

COMPENSATION AND CLASSIFICATION REVIEW

TOWN OF PRINCETON MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL 2023

Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management

MCCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GLOBAL STUDIES



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Introduction

The Town of Princeton (the Town) retained the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management (Collins Center) to conduct a market survey and review the classification of selected positions.

Classification of Selected Position Descriptions

The Project Team met with the incumbents of the selected positions to obtain information about the scope and scale of the positions, responsibilities and requirements in order to update the relevant position descriptions. Once descriptions were drafted, the Project Team used a point factor rating method to objectively evaluate all relevant positions. The application of an objective position evaluation system that is consistently applied to each position is critical in assuring the internal equity of the classification plan. The evaluation system utilized by the Project Team is one that has been successfully implemented in many municipalities and other governmental organizations in the Commonwealth. Each position was assigned a point factor in a series of categories, including those listed below, and the total points determined the groupings of positions. These categories include:

Supervision Received	Supervision Exercised	Accountability
Judgement	Complexity	Personal Contacts
Confidentiality	Education/Licenses	Experience
Work Environment	Physical Requirements	Motor Skills Requirement
Physical Skills Requirements	Vision Requirement	Occupational Risks

The Assistant Town Clerk, who also served as a Special Projects Coordinator for the Town Administrator left the Town, which has impacted the planned structure of assignments in Town Hall. Additionally, the Treasurer/Collector has indicated a planned retirement. The Town will need to make decisions about who, or which positions, will take on the responsibilities currently being performed. One potential option for filling the position of Treasurer/Collector is to promote the current Assistant Treasurer/Collector. Should this happen, the Town will have the opportunity to reorganize and create the position of Assistant to the Town Administrator. Typical responsibilities for such a position include risk management oversight, human resources, procurement, and special projects. The creation of the new position would incorporate many of the human resource functions performed by the Assistant Treasurer/Collector and the special projects tasks performed by the former Assistant Town Clerk. The Collins Center has forwarded a sample position descriptions.

Salary Survey

A salary survey was conducted to compare the Town's compensation levels against other area municipalities. A summary of the results is attached to this report. Obtaining survey data is one of the most challenging aspects of a classification and compensation study. Not all municipalities have the same titles or definitions of duties under a specific title, which can make exact comparisons difficult. The

municipalities that responded to the survey from those determined by the Town are: Ashburnham, Barre, Berlin, Bolton, Boylston, Groton, Harvard, Hubbardston, Paxton, Sterling, Sunderland, and Westminster.

Princeton is a small town and titles don't always have the level of responsibilities as counterparts with the same titles in other municipalities. The Project Team evaluates both the average and the median pay in order to obtain accurate information. The analysis of median pay removes the outlying data points.

The following Table highlights some of the challenges when reviewing survey data and should be taken into consideration when making evaluative determinations.

FACTOR	DISCUSSION
Title Comparison	A survey of titles can be challenging. Oftentimes, the same title may have different levels of responsibility, which can skew the results.
Data Points	The Center provided analysis with three data points of greater. Only three data points can have a skewed average and median if there is an outlier.
Organizational/Staffing Structure	Staffing levels and classification structures can impact salary survey results. For example, a large municipality may have more positions, which may be specialized, or have narrow responsibilities, whereas a smaller municipality, with fewer staff, may have broader responsibility.
Elected and Appointed Officials	It is common for appointed officials with the same title as elected officials to be compensated at a higher level because of the professional education and experience required to be hired into the job. Elected officials have no such minimum requirements and as such are oftentimes paid differently than their counterpart in other municipalities.
Reporting Relationship	Depending on the municipality and organizational structure, titles may not be truly comparable. In larger municipalities, the same title can be a department head, division head, or professional staff.
Salary Ranges	It is common for salary ranges to be outdated, which contributes to data being skewed. Even though many municipalities report minimum salary ranges, it is not known if they actually hire or compensate employees at the minimum.

Development of the Salary Schedule

In classification evaluation, it is important to note that each municipality is different and the comparability within an organization is as important, if not more so, than external comparability. In developing the recommended salary schedule, the Project Team coalesced the existing classification and compensation plan, which was adopted under a previous study, the selected position classification review, with the results of the salary survey to establish salary ranges for each of the grades.

The Survey revealed that Princeton salary ranges are below the labor market. Two of the selected towns (Groton and Westminster) for comparison are significant outliers. The Project Team has provided data analysis with and without these towns. The survey revealed the market has adjusted in recent years. As such, the Collins Center recommends compressing a few of the classification grades in the current structure.

The salary ranges were established by evaluating the median and average maximum pay with respect to the existing pay of the positions in each grade. Each grade has a range of 30%, which is the industry norm. The following Table represents the Project Team’s classification and compensation recommendation.

DEPARTMENT	POSITION TITLE	RECOMMENDED GRADE	MIN	MAX
Assessing	Principal Assessor	6	\$29.23	\$38.00
Building	Building Inspector	6		
IT	IT Coordinator	6		
Library	Library Director	6		
Town Accountant	Town Accountant	6		
Town Clerk	Town Clerk/Spec. Projects Coordinator	6		
Treasurer/Tax Collector	Treasurer/Tax Collector	6		
Council on Aging	COA Director	5	\$26.92	\$35.00
Highway Department	Foreman/Supervisor	5		
Parks & Recreation	Parks & Recreation Director	5		
Assessors	Office Manager	4	\$23.08	\$30.00
Cemetery	Cemetery Superintendent	4		
Highway Department	Mechanic/Driver	4		
Town Buildings	Building Maintenance Supervisor	4		
Treasurer/Tax Collector	Asst Treasurer/Collector	4		
Building	Administrative Assistant	3	\$21.54	\$28.00
Council on Aging	Outreach Worker	3		
Highway Department	Driver/Operator	3		
Library	Children's Librarian	3		
Library	Young Adult Librarian	3		
Library	Media Specialist/Technology Services	3		
Police	Administrative Assistant	3		
Town Administrator	Administrative Assistant/AP	3		
Town Clerk	Assistant Town Clerk	3		

DEPARTMENT	POSITION TITLE	RECOMMENDED GRADE	MIN	MAX
Cemetery	Cemetery Laborer	2	\$19.23	\$25.00
Council on Aging	Program Coordinator	2		
Highway Department	Highway Laborer	2		
Library	Library Clerk	2		
Vacant	Vacant	1	\$15.38	\$20.00

The Center recommends standardizing titles. For example, many titles have the words “administrative assistant. Similarly, the Library has a few titles with “Library Clerk” in the title. There is no need to have multiple titles with the same level and core responsibilities. Descriptions should be written in sample or general duties.

Implementation

The Project Team recommends placing employees in the range. The Town will need to make policy decisions on any other adjustments such as length of service in position, creating steps, or applying across the board or cost of living adjustments (COLA) to the entire pay scale. The Town may wish to determine a minimum increase for all positions and then place them on the scale.

Conclusion

The Project Team would like to thank the Town for welcoming the Collins Center and the Project Team specifically. We believe the recommended position descriptions and classification plan will serve the Town well for many years to come.

Summary of Salary Survey Maximum Pay

EXISTING TITLE	PRINCETON SURVEY AVERAGE MAXIMUM	PRINCETON SURVEY MEDIAN MAXIMUM	PRINCETON MINUS AVERAGE MAXIMUM	PRINCETON MINUS MEDIAN MAXIMUM
Building Inspector	\$38.52	\$36.06	(\$2.69)	(\$0.23)
Library Director	\$40.38	\$36.97	(\$4.55)	(\$1.14)
Town Accountant	\$39.68	\$39.76	\$3.35	\$3.27
Treasurer/Collector	\$38.43	\$37.77	\$4.60	\$5.26
Town Clerk	\$34.55	\$34.56	\$1.28	\$1.28
COA Director	\$33.56	\$32.05	(\$3.68)	(\$2.17)
Foreman	\$34.10	\$33.73	(\$4.22)	(\$3.85)
Parks & Recreation Director	\$33.55	\$29.47	(\$3.67)	\$0.41
Office Manager	\$28.79	\$28.32	\$1.10	\$1.57
Mechanic/Driver	\$30.28	\$29.20	(\$1.81)	(\$0.73)
Asst Treasurer/Collector and	\$31.27	\$29.93	(\$4.19)	(\$2.85)
Children's Coordinator	\$27.47	\$27.01	(\$0.39)	\$0.07
Library Clerk/Young Adult Librarian	\$27.98	\$28.04	(\$0.90)	(\$0.96)
Media Specialist/Technology Services	\$27.38	\$28.82	(\$0.30)	(\$1.74)

EXISTING TITLE	PRINCETON SURVEY AVERAGE MAXIMUM	PRINCETON SURVEY MEDIAN MAXIMUM	PRINCETON MINUS AVERAGE MAXIMUM	PRINCETON MINUS MEDIAN MAXIMUM
Department Assistant	\$27.23	\$27.77	(\$1.42)	(\$1.96)
Admin Assistant	\$26.54	\$27.33	(\$1.96)	(\$2.75)
Driver/Operator	\$27.63	\$28.58	(\$3.05)	(\$4.00)
Account Payable/Admin Asst	\$31.94	\$28.75	(\$7.36)	(\$4.17)
Asst Town Clerk	\$26.92	\$26.75	(\$2.34)	(\$2.17)
Admin Asst/Program Coord.	\$24.69	\$22.18	(\$0.11)	\$2.40
Cemetery Laborer	\$24.82	\$24.82	(\$1.42)	(\$1.42)
Laborer	\$21.24	\$22.26	\$2.16	\$1.14
Library Clerk	\$21.10	\$20.37	\$2.30	\$3.03
Substitute Library Clerk	\$19.09	\$19.09	\$4.31	\$4.31
Laborer/Driver/Operator	\$25.11	\$25.56	(\$2.69)	(\$3.14)

Note: Survey reflects the exclusion of Groton and Westminster