



THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**

ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

# COMMISSION COMMENTS

## Listen Up! Your Favorite Bands Have New Names

When you take a City of Columbus civil service examination, your final score is placed in a score band. Scores are grouped into bands for consideration by departments for hiring. Bands will now be designated as 1, 2 and 3. This is a change from the 90, 80 and 70 bands used in the past.

The reason for changing this is because some tests do not include scores on the traditional 70 to 100 point scale, and it has caused confusion for candidates. Re-labelling the bands as 1, 2, and 3, will make the concept



**Old names: 90, 80, 70**

**Old method:** The 90 Band was considered first, then the 80, and finally the 70

**New names: 1, 2, 3**

**New method:** Band 1 will be considered first, then Band 2, and finally Band 3

clearer about how quickly someone will be considered for employment.

When a department has a vacant position, they request a referral from Civil Service. The appointing authority, (typically the department director or elected official) can choose from anyone in the first band. Once the first band is down to less than five names, the second band will be referred to the department. The third band cannot be reached until Bands 1 and 2 have been properly considered.

## Why is Diversity & Inclusion Important in the Workplace?

or hear, social media interactions, training, and/or just daily conversations between many of us. Even though the phrase is prevalent, there is often still ambiguity for many when considering the topic. So here's a birds-eye view of diversity and inclusion that may prove helpful next time the topic comes up!

According to Matt Bush<sup>1</sup>, Culture Coaching Lead at Great Place to Work®, diversity and inclusion (D&I) is more than policies, programs, or headcounts. An organization that respects the unique needs, perspectives and potential of all their team members typically outperforms its competitors in services/products provided because employees have a deeper trust and more commitment for their employer.

[So, what is the difference between diversity and inclusion?](#) According to Matt, diversity and inclusion are two interconnected concepts—but they are far from interchangeable. Diversity is about representation or the make-up of an entity. Inclusion is about how well the contributions, presence and [\(continued on page 2...\)](#)

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**Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.**

~Verna Myers

## Diversity & Inclusion, Continued...

(...continued from page 1) perspectives of different groups of people are valued and integrated into an environment. An environment where many different genders, races, nationalities, and sexual orientations and identities are present but only the perspectives of certain groups are valued or carry any authority or influence, may be diverse, but it is not inclusive. A diverse and inclusive workplace is one that makes everyone, regardless of who they are or what they do for the business, feel equally involved in and supported in all areas of the workplace.

### Why is diversity & inclusion in the workplace important?

Matt shares that research has shown there are many benefits for a diverse and inclusive workplace including:

- Higher revenue growth
- Greater readiness to innovate
- Increased ability to recruit a diverse talent pool
- 5.4 times higher employee retention

In fact, inclusion in the workplace is one of the most important keys to retention. If employees don't feel that their ideas, presence or contributions are truly valued or taken seriously by their organization, they will eventually leave.



Additionally, research conducted by Great Place To Work on company culture shows that when employees trust that they, and their colleagues, will be treated fairly regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or age, they are:

- 9.8 times more likely to look forward to going to work
- 6.3 times more likely to have pride in their work
- 5.4 times more likely to want to stay a long time at their company

Having an inclusive workplace culture will not only help attract a diverse set of talent but also helps to retain the diverse talent currently within the organization. And keep in mind, an inclusive workplace doesn't just have a diversity of people present, it has a diversity of people involved, developed, empowered and trusted by the business.

Under the leadership of Mayor Ginther and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the City of Columbus recognizes the moral, social, community, and economic benefits, as well as our collective obligation, to continuing to work toward providing a diverse and inclusive City in which we all want to live, work, and play!

<sup>1</sup>Bush, Matt. ["Why Is Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace Important?"](https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/why-is-diversity-inclusion-in-the-workplace-important) [www.greatplacetowork.com](https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/why-is-diversity-inclusion-in-the-workplace-important),

<https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/why-is-diversity-inclusion-in-the-workplace-important>. Accessed 16 October 2020.



## How Are Competitive Vacancies Filled?

When you visit the *Current Job Openings* section of the Employment Center on our website, you will find that we have four types of jobs: Competitive, Noncompetitive, Qualifying Noncompetitive, and Unclassified. The two most common, that make up most of our job postings, are competitive and noncompetitive. Competitive postings will have the word "EXAM" after the name of the job.

Unlike noncompetitive job vacancies, which are posted to the public and then filled from the general applicant pool, competitive jobs have a few more steps. In order to fill a competitive job, there must be an eligible list of candidates to choose from. If there is no existing eligible list, a department will first need to request that the exam is given. This is when the "job" is posted to the public. All applicants who meet the minimum qualifications are invited to take the exam. Once that examination is given, the eligible list is established and all passing candidates are added to the list. Candidates are then notified that their name has been added to the eligible list and, if applicable, which band they have been placed in.

Once an eligible list is established, it is up to the departments to request the list when they have a vacancy that needs to be filled. Sometimes this can be as soon as the day the list is created; sometimes it can be weeks or months before the list is requested. The timing of "when" a department needs to fill a vacancy can vary due to a number of different factors, and therefore it is difficult to predict exactly when a list will be requested, or how often.

Once a department submits a request for the eligible list, they are given all reachable bands. A band is considered reachable if there are less than five interested candidates in the preceding bands. Sometimes this means a whole list is issued at once, if the list has 5 or fewer names! Once candidates are "released" to the departments for consideration, we notify them with an email and/or mailed letter titled "Notice of Certification" – this lets candidates know they have been placed on a referral. A referral is different from an eligible list as it is the list of candidates given to a department to be considered for a specific vacancy. An eligible list consists of all potential candidates for a job class, but departments must "work" the list in order to reach candidates further down the list. Typically, this means candidates are either not interested in the specific position, or they have been removed from the list after being hired off of a previous referral for a different vacancy.

Once an eligible list expires – typically after two years – or it is exhausted, departments can request that a new exam is given. This will generate a new pool of applicants to choose from for future vacancies.

## ??? Ask Eyestein ???

Dear Eyestein:

**I just completed the Oral Board phase of the Entry-Level Police Officer exam. They say my performance will be evaluated by a panel of raters. How can I be sure that each rater will be objective and unbiased when they score my performance?**

**Signed, Your Future Police Chief**



not make something *else* the basis for a score. For example:

Suppose a rater is a **Chicago Bulls** fan, and the candidate being evaluated is wearing a Chicago Bulls shirt. If the rater allowed that similarity to positively influence their score of that candidate's performance, they would be making what is called the "Similar-to-me" error. The **Similar-to-me error** makes the rater's own characteristics or tastes the basis for the present candidate's score.

Dear Optimist:

Raters who participate in evaluating Oral Board performances receive extensive training. A key part of the training involves learning how to recognize and avoid common rating errors. Raters are human, even the most careful human can make subconscious errors when evaluating a performance. Without training, those errors could result in some candidates being given an unfair advantage or disadvantage over others.

That is why raters are trained to base their raw scores of each performance on two things: 1) **the present candidate's behavior**—what the candidate actually says and does during their timed performance, and 2) **the rating scale**—what the rating tool actually says about that behavior. Raters are trained so that they do

Or suppose a rater is evaluating a performance and they think to themselves "The last candidate was *much* better than this one." If the rater allowed that thought to negatively influence their score of the present candidate's performance, they would be making what is called the "Contrast Effect" error. The **Contrast Effect error** makes another candidate's performance the basis for the present candidate's score.

These and other common rating errors are why raters are thoroughly trained to base each and every score on what the candidate actually says and does, and what the rating tool actually says about such behavior. Additionally, every panel of raters is closely monitored by a Civil Service Analyst who is trained to gently steer raters clear of these and other common rating errors.

## What is a Situational Judgment Test?

*More and more tests are including this style of testing. Learn more about it here!*

A Situational Judgment Test (SJT) is a video-based assessment. This type of examination assesses judgment required for problem solving in work-related situations.

Test-takers watch scenarios. At various points in each scenario, an employee on the video will be placed in a situation that requires a response. That employee will respond to the situation in multiple ways. After each response, the video automatically pauses and provides 10 to 15 seconds for the test-taker to rate the effectiveness of the employee's response. The City currently uses the following scale:

**A = Highly effective**—providing the desired effect, impressive.

Response provided extra effort and attention that made it distinctly better than satisfactory.

**B = Satisfactory**—fulfills the requirements resulting in a positive outcome, but nothing more.

Response meets the standard but does not provide any extra effort (does not go above and beyond).

**C = Substandard**—below standard or less than adequate; will likely have a negative impact on the situation.

Response may have positive points, but does not meet the standard of what would be expected or required for the situation.

**D = Unacceptable**—clearly inferior.

Without a doubt the response would end in a negative outcome; definitely wrong.

Each response can have any rating, independently of the others. For example, response 1 could be highly effective and response 2 could also be highly effective. For each response, the test-taker must consider the entire A/B/C/D scale.

Specialized training, knowledge, or experience is **not** required for this type of test. Rather, answers draw on the general knowledge and life experience a person has acquired through work, school, extracurricular, and/or community activities.

### Suggestions on how to do your best on a Situational Judgment Test

- Be attentive to each of the scenarios.
- While viewing the responses pay careful attention to tone, wording, and demeanor.
- Use the entire scale. Consider all four ratings for each response.
- Once you make your rating, look back at the screen to prepare for the next scene or response to begin.

We have added a new link on our website under *Employment Guides and Resources* that will give you a look at the full instructions and an example scenario with responses. Please visit our website and check it out!





**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

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## WHERE IS IT?

See if you recognize the location  
in our title banner on the first page  
and email your guess to  
[CEEmhuff@columbus.gov](mailto:CEEmhuff@columbus.gov)  
We will print the answer and  
the names of the first five correct  
responses in our next issue.

### LAST QUARTER'S ANSWER:

Parsons Water  
Administration Building

### Last Quarter's First Three:

Tara Reeves, *Division of Fire*  
Rita Stone, *Public Utilities*  
Jason Rollison, *Public Utilities*

## Join Us in Saying Farewell to Our Newest Retiree: Brenda Sobieck



The joke around the office is that Brenda has worked for Civil Service since she was twelve years old—because it seems impossible that she is old enough to retire! In fact, before she joined the Commission in 1991 as a Personnel Analyst I, she already had two years in public service, working as a Researcher at the Ohio Department of Youth Services.

Brenda moved up through the ranks at Civil Service, finally landing in her current position as a Personnel Administrative Manager, where she is responsible for coordinating the police and fire hiring process, including the background process and medical contracts. She is also the primary Hearing Officer for appeals from applicants and employees, including Columbus City Schools. Above and beyond her required responsibilities, "Brenda the Earth Defenda" was an active member of the City's Green Team for several years, and is still known for making sure everyone at the commission recycles. In addition, Brenda is also the chair of the newsletter committee. This wide variety of responsibilities has not only made her one of our top experts in creating custom NEOGOV reports and massive Excel spreadsheets, but it has put her in contact with every department in the City. And that is what she will miss most about working—she says, "I have worked with so many great people" and promises to try and keep in touch.

Originally from Louisville, Ohio and a graduate of the University of Akron, Brenda's other passions will transition well into retirement. She loves to swim, garden, and bake and is an avid reader who rarely watches TV... with the exception of OSU football, of course!

Brenda, her husband Dan, and their daughter Taylor are well known for rescuing cats and dogs. They have fostered cats and kittens as volunteers with Columbus Pet Rescue ([www.columbuspetrescue.com](http://www.columbuspetrescue.com)) for years. Brenda looks forward to retirement as 2021 begins. It will allow her more time with her family and pets, permit her to focus on helping with her daughter's college search, and let her continue to be a loyal sideline fixture at her daughter's volleyball and tennis matches. Brenda also plans to work a part time job and travel to as many new places as possible (as soon as the pandemic allows). We at the Commission are so thankful to have had so many years with an amazing employee and incredible person. The work will go on, but Brenda will be so missed. *Since pandemic rules prevent us from hosting a retirement party, please reach out to Brenda at [BSobieck1@columbus.gov](mailto:BSobieck1@columbus.gov) before the end of the year and wish her well!*



## Welcome: Commissioner Price

Larry Price was recently appointed to the Civil Service Commission with a term expiring January 31, 2026. Outside of the Commission, Mr. Price serves as the founder and CEO of L. Price & Associates, which provides consultative services to private, public, and faith-based organizations, specializing in helping to ensure inclusion and diversity for minority business owners in acquiring state and local contracts. Mr. Price's passion for community outreach has led him to serve on boards of several organizations, such as Boy Scouts of America, the NAACP -State of Ohio, and founding the Urban Crime Advisory Committee in Columbus. Mr. Price also brings a wealth of skills and knowledge from over 30 years of experience in public service, which includes working in the Ohio Senate, the Office of the Mayor, and being elected in 2003 as State Representative of the 26<sup>th</sup> District in the State of Ohio House of Representatives. Mr. Price received a bachelor's degree in Journalism from The Ohio State University.