



UNITED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

February 21, 2019

Alice Dowdin Calvillo
Executive Officer
Sacramento County Civil Service Commission
700 H St. Suite 2640
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Calvillo,

United Public Employees (UPE) writes to object Department of Human Assistance's (DHA) proposal to combine the Human Service Specialists (HSS) and Eligibility Specialists (ES) into a single classification called HSS as well as their planned changes to the Senior Eligibility Specialist (SES) position. UPE and DHA met and conferred over the proposed classification changes in 2018 and 2019. Though UPE made some proposals which the Department accepted, UPE does not support the final changes brought before the Commission.

First, during negotiations DHA failed to present a clear justification for changing classifications. UPE asked DHA for an explanation of how workers' duties will change under the new classifications. DHA stated workers would not change duties immediately following passage of the class changes, despite the fact that currently HSS and ES's have very different duties. However, they did state they do intend to change duties at some point. When UPE asked for an explanation of how duties will change, DHA provided UPE with a short vague statement that does not explain how the department intends to use workers in the new classification. This limits UPE's ability to effectively represent our members by forcing the Union to negotiate over class specifications for positions with unknown duties. This also flies in the face of past practice within the Department. Previously, the Department changed duties and then created new classifications that matched those duties. In this instance, the department chose to combine two classifications for no clearly articulated purpose.

This places UPE at a disadvantage during negotiations over class specifications and later salary because we do not know how to map current and future duties onto the proposed classification language. UPE proposed re-opener language to allow the two sides to return to the table over the classification specifications after the Department settled on its plans for the classification. The County rejected this proposal.

The Department's process results in extremely broad classification specifications that miss nuances within existing workloads. For instance, the HSS workers in Employment Services, a DHA program, play no role in determining benefit eligibility. Instead these workers provide job training. This again raises the question of why is the Department enacting these classification changes when they seem to bring more workers together in one class performing a wider array of duties. Without knowing the Department's plan for duty changes UPE cannot determine if the class specifications make sense.

Furthermore, DHA has a history of misleading UPE when it comes to this Classification Study. During the most-recent round of contract negotiations UPE requested a copy of the proposed changes, but the Department claimed it was not ready. UPE members ratified the new contract on 9/20/18 and one week later DHA noticed UPE that the Department completed its review of the study and they were ready to meet. Department of Personnel (DPS) staff signed the version of the study sent to UPE in May and June. It was sent to UPE on September 27, 2018. This suggests no changes were made during the intervening three months and the Department purposefully delayed releasing the study due to bargaining. As a result, UPE believes DHA has more information than they are currently providing.

UPE also directs the Commission's attention to the Department's lack of a training plan for existing ES to become HSS. According to the Department, current workers in the ES classification will see no changes in duties following implementation of the class changes. However, they will now be governed by the duties and employment standards associated with the newly created class, which are almost entirely new for the ES's. Without a training plan in place these workers are left open to evaluation based upon a set of standards they have not been trained to meet. DHA claims they will provide training when they change duties but the Department has a history of promising training and either not following through at all or providing insufficient training.

UPE also objects to the Department's proposal to condition movement between Human Services Specialist I and II upon management discretion rather than making promotion automatic

upon completion of the twelve month probationary period. As it is now, probationary workers are already responsible for the same level of work as permanent workers before the end of their probationary period. The use of management discretion seems a deliberate tactic by the Department to essentially extend probation beyond the prescribed twelve months and require journey-level work without paying HSS I journey-level wages. During negotiations, UPE objected to this provision but the Department refused to change it.

Given our objections UPE asks that the Commission direct the Department to provide UPE with additional information and return to the bargaining table before the commission approves the proposed changes. UPE wants a clearer understanding of why the Department is making this change, what duties workers will have within the classifications, and how they plan to train employees to meet the new class specifications. We thank the Commission for their time and attention to this matter.