

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS

ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

2019 Annual Report

The Municipal Civil Service Commission of Columbus, Ohio

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www.columbus.gov/civilservice*

MISSION

The Civil Service Commission is committed to providing a quality workforce for the City of Columbus based upon merit system principles. Through our collective knowledge and experience, we strive for efficiency and consistency in the application of the Commission's Rules and Policies. We are dedicated to improving the services we provide by anticipating employment trends, by listening to the needs of the operating agencies, and by responding accordingly.

INTRODUCTION

The Civil Service Commission is the primary contact point for candidates seeking employment with the City of Columbus. The Commission acts as the gateway, assessing applicant qualifications for 90 percent of all City jobs. Through the online Employment Center and applicant testing, the Commission ensures the individuals who ultimately comprise the City's workforce of approximately 8,100 full-time employees, are of the highest caliber capable of providing exceptional service to the citizens of Columbus.

Together with its Civil Service Commissioners, the Civil Service Commission is responsible for upholding and administering all mandated provisions of the Columbus City Charter, including, but not limited to, the administration of the City's class plan, verifying personnel actions and certifying City payroll, and serving as a neutral hearing body for employee appeals regarding suspension or discharge actions by an appointing authority. As required by the Ohio Revised Code, the Commission also provides class plan maintenance, personnel actions and appeal hearing services for all classified employees of the Columbus City Schools.

CLASS PLAN MAINTENANCE

The Civil Service Commission is responsible for maintaining the City's class plan, which provides a structural framework for all personnel actions and provides the basis for an equitable compensation plan. Regular class plan reviews and revisions are necessary to ensure each class specification continues to meet the ever-changing needs of each department. For this reason, an important Commission objective is to review every classification at least once every five years. At the close of 2019, 100 percent of the City's class plan was up-to-date. As part of this objective, staff completed a total of 174 class reviews with recommendations approved by the Commission in 2019.

The 174 reviews resulted in:

- 6 actions to create new classification specifications
- 13 actions to abolish classifications
- 44 actions to review without change
- 110 actions to revise and/or retitle
- 1 action to impose moratorium

Additionally, 84 positions were randomly reviewed to determine if their duties matched their current classification; of these, 83 positions (99%) were properly classified.

The Commission also conducts job audits upon request by an individual, a department, or a union. The purpose of these audits is to ensure that City employees are performing the duties for which they were hired, qualified, and being properly compensated. During 2019, Commission staff completed a total of sixteen position audits; six of those positions were identified as misclassified. Misclassifications are typically resolved through reassignment of duties to the position which are appropriate for the current class, or reallocation of the position to a different class for which the current duties best fit.

APPLICANT AND EMPLOYEE SERVICES

In order to ensure that specific positions under each of the job classes in the class plan can be filled in a timely fashion with qualified employees, the City's Charter has designated primarily two classification types: noncompetitive and competitive. Noncompetitive classes are either non-skilled positions or those with qualifications that have a license or other conditions that must be met by an external source, such as a Registered Nurse, and for which it is impracticable to test. Competitive classes are those which require a broader set of minimum qualifications and a variety of job-specific knowledge, skills, and abilities, such as an Office Assistant and for which testing is practical.

To identify an initial pool of candidates for City employment, the Commission uses its online Employment Center database. The Center includes a wealth of information about jobs with the City, including: current vacancies, exam opportunities, job descriptions, qualification requirements, and salary information. Additionally, the Center houses an automated job interest database and the convenience of submitting applications on-line. This service can be utilized via the Commission's website from any computer with web access or at kiosks located at the Commission's downtown offices at 77 N. Front Street on floors one and three. A potential applicant can indicate interest in multiple jobs and will automatically receive an email notice to apply when the City is taking applications for a given job.

The Applicant and Employee Services Unit is responsible for the notification and application process for the City's noncompetitive, provisional, and unclassified jobs.

In 2019, the Applicant and Employee Services Unit:

- received 14,756 Job Interest Cards submitted electronically for all City jobs
- posted 560 noncompetitive/provisional/unclassified job vacancies
- received 27,329 online applications for noncompetitive/provisional/unclassified job postings

NON-UNIFORMED TESTING

The Commission's Non-Uniformed Testing Unit administers exams to further determine candidates' suitability for the work which will be performed in all tested (competitive and qualifying noncompetitive) job classes, other than the Police and Fire sworn jobs. Exams open for testing are advertised (posted) on the Commission's website. Individuals interested in taking the exam can submit an application and then be invited to the test if it's determined they meet the minimum qualifications (education/experience/licensure) for the exam. Those passing the test have their names put on an eligible list, in score band order (or alphabetically for qualifying noncompetitive lists), for consideration for any upcoming vacancies a department may have.

If, after an eligible list is established through open recruitment, a City department has special recruiting needs for a position, they may request a candidate be considered and tested for a job class under provisions of CSC Rule VI. If the candidate meets all requirements and passes the test, their name is added to the existing eligible list in accordance with the established scoring structure and effective dates for the list.

In 2019, the Non-Uniformed Testing Unit:

- received 189 exam recruitment requests from departments (85 regular recruitments and 104 Rule VI)
- reviewed 15,854 exam applications
- tested 4174 candidates (4081 regular and 93 Rule VI)

The Commission is committed to having a current exam in place and ready to be administered for each of the 243 non-uniformed competitive and qualifying noncompetitive classifications in the City and to establishing an eligible list within 60 days from the date a test is requested by a department. The exams are directly based on the work performed by current employees in the job class and are comprised of varying combinations of 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.

To keep the tests current, our goal is to complete a full job analysis and to review, revise, and/or develop the exam for approximately 51 non-uniformed competitive and qualifying noncompetitive classifications each year. In 2019, we completed 45 job analysis projects, 44 test development projects, and averaged 55 days to create eligible lists.

Commission Rules also allow latitude for City departments to hire personnel provisionally when there is a critical need to immediately fill a position but there is no eligible list in place. In order to ensure fair access to City jobs, the Commission is committed to maintaining a provisional employee count below two percent. The City began 2019 with no full-time provisional employees and ended the year with no full-time provisional employees, resulting in a provisional appointment rate of zero percent.

UNIFORMED TESTING

The Civil Service Commission’s Uniformed Testing Unit administers exams for nine job classes that make up the Public Safety services for the City of Columbus. The majority of the examinations are comprised of at least three components, including a written test, an oral response, and a physical assessment or tactical exercise. The Uniformed Testing Unit works closely with the IAFF and the FOP unions to ensure fairness and consistency in the testing process of promotional exams. The following exams were administered in 2018 with resulting eligible lists established in 2019: Fire Battalion Chief and Fire Deputy Chief. The next group of exams were administered in 2019 with the resulting eligible lists established in 2019: Entry-level Police Officer, Police Sergeant, Entry-level Firefighter, Fire Lieutenant, and Fire Captain. Each of these exams were developed, administered, and validated by Civil Service Commission staff.

Entry-Level Testing

In 2019, there were 3,825 individuals who applied to take the Firefighter exam. Five hundred fifty two candidates were placed on the Firefighter eligible list. In 2019, there were 1,942 individuals who applied to take the Police Officer exam. A total of 402 candidates were placed on the Police Officer eligible list.

Promotional Testing

	Number of Exam Phases	Number of Applicants	Number of Candidates Tested*	Number of Candidates Added to Eligible List
Police Sergeant	4	169	130	88
Fire Lieutenant	3	197	144	63
Fire Captain	3	59	51	35
Fire Battalion Chief	3	10	8	7
Fire Deputy Chief	3	9	5	3

* Number of Candidates tested may vary based upon those who withdrew during various testing phases.

In March 2019, the Civil Service Commission’s Uniformed Testing Unit moved to a new office space and test center located in the Jerry Hammond Building at 1111 East Broad Street.

PAYROLL AND PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Another City Charter responsibility conferred upon the Commission is the monitoring and certification of the entire bi-weekly City payroll. This means that no City employee can be paid until the Commission certifies that the individual was hired and continues to be employed in accordance with the City Charter, Civil Service Commission Rules, and current collective bargaining agreements/pay ordinances. The monitoring process includes verifying personnel transactions such as appointments, changes in pay, leaves of absences, and political activity. During 2019, the Commission processed an average of 681 transactions per pay period before the payroll was certified correct to the City Auditor and paychecks issued.

COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS

In addition to services provided to the City of Columbus and its employees, the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) provides that the Commission also oversees various administrative personnel functions for approximately 3,685 employees in the classified service of the Columbus Board of Education (Board). In accordance with the ORC and an agreement executed by both the Commission and the Board, services provided by Commission staff for the various administrative personnel functions are billed to the Board. This agreement covers any and all work associated with class plan maintenance (creation, revision, abolishment of class specifications), test development and/or administration, and trial board administration for the Board. The Commission will make such services available to the Board as long as Board funding is available for reimbursement of Commission costs for the services.

As of January 1, 2019, there were 124 classification specifications in the Columbus City Schools' class plan. During the year, staff completed a total of 22 class reviews with recommendations approved by the Commission.

The 22 reviews resulted in:

- 4 actions to create new classification specifications
- 3 actions to abolish classifications
- 0 actions to review without change
- 0 actions to place a moratorium
- 15 actions to merge, revise and/or retitle

These actions resulted in the district's class plan totaling 124 classifications as of December 31, 2019. There is one classification awaiting pay and bargaining unit assignment by the School Board before it can be officially included in the classification count.

In 2019, Columbus City Schools utilized the Commission's downtown test center for 27 days of testing, and the Hearing Room for three days of trial board hearings.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

The City Charter provides that the Mayor, with the approval of City Council, appoint the three Civil Service Commissioners:

Grady L Pettigrew, Jr., President	Term expired January 31, 2018
Delena Edwards, Member	Term expired January 31, 2014
Stefanie Coe, Member	Term expires January 31, 2022

The Commissioners have the responsibility to establish the Rules that govern the selection, classification, promotion, and termination of the classified employees of the City of Columbus and the Columbus City Schools. During 2019, the Commissioners ruled on applicant appeals, heard employee disciplinary appeals, amended Commission Rules and Regulations, and responded to personnel requests from department directors, elected City Officials, and the School Board.

Throughout 2019, the Commission:

- held 12 regular meetings
- held 3 trial board disciplinary appeal hearings

The Commission's 2019 docket included:

- 7 disciplinary appeals filed by employees/unions
- 6 non-disciplinary appeals filed by employees/unions
- 2 appeals withdrawn
- 5 disciplinary appeal rulings (2 dismissed)
- 6 non-disciplinary appeal rulings (all dismissed)
- 51 requests for background administrative reviews by applicants
- 44 background administrative review rulings (7 carried over from 2018)

EXPENDITURES

Summary - Expenditures by Unit	2018	2019
Administration	\$2,147,885	\$2,330,634
Classification & Testing-Sworn Employees	1,584,968	1,528,848
Classification & Testing-Civilian Employees	481,509	544,941
Total Expenditures	\$4,214,362	\$4,404,423