



COMMISSION COMMENTS

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Your Data Helps Us Improve

City of Columbus applications have a section called *Agency Questions* that asks "What is your gender?" and "What is your race?" We collect this information as required by the State of Ohio and report it annually to the State Personnel Board of Review.

If an applicant feels uncomfortable sharing this information, the application includes an option for a response of "prefer not to answer." With all that is going on in the world today, it is understandable why an individual would consider making use of this option. However, we use this important information to analyze our process and make improvements in the diversity of our pool of candidates as well as the overall fairness of the entire process. Please review some of our routine practices listed below:

This data is stored in your Master Profile and cannot be seen on the application. It is never used in the grading process, does not appear on the application viewed by Civil Service, is not on the eligible list, and cannot be seen by hiring managers/staff during the hiring process.

Tests for City of Columbus jobs are graded by identification numbers, not by name. When candidates take a civil service test with the City of Columbus, they do not put their name on the test, but instead use a Person ID. Person IDs are random numbers assigned to candidates by our online database NEOGOV or governmentjobs.com which offer an extra layer of anonymity. Many tests are graded

by an automated system, but staff members hand-grading exams only see a number. In either case, that number is not linked back to a name until all grading is complete.

Our staff analyzes the adverse impact of exams after they are administered.

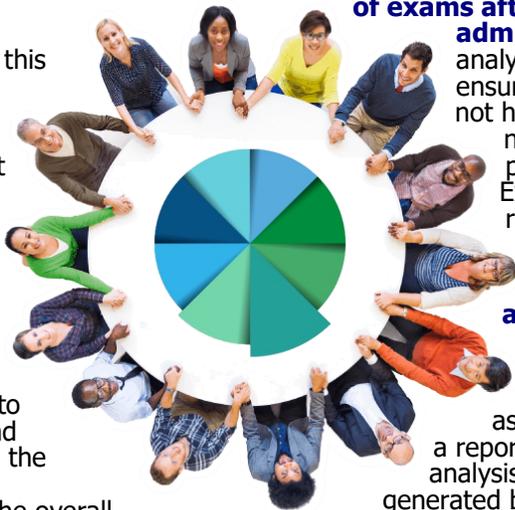
Data is analyzed for each exam to ensure that the exam does not have an unintended negative impact on a protected group. Exams are reviewed regularly and revised as needed.

Test questions are reviewed again after an exam is administered.

A standard practice in assessment is to review a report called an item analysis. This report is generated by our grading software and tells us if a specific test item (question) is too easy or too hard. In addition, we use a candidate feedback form in our test center to allow test takers to let us know if they think there is an issue with a test question, such as having two correct answers. The analyst reviews each of those feedback forms when grading a test, checks all of the items in question and determines whether or not to keep the test item in the final grading process.

Testing staff receive training on test development, test grading, the Federal Uniform Guidelines which govern civil service testing, legal updates, and many more topics. Most of our exams are developed and graded in-house by these same staff members based on observation of City of Columbus employees performing the actual job and a thorough job analysis.

(continued on Page 2...)



Inside this issue:

Whose Job is That?	2
Police Testing	2
Veterans' Preference Rule Changes	3
Pop Quiz!	4
Meet the Staff	4
Where Is It?	4

Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common... Celebrate it every day.

~Winston Churchill

(...continued from Page 1) **This data helps form future policy and recruitment.** While the tests we give are based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform well on day one of a job, the information we collect on gender and race at the time of application helps other entities in the city and state decide if there is a cause for action of a different kind. For example, if we have a test where all applicants are male, is more focus needed in the community on education in that field for females?

Many steps are taken to keep information confidential and to make the testing process fair. The City of Columbus already has a very diverse group of employees not just in age, race, and gender, but also from different cities, states, countries with a variety of educational backgrounds and work experience. Mayor Andrew Ginther's administration and the Civil Service Commission are committed to continuing to improve diversity in the hiring process.

Whose Job is That? Epidemiologists

COVID-19 has recently put public health in the spotlight and generated a heightened interest in epidemiology. What is epidemiology? It is the study of how diseases and other health-related events spread and can be controlled in a population. The Columbus Public Health Office of Epidemiology analyzes health-related data to help improve the health of the community.

Epidemiologists in the City are responsible for monitoring disease and environmental hazards and assessing and controlling endemic, epidemic, and environmental incidents. They collect, analyze and report on data for not just diseases but also for other public health issues like drug overdoses, flu, and extreme heat. Epidemiologists investigate epidemics and interact with laboratory employees and other medical health professionals. These employees conduct and participate



in research, develop policies and help prepare for public health emergencies.

Whew, that's a lot of work! But what a great way to help your community! The minimum qualifications for this position are a bachelor's degree and one year of graduate level coursework in public health, preventative medicine, environmental sciences, epidemiology, biostatistics or other closely-related classes.

Epidemiologist is a noncompetitive position so vacancies will be posted on our website at Columbus.gov/civilservice.

If you qualify and are interested in this job, you can also fill out a job alert on our website by searching for Epidemiologist under Job Class Info and clicking the green subscribe button. While you are on the website, take a look around, the City of Columbus has hundreds of positions with exciting ways for you to get involved!

Apply in July: Police Officer Testing

Filing for the upcoming Police Officer Examination opens Wednesday, July 1st

If you have a high school diploma or GED, a valid and current driver's license, are a current United States citizen, and are at least 20 years of age, you meet the qualifications for the examination!

Please submit your application to the Civil Service Commission between July 1 and July 31, 2020, online at www.columbus.gov/civilservice, by clicking *Current Job Openings* beginning July 1. If you participated in the Pre-Qualification testing, you DO still need to apply for this job posting; it is how you will be scheduled for the next phase. Please be sure to submit your application no later than July 31, 2020.

The examination has multiple phases, consisting of a multiple-choice, writing sample, oral board (COPE), and a physical test. The first three phases of the test will be at our location for Police and Fire Testing at 1111 East Broad Street, Suite 201. This location has enacted many procedures to allow you to maintain social distancing while testing. These new practices include smaller testing groups in multiple rooms, candidate health screening before entry, and increased cleaning of materials & surfaces.

Want to learn more about the examination before you apply? The Civil Service Commission website contains a great deal of information regarding the testing process. A study guide and previously recorded information session are provided to help you prepare for the examination. You could also call our Police exam information line at 614-645-0800

Want to learn more about the position before you apply? Visit the Division of Police's website at www.columbus.gov/police. Prior police experience is NOT required, so if you are ready for a rewarding career that will provide life-long skills and an opportunity to serve our community, apply today!



Rule Change: Veterans' Preference

Smoothing the transition from active service to civilian life

Veterans' Preference is the practice of awarding additional points to the passing scores of United States military veterans on open competitive exams. During the May 2020 Civil Service Commission (CSC) meeting, the commissioners approved changes to our existing Rules.

These changes impact our policies and procedures, applications, fact sheet, and communication standards related to Veterans' Preference. Most of the proposed changes are wording and formatting changes that add clarity for applicants and staff.

However, there were two significant changes:

- 1) The CSC is expanding the type of documentation we will accept. Each branch of the military and the Veterans Administration produce unique paperwork that has changed format over time. On any given day, the Commission encounters veterans of every age with different types of service records. Therefore, to alleviate the "red tape," we removed the previous requirement that "service dates" must be on the proof of eligibility.
- 2) The CSC is expanding our definition of "veteran." The existing language of the Rule allowed those who provided the Commission with acceptable documentation of their service *and* their honorable discharge to be eligible for Veterans' Preference. While this sounds straightforward, in practice, it excluded an important group of people: current active service members who are making plans to leave military service and transition to civilian life. One of the key expressed purposes of Veterans' Preference is to assist service members with that transition. Service members typically begin the transition to civilian life at 180 days before their discharge. The updated rule includes a way for these service members, who are anticipated to be honorably discharged, as eligible to receive Veterans' Preference.

As a rule of thumb, veterans who wish to receive Veterans' Preference should expect to provide acceptable documentation prior to their test day, preferably attached to their application. So, if you are a veteran and would like to utilize this option, it is a good idea to learn about it now and be ready when your perfect job is waiting for you.

Please visit our website, www.columbus.gov/civilservice, click on *Public Forms>More>Veterans' Preference Fact Sheet* for more information.

VETERAN'S PREFERENCE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Can you request my service records for me?

No. The Civil Service Commission cannot request documentation of your service on your behalf; the service member must obtain their own records.

I can't find my DD214.

What else will you accept?

A service information letter from the VA or comparable documentation that includes the required information.

I have a DD214 that does not show the character of discharge. Will that work?

You probably have a Member 1 copy of the DD214. By itself, the form you have will not be sufficient. We recommend the Member 4 copy. The Member 4 contains all the information required.

I have a card showing I am a veteran.

Will you accept that?

There are many types of cards issued by many organizations. It depends on the card, who issued it, and what information is on it. Many cards do not have the information we need. A determination will be made case by case.

I forgot to turn in my records before the test.

How long do I have to provide them?

Check your exam notice (we typically provide a date there) or ask Commission staff. If you have received your final results, it is too late.

I am currently in the process of getting paperwork from the VA.

Will you wait to create the eligible list until I can get my paperwork?

No, we can not wait. It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain their paperwork and provide a copy to attach to the application prior to the test completion.

How can I submit my documentation?

Attach it electronically to your application, bring it to the test, send it by email, mail it, or fax it to us.

I already received veterans' preference points to obtain a City of Columbus job. Can I use the points again to get a different job with the city?

Typically, no. However, if you were terminated from that city job as a result of a layoff you can still qualify for the veterans' preference.

Main Office and Test Center

77 North Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-1895
614-645-8300
CivilService@columbus.gov
TestCenter@columbus.gov
Fax: 614-645-8379

Uniformed Test Center

1111 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43205
614-645-0848
PoliceFireTesting@columbus.gov

columbus.gov/civilservice
cscfeedback@columbus.gov

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Meet the Staff: Karla Pierce



Karla Pierce has traveled abroad and lived all over the United States. Born and raised in Washington State outside of Olympia, Karla has a master's degree in Practical Philosophy and Applied Ethics from the University of Northern Florida. She attended college in Seattle, Chicago, Miami, and Jacksonville. Always adventurous, Karla had the opportunity to backpack through Europe and North Africa for six months, during which her favorite stops were Sicily, Croatia and Morocco. Yet, Karla has chosen to call Columbus home, and we here at the Commission feel lucky to have her.



In May 2017, Karla began work as a Personnel Analyst with the Civil Service Commission first in a part-time role, and then she accepted a full-time position the following year. As a Personnel Analyst with the uniformed testing team, Karla develops and administers exams for the police and fire promotional ranks.



When asked what she likes best about her job, Karla responded "My co-workers, interacting with police and fire personnel, critical thinking, and binders (see picture). So many of my co-workers are smart, playful, approachable, collaborative, and truly supportive. Plus, this job provides many opportunities to apply and promote the critical thinking tools I learned through studying and teaching Philosophy." Prior to working for the City, Karla taught philosophy at several colleges and universities in Florida and at Columbus State Community College.



Karla just "got hitched" in 2019, and she and her new husband have three kitties (one named Eldorado is pictured) and someday would love to add baby goats and pigs to the family. She loves DNA & birth family research, composting, gardening, fermenting, day trips to go antiquing & hiking, and biking the Alum Creek trail here in town.



After recently learning that one of her biological grandfathers is 100% Greek, Karla said "that's good news to someone who loves Philosophy!"

WHERE IS IT?

See if you recognize the location in our title banner on the first page and email your guess to BSobieck1@columbus.gov

We will print the answer and the names of the first five correct responses in our next issue

LAST QUARTER'S ANSWER:

Schiller Park Art Installation

"Suspension: Balancing Art, Nature, and Culture."

Last Quarter's First Five:

Lori A. LeClair, *Technology*
Lauren Hunter, *Public Service*
Belinda Anderson, *Building & Zoning*
Rebecca Henrie, *Public Utilities*
Jennifer Henderson, *Finance*

POP QUIZ!

How many exams does Civil Service administer?

A common misconception about the City of Columbus' Civil Service Commission is that we administer just one test that every candidate must pass to earn consideration for any city job. **In fact, the correct answer is 250+.**

Consider this: The City of Columbus employs over 8,100 people in over 640 job categories known as job *classifications* or *job classes*. The four job classification types, from largest to smallest, are Non-Competitive (~51%), Competitive (~37%), Unclassified (~10%), and Qualifying Non-Competitive (~2%).

Civil Service creates a full exam for each *Competitive* job class. **That translates into over 250 exams!** Each classification's exam is based on the work that is actually performed by employees who are currently in that job. Plus, Civil Service creates every exam in-house.

The exam for each job class is made up of separate components called subtests. The most common subtests include: computer skills, information ordering, logic and reasoning, mathematics, memorization, name/number comparison, oral communication, oral comprehension, problem sensitivity, reading maps/plans, written communication, reading comprehension, and written expression.