

**EVALUATION OF JOB SHARING
IN THE
PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM**

A Report to the Legislature of the State of Hawaii

**Submitted by the
Legislative Auditor of the State of Hawaii**

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FOREWORD

This evaluation report is the latest of a series of reports which our office has issued concerning job sharing projects authorized by the Hawaii State Legislature.

The subject of this particular report is job sharing by personnel in the public library system. A previous report on the subject, *Evaluation of Job Sharing in the Department of Education: Tenured Employee Pairings and Public Librarians*, was issued in 1984.

Other reports in the series relate to job sharing by teachers in the public school system. These reports are: *Status Report on the Implementation of Job Sharing in the Department of Education* (1979); *Evaluation of the Job Sharing Pilot Project in the Department of Education* (1980); and *Job Sharing Pilot Project in the Department of Education: Final Evaluation* (1981).

We acknowledge with thanks the excellent cooperation and assistance which was extended to our office by the job sharing participants in the public library system, their supervisors, and other officials and employees of the Office of Library Services.

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EVALUATION OF JOB SHARING IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

The practice of job sharing originated in Europe as a way for mothers to hold part-time jobs while raising their children. In the United States, the first significant job sharing project began in 1965 in Framingham, Massachusetts, where 120 pairs of job sharing teachers were placed in various schools. Since then, numerous job sharing programs have been conducted in various parts of the country, including Hawaii.

Job Sharing in Hawaii

Teachers. In Hawaii, a three-year job sharing pilot project was started for teachers in the Department of Education in the 1978-79 school year. The legislation authorizing the project defined job sharing as "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 week, and with each receiving half of the salary to which each is respectively entitled and at least half of each employee benefit afforded to full-time employees."¹

The principal objectives for the job sharing project were to offer an alternative employment arrangement for teachers and to provide more employment opportunities for the large number of teachers who were then unemployed in the State. In the first year of the pilot project, there were 20 job sharing teams. By the

1. Act 150, Session Laws of Hawaii 1978.

end of the second year of the project, there were 50 job sharing teams, and in the third year, the number had grown to 66 teams. In 1981, the project was extended for two additional years,² and in 1984, legislation was enacted to make job sharing a permanent employment option for teachers.³ In recent years, the number of teachers participating in job sharing has stabilized at around 200 teachers and 100 teams each school year.

Three evaluation reports of the job sharing program for teachers were submitted by the Legislative Auditor, of which the most definitive was the final evaluation report in 1981.⁴ Overall, the evaluations found that job sharing among teachers had successfully achieved the objective of providing teachers with a viable employment option. In addition, the job sharing teachers reported greater job satisfaction and work productivity. And as a by-product of job sharing, the State experienced significantly lower costs than would have been the case if the job sharing positions had been filled by full-time teachers.

Library personnel. In 1982, the Legislature established a two-year job sharing pilot project for public librarians.⁵ The job sharing concept for librarians was almost identical to the job sharing concept for teachers. The legislation defined job sharing for librarians as "the voluntary equal division of one full-time permanent

2. Act 105, Session Laws of Hawaii 1981.

3. Act 147, Session Laws of Hawaii 1984.

4. Hawaii, Legislative Auditor, *Job Sharing Pilot Project in the Department of Education: Final Evaluation*, Honolulu, March 1981. The evaluation of a particular job sharing arrangement, that of pairing two tenured teachers, was presented in a fourth report. See Footnote No. 7.

5. Act 139, Session Laws of Hawaii 1982.

position between two employees, each performing one-half of the work required for the permanent position."

Amendments made in 1984 to the job sharing act extended the pilot project period through FY 1984-85 and FY 1985-86 and broadened eligibility for participation to library assistants and library technicians.⁶

Both the original job sharing act and the 1984 amendments directed the Legislative Auditor to conduct evaluations of the job sharing project for library personnel. Two reports were requested. The first report was submitted to the Legislature in 1984. This evaluation constitutes the second report.

Results of Previous Evaluation of Job Sharing Librarians

During the period covered by the previous evaluation (1983-84), job sharing was limited to those personnel who were classified as public *librarians*. The evaluation found that participation was very limited (four participants in the initial year), due primarily to the newness of the project, uncertain financial times, and the restriction of the project to public librarians. Nonetheless, the participants, their supervisors, and the available evidence supported the view that job sharing was beneficial and should be continued as an option for public librarians and opened up to other library personnel.⁷

6. Act 256, Session Laws of Hawaii 1984.

7. Hawaii, Legislative Auditor, *Evaluation of Job Sharing in the Department of Education: Tenured Employees and Public Librarians*, Honolulu, February 1984, p. 14.

Current Evaluation:

Summary of Findings

1. There continues to be limited participation in the job sharing pilot project for library personnel. The limited participation is not the result of any deficiency in the project's implementation. More personnel would participate if they could afford to give up half of their salaries.

2. Job sharers and other library personnel view job sharing as being beneficial to the participants as well as to the library system. Support is strong for establishing job sharing as a permanent employment option.

3. Costs of job sharing have been less than would have been the costs of full-time personnel.

Limited Participation

There have been a total of 14 participants in job sharing in the public library system, 6 incumbents and 8 partners.⁸ Five of the six incumbents have been public librarians. The sixth incumbent was a librarian assistant.

Of the six permanent employees who have participated in job sharing, three have returned to full-time employment after completion of their six-month job sharing contracts. Their personal financial requirements were cited as the reason for returning to full-time work. Two incumbents indicated that they would continue to participate in job sharing for as long as the law allows for such an arrangement. One incumbent, who is now working full time, reports that she will again apply for job sharing.

8. One librarian has had three partners over an extended period.

No one connected with the job sharing project, either as participants or as supervisors, cited deficiencies in job sharing procedures or particular arrangements as the reasons for the limited participation rate. These personnel as well as others whom we interviewed during the evaluation indicated that more people in the public library system would participate in job sharing when their financial circumstances improve.

Benefits of Job Sharing

Job sharers, their supervisors and colleagues, and administrators in the Office of Library Services all reported that the job sharing project has been beneficial. Job sharing participants said that they worked well with their partners and that the arrangement has resulted in higher productivity. They believe that their total output has been more than the amount that would have been produced by a full-time worker since a shorter work week helped them to maintain a higher level of enthusiasm and commitment.

Supervisors cited certain advantages of job sharing such as the ability to cover a six-day week more easily with a job sharing team than with one full-time person. By and large, the conventional job sharing arrangement was for an even split of a 40-hour work week, but supervisors reported that some job sharers voluntarily put in more time on the job to communicate with their partners. They also observed that in general, job sharing resulted in improved work quality.

As for the temporary participants, most were grateful that they had an opportunity for gainful employment and to work under arrangements which were not stressful. They gained valuable work experience, and most hoped that job sharing might eventually lead to full-time employment.

The only doubt among library personnel that our evaluation encountered was that job sharing might not work as well with librarians who have significant supervisory responsibilities. Personnel working under such job sharing supervisors might have to cope with two different philosophies and attitudes and might have to make daily adjustments, depending on which supervising librarian was on the job. Most personnel that we interviewed suggested caution in extending job sharing to supervisory positions such as head librarian.

Costs of Job Sharing

In the job sharing project for teachers, one of the interesting by-products of job sharing was that it resulted in significant savings to the State. In the first two and one-half years of job sharing among teachers, the State spent nearly half a million dollars less on job sharing teams than would have been the case if the incumbent teachers had taught full time.⁹ Job sharing among library personnel has also resulted in cost savings, although the savings have been more modest because of the much smaller number of people involved.

Table 1 compares the direct operating costs of the job sharing pilot project with what the costs would have been without the project. Our estimate is that job sharing in the public library system has resulted in a net savings of \$9,499 or 6.8 percent of normal costs. The most significant savings (\$7,947) are in salary costs. As with teachers, these savings in salary occur with library personnel because the salary of the job sharing partner is usually lower than the salary of the job sharing incumbent.

9. Hawaii, Legislative Auditor, *Final Evaluation*, p. 31.

Table 1
Direct Operating Costs
Job Sharing Project Costs Versus Costs Without Project
September 16, 1983 to September 12, 1985

<i>Cost Components</i>	<i>Pilot Project Costs</i>	<i>Costs Without Project</i>	<i>Savings</i>
Salaries	\$103,805	\$111,752	\$7,947
Retirement System	17,531	18,764	1,233
Social Security	7,245	7,800	555
Health Benefits	2,034	1,798	[236]
TOTAL	\$130,615	\$140,114	\$9,499

Other direct cost components show smaller savings with the exception of health benefits which cost more under job sharing. Under the job sharing act for librarians (as it is under the statute for teachers), all job sharing participants are entitled to full medical benefits. Consequently, health benefits for job sharing are slightly higher, even though some participants apparently had prior health coverage and chose not to participate in the State's program.

There are some administrative costs which are not reflected in Table 1. Procedures had to be prepared for job sharing, but these were minor, one-time costs associated with a personnel specialist's salary which would have had to be paid in any event, with or without job sharing.

If the job sharing program continues in the public library system, cost savings should continue to result, and the greater the number of incumbent library personnel participating, the greater will be the cost savings.

Concluding Observation

Our evaluation indicates that in spite of the limited participation, job sharing of public library personnel has been beneficial to the participants and to the public library system. We believe that the pilot test results of job sharing among library personnel justify continuing the program. When these results are considered in the context of the successful and much larger job sharing program for teachers, they suggest also that the concept of job sharing should be allowed to apply to other positions and departments of state government.

In our previous evaluation of job sharing in the public system, we stated the following:

"We believe that the time has arrived to remove the job sharing project from pilot status and to authorize job sharing on a permanent basis. Pilot testing is almost always useful, because many of the problems associated with installation of a new program or system can be detected, anticipated, and alleviated before full-scale implementation or expansion commences. In the case of the job sharing pilot project, we believe it has been more than sufficiently tested and evaluated and that there can be confidence in establishing job sharing as a permanent option for state employees.

"We believe that the best approach would be to enact a statute which would provide broad policy guidelines and authorize job sharing generally for all the agencies of state government, leaving it up to the agency heads to approve the specific jobs and the individual arrangements for job sharing. In this way, the individual departments could conduct their own pilot tests of the sharing of specific jobs. They would have the flexibility of continuing to authorize those arrangements that work and suspending those that do not.

"In this way, job sharing would be conducted in a larger and more flexible context with the potential of its benefits being extended far beyond what the pilot project has provided."¹⁰

10. Hawaii, Legislative Auditor, *Tenured Employees and Public Librarians*, pp. 16-17.

We have reviewed the foregoing conclusion, and we believe that it still represents the most reasonable and effective approach to job sharing. Already, there are other occupational fields (nursing, for one) seeking legislative authorization for job sharing. A general job sharing statute would obviate the need to enact piecemeal legislation for each new occupational group desiring a job sharing option, and it would bring more immediate benefits to the State as well as to a larger number of participants.

Recommendation

We recommend that voluntary job sharing be authorized for public library personnel as a permanent job option. We recommend that this authorization be accomplished through the enactment of a general job sharing statute which would also extend job sharing to other positions and departments of state government.