

**OPM 98-17**

**TO:** ALL APPOINTING AUTHORITIES

**FROM:** Oscar B. Jackson, Jr.  
Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources

**DATE:** February 23, 1998

**SUBJECT: Mission Critical Project Differential**

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Pursuant to Governor Frank Keating's Executive Order 98-05 (Filed February 18, 1998), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has approved the implementation of differential pay for employees in professional-level data processing positions who are assigned to projects deemed by a state agency to be critical to the accomplishment of the mission of that state agency.

**Mission Critical Project Differential Pay**

In order to retain the current workforce of professional-level data processing employees, the Office of Personnel Management has approved the use of a Mission Critical Project Differential. This differential is to be used to compensate current data processing employees who are assigned to projects determined by the employing state agency to be critical to the accomplishment of the agency's mission. Eligible employees may receive a monthly or biweekly pay differential not to exceed 20% of the employee's base salary. Mission Critical Project Differential shall be limited to:

- Individuals employed in professional-level data processing classes (see enclosed list);
- Individuals assigned to projects deemed by the Appointing Authority to be critical to the accomplishment of the agency's mission; and
- Individuals who have been performing the duties within the agency for at least 6 months.

**Any individual who elects to leave the employ of one agency is not eligible to receive a mission critical pay differential at another agency for 12 months after the separation date from the original agency.**

Agencies wishing to implement a Mission Critical Project Differential shall submit a plan for implementation to the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of State Finance. Such plan shall include:

- Description of the Mission Critical Project;
- Specific classifications to be included in the differential;
- Specifics as to the need for the differential;
- How the differential will be funded out of the agency's existing budget; and
- A written request for the differential to be implemented (see enclosed example).

### **Other Measures**

Along with the above mentioned alternative pay mechanism, the OPM has made special consideration for two existing pay mechanisms. The first of which is the **Class Special Entrance Rate** (MR 530:10-7-3 (1)). The OPM has made provisions for approval of Class Special Entrance rates of pay up to the maximum 20% level for all professional-level data processing classifications (see enclosed list). Agencies will still be required to notify the OPM of their intent to implement a Class Special Entrance rate as is currently required by rule.

Secondly, the OPM has declared a **market exception to exist for FLSA exempt data processing personnel** (MR: 530:10-7-12 (e)). This exception will allow agencies to make overtime payments up to the rate of time and one-half to FLSA exempt personnel in professional-level data processing classifications (see enclosed list). Agencies will still be required to make written notification to the OPM of their intent to make overtime payments to FLSA exempt personnel.

We trust that these measures will offer some relief to the recruitment and retention problems currently being experienced by all agencies in state government. If you should have questions concerning either of the alternative pay mechanisms, please contact Todd Dennis, Director of Compensation, at (405) 521-6338.

Enclosures

# Mission Critical Project Differentials

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Type of Procedure: **Approval of Mission Critical Project Differentials**  
Merit Rule Reference(s): **530:10-7-7**  
Statutory Reference(s): **O.S. Title 74:840-4.6(C,2)**  
OPM Contact: **Compensation Division**

## **Purpose:**

Pay Differentials allow agencies to provide additional compensation to employees with special duty requirements related to the position which are not factored into the base salary of the class.

## **Mission Critical Project Differential:**

This differential is used to compensate current professional-level data processing employees who are assigned to projects determined by the employing state agency to be critical to the accomplishment of the agency's mission. Eligible employees may receive a monthly or biweekly pay differential not to exceed 20% of the employee's base salary.

## **Procedures:**

This information is intended to supplement the information requested in the plan as directed by Executive Order 98-05.

All employees in the same class within the same approved agency or subagency code are eligible for the pay differential up to the maximum rate, however, only employees assigned to projects which are deemed critical to the accomplishment of the agency's mission may receive the Mission Critical Project Differential. It is not required that an agency provide differential pay to employees in an approved class, nor is it required that employees be paid at the maximum rate approved. The Office of Personnel Management does encourage agencies to treat employees in a uniform manner concerning the use of differential pay as much as circumstances allow.

**Common Errors:**

Common errors on requests include:

- 7 no effective date;
- 7 no clear indication of which facilities are to receive pay differential;
- 7 requests which exceed the maximum established rates; and
- 7 payment of differential pay while an employee is in leave status or not working under the circumstances which necessitated the pay differential.

**Example:**

The following is a fictitious example of an effective Mission Critical Project Differential pay request.

February 1, 1998

Jim Lippert, Assistant Administrator  
Management Services Department  
Office of Personnel Management  
2101 N. Lincoln Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear Mr. Lippert:

Pursuant to Merit Rule 530:10-7-7, the Department of Information Services requests mission critical project differentials for the following classes at the indicated rates.

| <u>CODE</u> | <u>CLASS</u>               | <u>GRADE</u> | <u>Maximum Percentage</u> |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| B511        | DP Programmer Analyst II   | 52           | 20%                       |
| B512        | DP Programmer Analyst III  | 58           | 20%                       |
| B515        | DP Programmer Analyst Sup. | 63           | 20%                       |

Please approve these differentials for all subagencies. We are requesting an effective date of March 1, 1998. The funds necessary for implementation of these differentials are currently available under our existing budget. These differentials will be paid to incumbents assigned to work on the Year 2000 Project.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Meg A. Byte  
Personnel Manager II

CC: Rollo Redburn  
Office of state Finance

## Classified Professional-Level Data Processing Job Titles

### CLASS

| <u>CODE</u> | <u>TITLE</u>   |
|-------------|--|
| B301        | DATA PROCESSING BRANCH MANAGER                       |
| B302        | DATA PROCESSING MANAGER                              |
| B307        | DATA PROCESSING PLANNING SPECIALIST                  |
| B308        | SENIOR DATA PROCESSING PLANNING SPECIALIST           |
| B310        | DATA PROCESSING ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR                   |
| B312        | DATA PROCESSING DIRECTOR                             |
| B313        | DATA PROCESSING ADMINISTRATOR                        |
| B325        | MANAGER, INFORMATION SERVICES DIVISION (OSF)         |
| B502        | DATA PROCESSING SYSTEMS SPECIALIST I                 |
| B503        | DATA PROCESSING SYSTEMS SPECIALIST II                |
| B504        | DATA PROCESSING SYSTEMS SPECIALIST III               |
| B510        | DATA PROCESSING PROGRAMMER ANALYST I                 |
| B511        | DATA PROCESSING PROGRAMMER ANALYST II                |
| B512        | DATA PROCESSING PROGRAMMER ANALYST III               |
| B515        | DATA PROCESSING PROGRAMMER ANALYST SUPERVISOR        |
| B519        | DATA PROCESSING SERVICES COORDINATOR I               |
| B520        | DATA PROCESSING SERVICES COORDINATOR II              |
| B521        | DATA PROCESSING SERVICES COORDINATOR III             |
| B522        | DATA PROCESSING APPLICATIONS SPECIALIST I            |
| B523        | DATA PROCESSING APPLICATIONS SPECIALIST II           |
| B524        | DATA PROCESSING APPLICATIONS SPECIALIST III          |
| B525        | DATA BASE ADMINISTRATOR                              |
| B526        | DATA MANAGEMENT ANALYST I                            |
| B527        | DATA MANAGEMENT ANALYST II                           |
| B529        | DATA MANAGEMENT ANALYST SUPERVISOR                   |
| B530        | DATA PROCESSING EQUIPMENT INSTALLATION SPECIALIST I  |
| B531        | DATA PROCESSING EQUIPMENT INSTALLATION SPECIALIST II |
| B540        | COMPUTER SERVICES ANALYST                            |
| B541        | SENIOR COMPUTER SERVICES ANALYST                     |
| B542        | COMPUTER SERVICES COORDINATOR                        |
| B545        | COMPUTER SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR                      |