



Rural Development

August 31, 2018

Joel C. Baxley  
Administrator

Rural Housing Service  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Room 5014-S  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Telephone: (202) 692-0268

TO: Rural Development State Directors

ATTN: Rural Housing Program Directors

THROUGH: Angilla Denton /s/ *Angilla Denton*  
Acting Chief Operating Officer

FROM: Joel C. Baxley /s/ *Joel C. Baxley*  
Administrator  
Rural Housing Service

SUBJECT: Status of Classification Structure for Single-Family Housing  
Positions in State Offices and Field Offices

This memorandum is to inform you of steps being taken to classify and standardize the position descriptions for Single-Family Housing (SFH) staff in State Offices and the Field.

For several years, there have been ongoing discussions among Human Resources, SFH Field Office staff, and SFH Headquarters staff, and Senior Leaders at Rural Development (RD) about the need to modernize the position descriptions (PDs) for SFH dedicated staff in the Field and State Offices. While there have been many conversations attempting to resolve this outstanding concern, no conclusive action has been taken to date to finalize a course to deal with the issue.

SFH positions in the Field and State Office are classified in the GS-1165 Loan Specialist series. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) classification standards used for the 1165 Loan Specialist series were last updated in 1966. There have been profound changes in SFH loan business in and outside our agency since 1966. The functions of the RD SFH staff and the structure of the RD organizations that support our SFH activities have changed significantly. We are at a point now where we must evaluate our SFH series and grade structure to ensure RD's SFH programs can continue to operate successfully going forward. This is especially important given RD's overall staffing levels are declining. We must develop new ways of doing business that provide outstanding customer experiences and responsibly utilize program funds appropriated from Congress.

EXPIRATION DATE:  
August 31, 2019

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:  
Housing Programs

I have tasked Roger Glendenning, Deputy Administrator for SFH, in consultation with the Office of Human Resources, to be the RHS Point of Contact for the SFH PD evaluation. He will work closely with the Acting Chief Operations Officer Angilla Denton and the Acting Chief Enterprise Officer Moraima Rivera, to ensure this activity is completed as quickly as possible, and that the right input is obtained throughout, including input from the Field, to ensure a fair and transparent outcome.

As part of the evaluation, we plan to examine existing SFH functions in the Field bottom to top. We plan to evaluate whether the 1165 is the proper classification series standard going forward for SFH, and we will examine SFH dedicated PDs at various grades from the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Field Offices to determine comparability. The goal of the PD modernization effort will be to: (1) provide standardized PDs from entry to full performance level, that could then be applied to the SFH structure in each state; and (2) provide a path for career ladder progression within each state's SFH functions.

An RD work-group will be established to review the Single-Family Housing work performed in the agency and make recommendations to establish the new PDs. This workgroup will consist of a combination of Field Office SFH staff, Headquarters SFH staff, and staff from Human Resources at RD. Once the project is complete, the group will provide counsel to agency leadership along with uniform position descriptions that reflect the work being done. My objective is to have the new PDs for you to use by December 31, 2018.

On another but related matter, I recognize that many GS-1165 grade 9 SFH specialists have been recently or soon will be promoted internally to higher graded positions in other RD programs. Given this attrition from SFH and the inability to backfill these vacant position, the need to provide core SFH functions in some states will be impacted, in some cases severely. I am evaluating the impact of these staff losses on the SFH programs, and will provide further feedback to you soon.

Thank you for your support of the SFH programs. If you need additional information on this initiative, please contact Roger Glendenning at 202-692-0145.

Sent by Electronic Mail September 5 2018 at 9:00 am by Rural Housing Service. State Directors and Program Directors will notify all other personnel as appropriate.