

Civil Service Commission

Presentation to Denver City Council

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Presenters –

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Commission Website –

www.denvergov.org/civilservice

We are an Independent Agency –

The Commission is responsible for a merit-based personnel system free of political considerations, personal preferences, and other outside influences that would compromise the long standing principles of merit-based systems utilized throughout the United States.

The Commission ensures a fair, open, and competitive employment and promotional merit-based system in compliance with the Uniform Guidelines on Employment Selection Procedures. These guidelines were adopted and affirmed on September 25, 1978 by the US Civil Service Commission, Department of Justice, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Department of Labor.

What the Commission Does –

The CSC was established in 1904 and is responsible for administering a merit-based personnel system for those seeking employment or promotional opportunities within the Classified Service of the Denver Fire and Police Departments.

The CSC is also responsible for managing and maintaining the disciplinary appeals process for members of the Classified Service of the Denver Fire and Police Departments. As governed by City Charter and Commission Rules, the Commission contracts with qualified Hearings Officers.

Commission Staff –

The CSC has 9 full-time staff and 22 on-call background investigators. Our former Executive Director opted to take the recent City retirement option, and we will be replacing his position in 2021.

How We Are Governed –

The CSC is governed by 5 Commissioners. Two of the Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor (Joseph G. Sandoval, Esq. and Kevin Duncan), two are appointed by City Council (Kelsey Anne Green and James Fitzpatrick), and one is a joint appointment (Sylvia Murray).

One of the Commissioners' primary duties is to review and approve applicant files for employment consideration by the Executive Director of Safety.

Commissioners also provide oversight for recommendations regarding entry level and promotional testing, business operations, and revisions to Commission Rules and City Charter.

Commissioners also hear any appeals resulting from a Hearing Officer's disciplinary decision.

Where it all Starts –

The hiring process begins with the Executive Director of Safety (EDOS), as the appointing authority, requisitioning the Civil Service Commission to issue a “list of the names of those individuals eligible to be considered for appointment to the position.”

When a requisition to hire for an academy class has been received from the EDOS, the Commission certifies to the Director a list of names equal to the number to be appointed plus as many additional names from the respective registers as the Commission deems necessary. When selecting names to be certified, the Commission does so based on the relative rank on the eligible registers and the requirements of any Court Orders in effect. Applicants who have been certified for consideration for original appointment may be subject to an interview by a panel of members from the respective Departments.

What We Don't Do –

The Commission is not responsible for Police or Fire recruitment. Recruitment is handled through the Department of Safety (DOS) and the Fire and Police Departments.

The Commission is not responsible for hiring Firefighters or Police Officers. The Commission certifies to the EDOS eligible applicants for selection. The EDOS may solicit input from the departments, but the EDOS is the hiring authority.

Police and Fire Qualifications –

Per Charter Section 9.3.11 – Those examined, who have successfully passed all phases of testing shall be entered on an eligible register in rank order by examination grade.

Per CSC Rule III, Section 6a – To be eligible for original appointment to a position in the Classified Service, an applicant shall be of good moral character. In reviewing an applicant's character and background, the Commission will consider the standards of ethical conduct, integrity and honesty that shall guide the behavior of a member of the respective Department.

The selection process for public safety encompasses a broad range of selection tools including: written tests, video tests, behavioral questions, job-related physical ability tests, oral interviews, suitability assessments, polygraphs, background checks, medical screening, psychological reviews, and drug tests.

Applicants can pre-assess their qualifications prior to submitting a formal application to discern any potential disqualification concerns.

Qualifications –

The required qualifications for Original Appointment are set in Commission Rule 3, and Commission Rule 5 establishes the Examination and Screening phases. During the respective open application periods, applicants interested in testing for a Police Officer or Firefighter position first complete an application form and schedule a test date online through the Commission's web site at www.denvergov.org/civilservice. Upon an acceptable application being submitted, the Commission's testing center can accommodate up to 32 applicants per test session.

Applicants must meet the minimum qualifications such as U.S. Citizenship, age requirements (must be at least 21 years old) must possess a high school diploma or GED, have a valid Driver's License and must meet certain qualifications related to character and background. Applicants can have no legal impediments nor felony convictions as an adult or as a juvenile charged as an adult.

Qualifications –

Additionally, certain misdemeanor behaviors or offenses, traffic and driving-related offenses or the illegal use, purchase, possession, distribution, sale or manufacturing of drugs may constitute lifetime or time limited disqualifications depending on the nature of the offense or incident.

At the request of the Denver Department of Safety, on June 11, 2020, the Civil Service Commission reduced the minimum soft-drug disqualification from 3 years to 1 year:

An individual shall not have any illegal use, purchase, possession, distribution, sale or manufacture of **soft drugs** (including recreational or medical marijuana as prohibited under Federal law) within the period beginning from **twelve (12) months (1 year)** prior to the date of application and up to the date of appointment. All members of the Classified Service are expected to not engage in the illegal use, purchase, possession, distribution, sale or manufacture of soft drugs. An exemption from these standards is permitted as part of the employee's official duties, in accordance with department policy and Executive Order No. 94. [*Adopted October 27, 2000 as § 1(B)(12)*] (*Amended April 15, 2011; December 19, 2014; March 18, 2020*) (*Adopted June 11, 2020*)

Testing –

In compliance with the Uniform Guidelines on Employment Selection Procedures, all entry level and promotional tests are validated by selected consultants for material content based on the job responsibilities of the position being tested.

Through a competitive bid/selection process, the CSC utilizes professional PhD consultants who are nationally recognized for their expertise in public safety testing.

Entry Level Police Officer and Firefighter –

The Commission tests for the position of Police Officer on an as-needed basis. The Commission typically tests for the position of Entry-Level Firefighter every two (2) years.

Police Ranking –

A Video Test is administered (after the Written Test) to all applicants who receive a passing score on the Written Test. Via the computer monitor, the applicant is shown video scenarios. The applicant is asked to choose the best out of four responses to each scenario. (“Sample Police Video Test” scenarios are available on our web site. An applicant’s Video Test score is the applicant’s “total exam score”. The Final Exam Score is the Video Test score plus any preference points. The Final Exam Score is used to rank applicants on an examination list. Ties shall be broken randomly.

When selecting individuals for additional testing and screening, the Commission will consider an applicant’s ranking, the anticipated personnel needs of the Department of Safety and any Court orders in effect.

For Police positions, the *Hogue Consent Decree* allows CSC to consider applicants out of rank order to meet minority hiring goals. Minorities considered under *Hogue* are also required to be considered within their respective rank order.

Fire Ranking –

Applicants who pass the Written Test will be ranked based on the Situational Judgement and Human Relations component. An applicant's Final Examination Score is their Rank Score plus any Military Veteran Preference Points and/or any Special Skill Preference Points for Language Proficiency or the completion of the Fire Career Apprenticeship Program (CAP) as applicable. The Final Examination Score is the score used to rank applicants on an examination list for selection for additional testing and screening. Ties shall be broken randomly.

Lateral Police Officers –

Police applicants who are currently employed as peace officers (with appropriate State certification), and who have a minimum of two years patrol experience, can be considered for lateral-entry placement. A benefit of the combined entry-level and lateral-entry academies allows lateral-entry applicants to complete the academy in 16 weeks (versus 25-28 weeks for entry-level applicants), if their previous training and experience warrants.

Lateral Firefighter –

In order to qualify as a Lateral Firefighter, at the time of application, applicants must be currently employed as a full-time paid firefighter employed by a state, county, or municipal fire department;

or

A retired firefighter who voluntarily separated (within the last 12 months) from full time paid employment from a state, county, or municipal fire department;

or

A former paid firefighter who separated (within the last 12 months) as a result of layoffs from full time employment by a state, county, or municipal fire department;

with

A minimum of three years (full-time) paid firefighting experience while employed full time by a state, county, or municipal fire department.

In November 2018 the Commission administered a test for the first-ever Lateral Firefighter academy. One Lateral Fire academy was placed in June 2019.

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) –

On November 5, 2019, the citizens of Denver voted to approve an amendment to the City Charter to establish a new position in the Denver Fire Department: Emergency Medical Technician. In December 2019, the Commission administered a test for the first-ever group of EMTs.

The rank of EMT was needed in order to provide additional and faster medical services at the scene of an emergency.

Denver Public Safety Cadet Program –

The Denver Public Safety Cadet Program is a specialized training and education program designed to help strengthen and diversify the future workforce of the Denver Police, Fire, and Sheriff Departments. Successful applicants are typically recent high school graduates or those with less than two years of completed college credit.

The Executive Director of Safety shall provide the names of those cadets who have successfully completed the public safety cadet program for consideration in a police or fire academy class.

Specialized Testing –

The Commission provides additional testing as needed for the following: Fire System Technical Specialist, Electrician, Electronic Technician, Computer Technician, Fire Mechanic and for the Department of Safety's – Denver Public Safety Cadet program.

Preference Points –

Military Veteran – The Civil Service Commission, in ranking applicants, provides five (5) or ten (10) preference points to veterans pursuant to Article XII, § 15 of the Colorado Constitution.

Foreign Language Proficiency – In 2007, the Commission approved the granting of preference points for foreign or sign language proficiency. The Commission currently assesses the following foreign languages: American Sign Language, Amharic, Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Denver Sheriff Preference Points – A Deputy Sheriff who has worked for the Denver Sheriff Department for at least three years (in a uniformed role) may be awarded a maximum of five (5) special skill points for those who pass the entry-level Police exam. The Deputy Sheriff must not have any active internal affairs cases, nor any discipline rising to the level of suspension within the last two years. The Deputy Sheriff must have also received a performance rating of at least successful or greater for the past two years. The Executive Director of Safety must approve the Deputy Sheriff's request in order to receive the preference points and inform the Commission of this approval.

Denver Fire Career Apprenticeship Program (CAP) – The primary purpose of the Denver Fire Career Apprenticeship Program (CAP) is to support the future hiring needs of the department by developing and mentoring program participants while augmenting support positions to achieve Department tasks and goals. Denver Fire CAP members who have completed at least 12 months of satisfactory service and have passed the Denver Civil Service Commission Entry-Level Firefighter Exam will receive five (5) preference points added to their Composite Written Test Score.

Police Applicant Volunteer Experience (PAVE) Preference Points – The PAVE program is a program designed to enhance the recruitment needs of the Denver Police Department in partnership with the Denver Civil Service Commission, the Denver Police Recruiting Unit and the Denver Volunteers in Police Service Program. PAVE participants gain experience and exposure with the Denver Police Department and have a better understanding of the department and what it takes to be an exceptional Denver Police Officer. Denver Police PAVE members who successfully satisfy all requirements of the program, and pass the Entry-Level Police Written / Video Test, will receive five (5) preference points added to their score.

Promotional Process –

The Commission tests for the following ranks:

Police – Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain (currently suspended)

Fire – Engineer, Lieutenant, Captain, Assistant Chief

1. Position vacancies in the Classified Service ranks are filled through promotional examination; The components of the examinations are to be impartial and competitive.
2. Examinations for promotion typically given every two years.
3. Examination announcements give the nature of the examination, the pass/fail scores, the point values for the various phases and the minimum qualifications, prerequisites, and or requirements for participation.
4. Disciplinary History Assessment for Police Officers.

Promotional Process –

5. Officer Development Program for Firefighters.
6. Placed on an Eligible Register in Rank Order based on Examination Score.
7. The Executive Director of Safety requisitions a list of names of those eligible for promotion.
8. The Commission certifies names to the EDOS. - Number of vacancies plus two
9. The EDOS appoints from among those certified.

FEDRC and PEDRC –

The Commission provides through the Fire Examination Diversity Review Committee (FEDRC) and the Police Examination Diversity Review Committee (PEDRC), an open forum for discussion that addresses diversity, recruitment, entry level and promotional exams and other related topics for the Denver Fire and Police departments.

Participants include Fire and Police administration, Fire and Police union representatives, and Fire and Police employee group representatives. Parties are encouraged to attend and provide constructive feedback to the Civil Service Commission.

A current FEDRC subcommittee has been formed to reviews potential barriers to promotional opportunities for underrepresented minorities and females. The subcommittee is reviewing the request for test proposals process, the recruitment and selection of department subject matter experts in test development, candidate reading lists and the use of situational judgment questions in multiple-choice written examinations.

Diversity Initiatives –

We have focused our efforts on promoting the ethnic and gender diversity of the Fire and Police departments while carrying out our Charter mandate of providing for the hire and promotion of the best qualified applicants.

The CSC has been involved in diversity measures for the past twenty-five years. Through collaborative efforts with the Department of Safety and Safety Recruitment, inclusion opportunities have been fully supported by the CSC to increase the minority and female pool of entry level Police and Fire applicants.

The CSC guarantees testing opportunities for those individuals identified through recruitment or by employee groups tutoring and mentoring efforts (i.e., Black Professional Police Officers, Firefighters Incorporated for Racial Equality).

Current Implicit Bias Considerations –

To get the best, highly qualified, diverse firefighters and police officers, and help both departments create an inclusive culture, Civil Service is currently undertaking an in-depth research project to develop bias-related screening questions that will be incorporated into the Behavioral Questionnaire, which helps guide the polygraph examiners, psychologists, and background investigators in their applicant interviews.

City Charter and Commission Rules –

Over the years, the CSC has supported numerous changes to the City Charter and Commission Rules. These efforts have been accomplished in collaboration with the City Attorney, Fire and Police Administration, Fire and Police Unions and the Department of Safety.

In 2008, the Commission adopted the recognition of a disciplinary matrix for Police Officers and in March 2013, major changes to Commission Rule 12 – Disqualification and Disciplinary Appeals, Hearings and Procedures were adopted.

Disciplinary and Disqualification Appeals –

The Denver Civil Service provides recourse for members of the Classified Service to appeal any disciplinary matter in which a Departmental Order of Disciplinary Action (DODA) is issued by the EDOS. The matter will first be assigned to an independent Hearing Officer for a public hearing. The Hearing Officer may uphold, amend, or overturn the penalty issued in the DODA. As a result, either or both parties in the matter may request that the Hearing Officer's decision be reviewed by the Civil Service Commissioners. Following review of the appeal file, the Commissioners may uphold, amend, or overturn the Hearing Officer's decision. Any disciplinary decision issued by the Commissioners may be appealed to the Denver State District Court.

QUESTIONS?