

OVERVIEW

THE AUDITOR
STATE OF HAWAII

Final Report on Job Sharing in Hawaii State Government

Summary

As defined by statute, job sharing is the “voluntary sharing of a full-time, permanent employee’s position with another employee, with each working one-half of the total number of hours of work required per month.” Job sharers receive one-half of the salary to which they are entitled and at least one-half of the benefits afforded full-time employees.

For nearly 15 years the Legislature has promoted job sharing as an employment option for certain state workers. Job-sharing pilot projects have been conducted in the Department of Education and the Department of Health. We evaluated these projects; found job sharing to be a feasible, desirable, and cost-effective work arrangement; and recommended that job sharing should be made available by statute to all state agencies to use at their discretion. The Legislature has established permanent job-sharing programs in the Department of Education for full-time, tenured, certificated personnel (excluding educational officers) and for full-time employees of the public libraries.

Most recently, Act 244 of 1989 established a job-sharing pilot project from FY1990-91 to FY1993-94 to test the efficacy of job sharing throughout state government. The act covers permanent, full-time employees in the executive branch, the Department of Education, the University of Hawaii, the Judiciary, the Legislative Reference Bureau, the Office of the Auditor, and the Office of the Ombudsman. Participation in the project is voluntary both for the agencies and the employees. Each participating agency is allowed to use up to 150 permanent positions for job sharing.

In 1991 we issued a status report on the Act 244 pilot project, focusing on the progress of implementation. We found that interest in the project was minimal. Most executive agencies were not participating and no employees had applied for job sharing.

In the present study, we found participation in the pilot project was still low. Most executive agencies still were not participating in the project. Some said their work is not amenable to job sharing, employees are not interested, or job sharing is too complicated. Only 37 state employees are taking part, most of them nurses. Even with an additional 99 employees participating under other statutes, only 136 of Hawaii’s state employees were job sharing. Agency officials suggest that most employees cannot survive on a half-time salary.

However, we found that agencies which have job-sharing employees are satisfied with job sharing and have received no complaints about job sharing from their subordinate units. Widespread support for job sharing exists at the work unit level. Supervisors find that job sharing meets their needs and allows flexibility in scheduling. They believe job sharing should be continued and extended as an option for all state agencies. Employees who are job sharing expressed satisfaction with the arrangement because it means more time with their family, less job-related stress, and increased productivity. They also like the benefits and being able to continue working at a job they enjoy. Almost all reported that job sharing improves their agency's operations by reducing turnover and absenteeism, improving productivity and morale, or a combination of these. One employee said the only problem with job sharing is frequent rumors that it might be taken away. Almost all of the job sharers recommended that job sharing be made an option for all full-time state workers seeking part-time employment.

We concluded that job sharing has a positive effect on both agencies and their employees who job share. Agencies may find it to their advantage to foster interest in job sharing.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Legislature consider passing legislation that would authorize all agencies in the three branches of the state government to implement job sharing at their discretion. The legislation should encourage agencies to examine carefully the appropriate use of job sharing as a means of improving operations and retaining effective employees. Agencies, in turn, should share information about positions suitable for job sharing, where job sharing has worked, and where it has not.

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