



## City of Missoula Non-Union Career Ladder Procedure

### I. PURPOSE

This procedure provides for advancement of staff in eligible City of Missoula positions when the requirements for the next higher step are met, and for placement of newly hired individuals. Employees hired into a career ladder may be eligible for differing pay rates based on the level of work performed by the employee. The purpose of the career ladder is to increase employee retention by providing opportunity for periodic professional and economic growth and to ensure the City recognizes the benefit of increased employee competency through increased responsibility.

Career ladder steps must be objective, documented, and reflect differing work at each step. The Department bases advancement under this policy on successful job performance of the work assigned and attainment of the minimum qualifications expected at the next higher step. The Department does not base promotion, placement or transfer upon color, creed, race, sex, sexual preference, gender identity, gender expression, familial status, age, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, political beliefs, or any other factor that would be in violation of federal and state civil rights law.

This policy outlines the general requirements for career ladder advancement within eligible positions and does not provide for reclassification. Approval for a career ladder is reviewed carefully by managers, Department Directors and Human Resources, based on the ability to have positions progress in complexity while allowing all staff in that specific position to do so. Not all positions are appropriate for a career ladder due to work availability and type of work performed. Positions that are approved for a career ladder will have a Position Specific Career Ladder document created.

This procedure is not a contract. Advancement in the career ladder, and an applicable pay increase, is not guaranteed. All career ladder and pay advancements are contingent upon the Department's budget. The job description and any individual performance appraisals, when applicable, provide additional detail regarding job duties, professional development plans, and specific career paths for individual employees. The employee and supervisor will discuss and document how the employee will meet the detailed education, experience, training, work elements, and competency criteria for each step.

New hires and existing employees with prior experience will be placed at the appropriate step but it will be up to the candidate to provide an extensive review of their previous training and experience. There may be examples where experience in one discipline will be accepted for another. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by both the Department and HR Directors.

The Department will:

- Consider its ability to pay before awarding career-ladder adjustments.
- Assign an employee to the appropriate initial step at implementation or at the time of hire.

- Base advancement on successful job performance of the work assigned and the competencies necessary to advance to the next step. Consistent demonstration of proficiency is required.
- Reserve the right to assign work elements to all steps, regardless of the current step in the career ladder, to meet business needs.
- Reserve the right to revise or suspend established career ladders due to business necessity. If the Department suspends or revises an established career ladder, the Department will document the reasons and provide no less than 30-days' notice to employees, or as soon as practical when less notice is necessary.
- Reserve the right to reassign an employee to a lower step, in accordance with the City's policies or practices for demotions, if an employee is unable to perform at an advanced step.
- Communicate career ladder opportunities to all staff in career ladder eligible positions and assist staff in identifying how they can work toward meeting the education, experience, work elements and competencies required for advancement.

Employees of the Department will:

- Consider how their aptitudes and interests align with the Department's business needs and communicate career advancement interests with their supervisor.
- Demonstrate overall performance that meets or exceeds performance standards to be eligible for advancement within the career ladder.
- Meet the responsibilities, education, experience, work elements, and competencies required for advancement.
- Develop a portfolio of documentation showing consistent successful performance of the work elements. The portfolio must also include documentation of completed certifications, training, and on-the-job experience.
- Notify their supervisor of eligibility and interest in advancement when all requirements are met by following the stated procedure below for consideration for advancement.

The Department bases placement of an individual employee within the career ladder on the employee's qualifications and recommendations from the direct supervisor, with review by the Human Resources Department and approval from the Department Director. Assignment to the appropriate initial career step will occur at the time of hiring or implementation of the career ladder.

## **II. PROCEDURE**

1. If an employee has interest in advancement within the career ladder, they will communicate this interest to their immediate supervisor.
2. The supervisor will, in conjunction with the employee, develop a professional development plan which includes the work the employee needs to perform and any training or additional experience the employee needs to gain to advance.

3. When an employee has met the defined criteria, as listed in the professional development plan, they may submit a written request to their supervisor, along with their portfolio of work elements. This portfolio must demonstrate all elements of the required work listed in the requested career ladder step.
4. The supervisor will compare the request to the required work elements found in the Position Specific Career Ladder and review the request and portfolio for accuracy. The supervisor will then complete the Career Advancement Verification Form (Addendum 1), and forward to the Human Resources Department within 15 working days from receipt. The Human Resources Department will review the submitted documents within 15 working days to ensure all requirements of the requested step have been met.
5. Once approved by the supervisor and Human Resources Department, the request for approval will be submitted to the Department Director. The Director will review the documents and approve or deny the request within 15 working days.
6. If the Director approves the request, the advancement and applicable pay rate will be effective the first of the pay period in which the employee's request was approved. The request for advancement and the portfolio of work will be retained in the employee's personnel file.
7. If the supervisor or Director denies the request, specific reasons for the denial will be provided to the employee, in writing. The employee will have the opportunity to resubmit their request with the missing documentation demonstrating proof of meeting the requirements, or work toward meeting the missing requirements and resubmit their request once requirements are met. The request and letter of denial will be retained in the employee's personnel file.

### **III. STRUCTURE**

Each eligible position will include no more than three steps, such as: (A) Entry, (B) Intermediate and (C) Senior. The minimum qualifications for each step will be clearly defined in the position specific Career Ladder Addendum; the entry step minimum qualifications will be as listed in the Job Description.

Specific responsibilities relevant to individual positions vary. The level of independence and complexity of such responsibilities will vary depending on the career ladder step.

### **IV. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The City recognizes this policy cannot cover every work or classification need within the organization. Nothing in this policy shall preclude management from reclassifying employees in their present positions to classifications that reflect the duties performed. Please direct any questions concerning this policy to Human Resources.

ADDENDUM I

**Career Ladder Advancement Verification Form**

<b>POSITION TITLE</b>	
<b>RECOMMEND FOR STEP</b>	
<b>EMPLOYEE NAME</b>	

Directions:

Supervisor--fill in the Education/Experience, and Work Elements criteria, using the documented portfolio submitted by the employee as a guide. Then submit to Human Resources for verification and signature of the HR Director.

Employee- review the document created by the supervisor and initial each item verifying accuracy.

Human Resources- verify requirements against the position’s specific career ladder elements, provide approval signature, then route to the Department Director for review.

Department Director- review and verify accuracy of requirements, budget authority and provide signature for approval.

**Education/Experience:**

Required	Attained	Date Met	Supervisor Initials	Employee Initials	Remarks

**Work Elements:**

Description	Date Met	Supervisor Initials	Employee Initials	Remarks

Add additional page if necessary.

**City of Missoula Career Ladder Request Approval**

**Signatures**

*My signature below indicates the review and approval of this career ladder.*

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**Signature** **Supervisor**

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**Printed Name** **Date**

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**Signature** **HR Director**

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**Printed Name** **Date**

**Do not submit to Department Director until both the Supervisor and Human Resources have signed.**

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**Signature** **Department Director**

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**Printed Name** **Date**

Submit the final, fully signed document to Human Resources along with the following documents:  
Position Specific Career Ladder  
Status Change form with appropriate and approved wage