and responsibilities of which are not captured by existing classifications.

Classification studies are performed by the State Personnel Office's Compensation & Classification Division.

Prior to the implementation of a new classification or classification descriptor, the State Personnel Office Director is required to provide affected parties with an opportunity to comment on the addition or revision. See State Personnel Board Rule 1.7.3.8(D) NMAC.

The State Personnel Board establishes a new or revised classification through the review, approval, and adoption of the corresponding new or revised classification descriptor. See State Personnel Board Rule 1.7.3.8(B) NMAC.

Employees affected by a classification study will be assigned to the new classification best representing the job performed on a date determined by the State Personnel Director. See State Personnel Board Rule 1.7.3.10 NMAC.

Appendix

Appendix A: Job Families & Sub-Families,

Appendix B: Job Title Glossary, Job Level Glossary, & Job Leveling Guide

Appendix C: Career Tracks

Appendix D: Job Catalog

Please view the appendix in the Excel Workbook linked [here](#).