

Government hiring systems, training and remuneration of Government Officers

Hiring of Public Officers

There are two major agencies involved in the hiring of government officers. These are the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Department of the Public Service.

The PSC is a Constitutional body established by Parliament with the responsibility to hire and administer discipline to members of the Public Service. In the late 1900 to 2001 the Government developed the habit of having the Office of the President vetting applications for promotion or hiring in the various ministries/Departments. This practice was challenged by the GPSU in the high Courts of Judicature and Justice Ian Chang ruled that the practice was unconstitutional and should cease. Nevertheless, many Permanent Secretaries were unaware of the Courts decision and continued to send applications to the Office of the President. During the period when the Commission was dormant resulted in a spate of people being appointed by the then Ministry of the Public Service on contract, to fill positions that were on the permanent pensionable inventory of the

Ministries’/Departments’ staff structure. This resulted in the creation of

a “parallel “public service
supersession

breakdown in discipline

unqualified persons being appointed to permanent pensionable positions at salaries higher than what was prescribed for that position

flaunting of the public service rules

blatant disregard for procedures/policies

For expediency, the PSC had delegated the authority to hire lower category workers, on contract, to the Ministry of the Public Service and the person so hired will have their appointment confirmed later by the PSC. This authority was abused for persons were appointed to very senior positions.

The other hiring authority was the Ministry of the Public Service. This Ministry is authorised to hire persons on contract for short terms.

Training

Training should be a function of the employer – the Government- and is the function of the Department of the Public Service. It is the union's position that training should be ongoing to allow for the development of the staff. Both internal and external training opportunities should be advertised well ahead of the closing date so that a wide cross section of public servants, who qualify, can apply in time. The COI into the Public Service of Guyana 'recommend the establishment of a Committee of Permanent Secretaries from the key Ministries under the Chair of the Permanent of the Department to identify candidates to be awarded such fellowships and scholarships'. The GPSU would like to have included in that recommendation a technical person well versed in the field in which the fellowship/scholarship is being offered.

Remuneration

Salaries

there are established salary bands in the Public Service. The lowest band being band1 with a minimum salary of G\$55,000 and the highest band 14 with a salary around G\$5000, 000. Each band has a minimum, midpoint and maximum. These bands were set by the Department of the

Public Service and officers are appointed to these bands by the PSC

What we are seeing over the years is that there is no movement in bands. Officers are bunched at the same level in the band. Officers joining the service several years ago today are receiving the same salary as a person who has joined the service last month. The GPSU is seeking a living wage for its members and is seeking to achieve this by the end of 2018. In arriving at a living wage the GPSU has developed a ‘basket of necessities’ as shown below.

ITEMS	GPSU Minium
* Food (approximately \$1,000.00 per day)	30,000
Clothing	3,750
Footwear & Repairs	625
Housing (Rent/Mortgage)	12,500
Furniture (Hire purchase)	4,750
Transportation	5,000
Communication	1,875
Medical & Personnel Care	3,750
Education & Personal Development	6,000

Leisure, Recreation & Cultural Activities	6,250
Electricity	3,750
Water	1,250
Cooking gas/kerosene	1,875
Miscellaneous Goods & Services	7,500
Net Salary after P.A.Y.E. & N.I.S. Deduction	<u>88,875</u>

PAYE Deduction 33 1/3% (\$35,000 Treshold 2008)	29,893
N.I.S. 5.2% of Salary	5,910

GROSS AMOUNT 124,678

From this basket it can be seen that for a person to live relatively comfortably he/she must earn a basic salary of G\$124,678.

The GPSU recognised that to move from the present minimum to that living wage level would have been hard to achieve in one go therefore, the GPSU proposed to reach that level in three years.

Contract workers

these were being employed in the permanent pensionable positions at salaries higher than what is on the estimates for that position.

Create imbalance in the Ministries'/departments' budget because no prior provision was made for them

Allowances

The last increase in most allowances was in 1995.

the travelling allowance for motor vehicles is the same as it was in 1995 when fuel was around G\$200/gallon.

Nurses' uniform allowance (dress, shoe, cap etc.) is G\$13,000/year since 1997

The GPSU is of the view that for there to be a career driven professional Public Service remuneration must be on par with the competitor to retain the professionals