
Final Report on Job Sharing in Hawaii State Government

A Report to the
Governor
and the
Legislature of
the State of
Hawaii



THE AUDITOR
STATE OF HAWAII

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Submitted by

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Foreword

By Act 244 of 1989, the Legislature established a job-sharing pilot project in Hawaii's state government starting in FY1990-91 and ending in FY1993-94. The act directed the State Auditor to monitor and evaluate the project and to submit a final report to the 1994 legislative session. Our status report in 1991 focused on initial implementation of the project. The present report focuses on the usefulness of job sharing.

We acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of the agencies covered by Act 244.

Marion Higa
State Auditor

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Job sharing is the sharing of a job position by two employees. Act 244 of 1989 established a job-sharing pilot project in Hawaii's state government to start in FY1990-91 and end in FY1993-94. The Legislature directed the State Auditor to monitor and evaluate the project, paying particular attention to the efficacy of the job-sharing concept and factors that facilitate or hinder its implementation.

We issued a status report in 1991. This is the final evaluation and report to the 1994 legislative session.¹

Job Sharing in Hawaii's State Government

For nearly fifteen years the Legislature has promoted job sharing to give Hawaii's people an opportunity for more flexible employment. In 1978 the Legislature established the first job-sharing pilot project in the Department of Education for full-time, certificated, tenured teachers.² This three-year project grew to include other personnel of the department (except for educational officers) and was extended to six years.³

In 1982 the Legislature authorized a second pilot project in the department, first for librarians in the public library system,⁴ and later for library assistants and technicians.⁵ The Legislature established a third project between FY1986-87 and FY1989-90 for nurses in the Department of Health.⁶

The Legislature asked the State Auditor to monitor and evaluate these early projects. In each case, we found job sharing to be a feasible, desirable, and cost-effective work arrangement, and we recommended it as a permanent option for those positions tested. We also recommended that job sharing should be made available by statute to all state agencies to use at their discretion.⁷

In 1984 the Legislature established permanent job-sharing programs in the Department of Education for full-time, tenured, certificated personnel (excluding educational officers) and in 1986 for all full-time employees of the public libraries.⁸ In 1990 the Legislature passed a measure to establish a similar program for all full-time employees of the Department of Health. The governor vetoed the measure, however, as being premature because the Act 244 pilot project would provide more information for developing a permanent job-sharing program for the entire State.⁹

Provisions of Act 244

Act 244 establishes 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. Each participating agency is allowed to use up to 150 permanent positions for job sharing.

In the executive branch and the Judiciary, employees eligible for job sharing must belong to collective bargaining units 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, or 13.¹⁰ These units include supervisory employees in blue collar positions, nonsupervisory and supervisory employees in white collar positions, personnel of the University of Hawaii other than faculty, and professional and scientific employees other than nurses. The act excludes persons allowed to job share under other statutes.¹¹

Participation is voluntary both for the agencies and for the employees. Agencies that participate must develop implementation guidelines in consultation and agreement with representatives of appropriate bargaining units. The agencies must announce the project to eligible employees and follow established procedures for responding to applicants.

Definition and conditions of job sharing

Act 244 defines 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 month, and each receiving one-half of the salary to which each is respectively entitled and at least one-half of each employee benefit afforded to full-time employees.”¹² In other words, one permanent full-time position is divided into two job-sharing positions. One job-sharing position is filled by the employee whose position was designated for job sharing, and the other position is filled by another permanent employee or a new hire.

Certain benefits and rights remain unchanged for full-time, permanent employees who choose to share a job. They include: (1) no loss of membership in an employee bargaining unit and normal dues and service fees; (2) the same contribution by the State for prepaid health, dental, and group life insurance plans as for full-time employees; (3) coverage under the State’s employment security and workers’ compensation laws; (4) service credits on the same basis as for full-time employees; (5) retention points on the same basis as for full-time employees for a reduction-in-force procedure; and (6) return rights to the full-time position held prior to participation in the pilot project.

Employees who job share must enter into a contract; the employees have the option to contract for one or more years. No job-sharing position is to be converted to full-time status before the end of the contract period. In the event one party vacates the position, the agency must fill it by recruiting another job sharer. At the end of the contractual period, the two job-sharing positions must be reconverted to a full-time position.

1991 Progress Report

In 1991 we issued a status report on the job-sharing pilot project focusing on the progress of implementation. We found that interest in the project was low. Most executive agencies were not participating. The reasons they gave for not participating included the following: (1) lack of demand from employees willing to give up one-half of their income, (2) difficulty in filling vacancies in the tight job market, (3) unsuitability of the agencies' work for job sharing, (4) availability of other part-time options, and (5) administrative burdens.

We suggested that more flexibility was needed in (1) the provisions in Act 244 relating to reconversion of job-sharing positions and numerical ceilings for participation, and (2) the provisions in guidelines issued by the Department of Personnel Services relating to determining a position's suitability for job sharing, selecting applicants, and scheduling job-sharers' work.¹³

Objectives of the Study

The current study focused on the usefulness of job sharing. Our specific objectives were:

1. To examine the implementation of the job-sharing pilot project and evaluate the efficacy of the job-sharing concept.
 2. To make recommendations concerning job sharing as a part-time employment option for the State.
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Scope and Methodology

The study covered the offices of the governor and lieutenant governor, the executive branch departments, the Judiciary, the Legislative Reference Bureau, the Office of the Auditor, and the Office of the Ombudsman.

To accomplish our objectives we reviewed project guidelines of individual agencies, those developed for the executive branch by the Department of Personnel Services, our reports on prior job-sharing projects, legislation associated with those projects, and state personnel laws and rules.

We also wrote to the agency heads for information and conducted telephone interviews of agency administrators and managers, including those directly supervising job-sharing employees. We mailed survey questionnaires to 37 state employees participating in job sharing; the response rate was 59 percent.

Our work was performed from March 1993 through October 1993 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Chapter 2

Findings and Recommendations

The job-sharing pilot project established by Act 244, SLH 1989, will end on June 30, 1994. In this chapter we describe the status of the project, our findings concerning the efficacy of the job-sharing concept, and our recommendations for the future.

Summary of Findings

1. Interest in the job-sharing pilot project remains low. Most executive agencies are not participating in the project and fewer than 40 state employees are taking part, most of them nurses.
2. Job sharing is a feasible, desirable, and cost-effective work arrangement that agencies should be able to use at their discretion.

Participation in the Pilot Project Is Low

Interest in job sharing has increased since our report in 1991 but remains low. The same four executive branch agencies are participating in the pilot project as in 1991: the Department of Accounting and General Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Also participating are the Judiciary and all three legislative service agencies (the Office of the Auditor, the Legislative Reference Bureau, and the Office of the Ombudsman).

Implementation by participating agencies

The Department of Personnel Services (DPS) issued overall guidelines for the executive departments in February 1990. These guidelines gave direction to the project, reiterated the provisions of Act 244, and set forth policies and procedures. They included steps for implementation, a model for departmental guidelines, and sample forms.

All of the participating agencies adopted supplemental guidelines that were reviewed and commented upon by DPS and, where appropriate, by the Hawaii Government Employees Association. All of the participating departments are open to accepting applications, but only the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, and the Legislative Reference Bureau have employees who are job sharing. (See Table 2.1.)

In 1991, no state employees had applied to job share under the pilot project. As of June 1993, however, 37 employees were taking part, most of them nurses in the Department of Health. With an additional 99

employees participating under other statutes, a total of 136 of Hawaii’s state employees were job sharing.

**Table 2.1
Number of Job-Sharing Employees in Participating Agencies**

Agency	Employees
Accounting and General Services	0
Health	31
Human Services	2
Labor and Industrial Relations	0
Auditor	0
Ombudsman	0
Legislative Reference Bureau	4
Judiciary	0
TOTAL	37

Agency officials offered several explanations for low participation by employees. Economics was the main reason; most employees simply cannot survive on a half-time salary. Also, employees tend to prefer permanent positions to the one-year contracts used in job sharing.

Most agencies not participating

The remaining executive departments and the offices of the governor and lieutenant governor report that they are not participating in the pilot project. Table 2.2 lists their reasons.

Several agencies said that their work is not amenable to job sharing, their employees have no interest in job sharing, or job sharing is too complicated. Additional reasons include the availability of other arrangements, such as part-time positions; availability of job sharing under another statute; and lack of familiarity with the pilot project.

Table 2.2
Agencies' Reasons for Not Participating in the Act 244 Job-Sharing Pilot Project

Agency	Reason
Governor's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of employee interest • employees not eligible
Lt. Governor's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work not amenable
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of employee interest
Attorney General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable in-house opportunities already exist
Budget and Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of employee interest • work not amenable
Business, Economic Development & Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work not amenable
Commerce and Consumer Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of employee interest
Defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work not amenable • program too complicated
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employees eligible under other statutes*
Hawaiian Homelands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unfamiliar with program
Land and Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of employee interest • program too complicated
Personnel Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employees not eligible**
Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of employee interest • program too complicated • suitable in-house opportunities already exist
Taxation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty finding new hires to job share
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work not amenable
University of Hawaii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable in-house opportunities already exist

*The Department of Education's full-time, certificated, tenured personnel (excluding educational officers) and full-time employees of the public libraries are eligible for job sharing under other statutes.

**The Department of Personnel Services is not offering job sharing under Act 244 to its own employees because none are members of bargaining units covered by the act. The department has participated in the implementation of the project by developing guidelines for other executive agencies.

Job Sharing Is a Useful Option for State Employees

Most of the job-sharing employees in the pilot project are registered nurses or licensed practical nurses in the Department of Health. They work at Kona Hospital or Hilo Hospital on the Big Island, and Hana Medical Center on Maui. Four of the job sharers are researchers at the Legislative Reference Bureau, and two are vocational rehabilitation specialists with the Kauai Branch of the Department of Human Services.

Job sharing appears to benefit both the state agencies offering it and the individual employees taking part.

Participating agencies generally satisfied

The participating agencies that have job-sharing employees are satisfied with job sharing and have received no complaints about job sharing from their subordinate units. The agencies are disappointed by the low participation, but still look on job sharing as a good program that should be continued. Widespread support for job sharing exists at the work unit level. Both supervisors and workers expressed satisfaction with the program, and supported the adoption of job sharing as a statewide option.

Supervisors favorable to job sharing

Supervisors made favorable comments about job sharing, although several of them expressed concern about the administration of the job-sharing program. All supervisors found that job sharing meets their needs and that the program allows more flexibility in scheduling. Supervisors tended to be less enthusiastic than their employees about direct benefits to their office or unit, but agreed that employees are happier because the needs of employees are being met.

Some supervisors were strongly in favor of job sharing. They believe that it gives them more flexibility and that two job-sharing employees perform more work than one full-time employee. Supervisors also like having the option to retain a qualified worker who wants to work part-time.

Problems reported by supervisors were primarily administrative. There was a concern that some hospitals could be understaffed yet give the appearance of being fully staffed due to confusion regarding “job-sharing” employees who fill full-time positions on a half-time basis. One supervisor thought the department-level personnel office was too slow in processing the request for job sharing. Some supervisors also mentioned that work units should have some input about the appropriate number of job-sharing positions allowed in the unit.

Supervisors agreed that the job-sharing program should be continued and extended to all state agencies, with each agency having the option to see how job sharing fits its operational needs. Supervisors also mentioned that agencies should have the option to either keep some of the full-time positions intact or increase the number of job-sharing positions.

Employees enthusiastic about job sharing

Twenty-two of the thirty-seven state employees in the pilot project responded to our survey questionnaire. Those who responded have spent from less than a year to six years job sharing. Their reasons for job sharing included caring for children, wanting more time with family, alleviating job burnout, and needing time to pursue other educational and vocational goals.

All job sharers said they were satisfied with their job-sharing arrangement, except for one temporary employee who would have preferred a permanent full-time position. Job sharing appears to have met or exceeded expectations. The job sharers reported that the half-time hours meant more time with their family, less job-related stress, and increased productivity. They also made positive comments about receiving benefits and having the opportunity to continue working in a job that they enjoy.

Almost all respondents said job sharing was the only part-time option available to them. Two nurses said they could have resigned from their hospital and worked through an agency, but they rejected this option because they preferred to work for the hospital and avoid the erratic hours with an agency. Another nurse could have worked for the hospital as an emergency hire, but would not have received benefits or guaranteed minimum hours.

Some respondents had strong feelings about job sharing. One said that the only problem with job sharing was frequent rumors that it might be taken away. Another said that job sharing had been a “life-saver” for her and her family, and thanked those responsible for providing this “wonderful option.”

Almost all reported that job sharing improved their agency’s operations by reducing turnover, reducing absenteeism, improving productivity, and improving morale, or a combination of these. Other observations were that an agency gets more work out of two job sharers than one full-time worker because the job sharers are happier and less stressed, and the agency has a greater pool of part-timers who can fill in for others on leave.

Most reported having no problems with job sharing. Some did report problems such as having to share office space and being left unclear about retirement benefits. Office space problems have been resolved, but some employees are still unclear as to their retirement benefits.

Almost all of the job sharers recommended that job sharing be made an option for all full-time state workers seeking part-time employment. One, a temporary employee, suggested that both employees in a shared position should be considered permanent. Some indicated that job sharing would be appropriate for many, but not all, state jobs. They said that it might not always be feasible to divide work assignments.

Job sharers gave many reasons for making job sharing a part-time option. In addition to the reasons already mentioned, other reasons included:

- allowing qualified workers with family obligations to remain in the work force;
- helping the government to attract and retain qualified workers;
- having access to benefits that would be unavailable to other part-timers under the current system; and
- improving agency productivity, morale, and staffing.

One respondent summed up by saying that job sharing gives to many employees, who may need time for other priorities, the option to retain their jobs while at the same time it permits state offices to continue to operate efficiently.

Conclusion

We find that job sharing has had a positive effect on both agencies and their employees who job share. Therefore, job sharing should be made available by statute to all agencies to use at their discretion. Agencies might then find it to their advantage to foster interest in job sharing. For example, one agency believed at first that its positions were unsuited for job sharing, but upon further investigation found that it could offer job-sharing opportunities. Agencies may find that they can improve employee satisfaction and agency operations through job sharing.

Recommendations

1. The Legislature should consider passing legislation that would authorize all agencies in the three branches of the state government to implement job sharing at their discretion.

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2. 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.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Hawaii, The Auditor, *First Status Report on Job Sharing in Hawaii State Government*, Report No. 91-7, Honolulu, February 1991. Originally, Act 244 required annual status reports. Act 137 of 1992 amended this to require only initial and final reports.
2. Act 150, SLH 1978.
3. Act 105, SLH 1981, and Act 128, SLH 1982.
4. Act 139, SLH 1982.
5. Act 256, SLH 1984.
6. Act 73, SLH 1986 and Act 108, SLH 1988.
7. Hawaii, Legislative Auditor:

Status Report on the Implementation of Job Sharing in the Department of Education, Special Report No. 79-3, Honolulu, March 1979

Evaluation of the Job Sharing Pilot Project in the Department of Education, Report No. 80-10, Honolulu, March 1980

Job Sharing Pilot Project in the Department of Education: Final Evaluation, Report No. 81-10, Honolulu, March 1981

Evaluation of Job Sharing in the Department of Education: Tenured Employee Pairings and Public Librarians, Report No. 84-15, Honolulu, February 1984

Evaluation of Job Sharing in the Public Library System, Report No. 86-11, Honolulu, February 1986

Evaluation of Job Sharing for Nurses in the Department of Health, Report No. 88-14, Honolulu, January 1988

Evaluation of Job Sharing for Nurses in the Department of Health, Final Report, Report No. 89-24, Honolulu, December 1989.
8. Act 147, SLH 1984 and Act 88, SLH 1986.

9. Statement of Objections to Senate Bill No. 2157 and Proclamation to the Members of the Fifteenth Legislature from Governor John Waihee, June 26, 1990, p. 1.
10. Unit 9 was added by Act 137, SLH 1992.
11. Section 1, Act 244, SLH 1989.
12. *Ibid.*, Section 3(5).
13. Hawaii, The Auditor, *First Status Report on Job Sharing in Hawaii State Government*.