

## **RECLASSIFICATION REQUEST – JUSTIFICATION NARRATIVE**

1. Department: <b>Health and Human Services</b>	2. Number of employees: <b>Two (2)</b>	3. Full-time/Part-time <b>Full Time</b>
4. Current Position Title: <b>Disability Benefit Specialist and Elderly Benefit Specialist</b>		5. Current Pay Grade: <b>G</b>
6. Proposed Position Title: <b>No Change to position titles</b>		7. Proposed Pay Grade: <b>H</b>

The Benefits Specialist positions (Disability Benefit Specialist (DBS) and Elderly Benefit Specialist (EBS)) have comparable duties to the Information and Assistance (I&A) positions and therefore should be compensated at the same pay grade. Presently the I&A positions are compensated a grade higher than the DBS/EBS positions. All three positions are organized within the Aging and Disability Resource Center and require the same professional/educational qualifications (bachelor degree and social worker certification) and job responsibilities.

In recent months it was brought to my attention that most of the counties in surrounding our southwest Wisconsin region place all of these positions (EBS, DBS and I&A) on the same pay level including Grant, Lafayette, Iowa, Juneau, and Sauk Counties. Green County is currently working on reclassifying the positions as well. The only counties that do not are Richland and Crawford Counties.

I evaluated the position descriptions for each of these positions and updated them to more accurately reflect their duties including the crossover back-up I&A duties. Both the DBS and EBS positions require bachelor degrees and are expected to provide Information and Assistance back-up duties when needed (the I&A position description is also included with the supporting documents for comparison). The need to back-up the duties of the I&A responsibilities further argues the comparability of these positions. The current and proposed position descriptions are included as supporting documents with this reclassification request.

A review by Carlson Dettmann Consulting recommended the reclassification with some additional suggestions. Excerpt from consultant review: *“Following a lengthy dialogue with the County, our recommendation is to adjust the rating factor for “Decision-Making”, which would result in a shift to Grade H for both the Elderly Benefits Specialist and Disability Benefits Specialist. However, we further recommend that the classification of Social Worker be reclassified to Grade I. (This would be based on a recommended—and justifiable—adjustment to the ratings for ‘Interactions & Communications’ and ‘Education & Experience’).”* The full Job Classification Review is included with the supporting documents for this reclassification request.

There is a fair amount of supporting information that makes the case for placing these positions on the same grade. I believe the DBS & EBS positions and the I&A positions are equivalent in their responsibilities and requirements. With the County’s recruitment and retention difficulties it is problematic to have comparable positions (especially in the same program area) being paid at different rates. Compensating these positions differently when surrounding counties keep them at the same level also puts Richland county at a recruitment and retention disadvantage. I believe the remedy is to raise the DBS/EBS up to the I&A grade level.

Carlson Dettmann also makes a recommendation that other Social Worker positions should be reclassified to Grade I. While I may consider supporting this recommendation, Health and Human Services did not plan for this increase in the 2022 budget and does not currently have the ability to capture the additional funding that would be required to cover the increased expense. It would be my goal to come back to make this request when I have given it full consideration and there is a plan for funding it.