

Public Safety Civil Service Commission Candidate and Election Information Session

City Clerk and Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC)

September 2026



City of Seattle

Introductions:

Agenda:

- Overview
- Public Safety Civil Service Commission
- Commissioner Election
- Questions?



Overview



Purpose: Public Safety Civil Service System

- Civil service in local government exists to curb favoritism and remove the coercive pressures that once caused public employees to contribute money, time and loyalty to partisan political candidates, to the detriment of the important work they do.
- Civil service laws and rules help assure that firefighters and law enforcement officers are recruited through open competition, hired and promoted because of their aptitude, skills, and knowledge, and are demoted, suspended, removed from office, or discharged only for cause.



Civil Service Rights:

See City Charter Art. XVI, Sec. 3-4

- Open and competitive hiring/promotion processes based on knowledge, skills, abilities to do the work
- Freedom from political coercion in hiring
- Limited probationary periods
- Just cause/due process for discipline and termination
- Appeal higher levels of discipline and other alleged policy violations
- Continued employment (with limited exceptions)

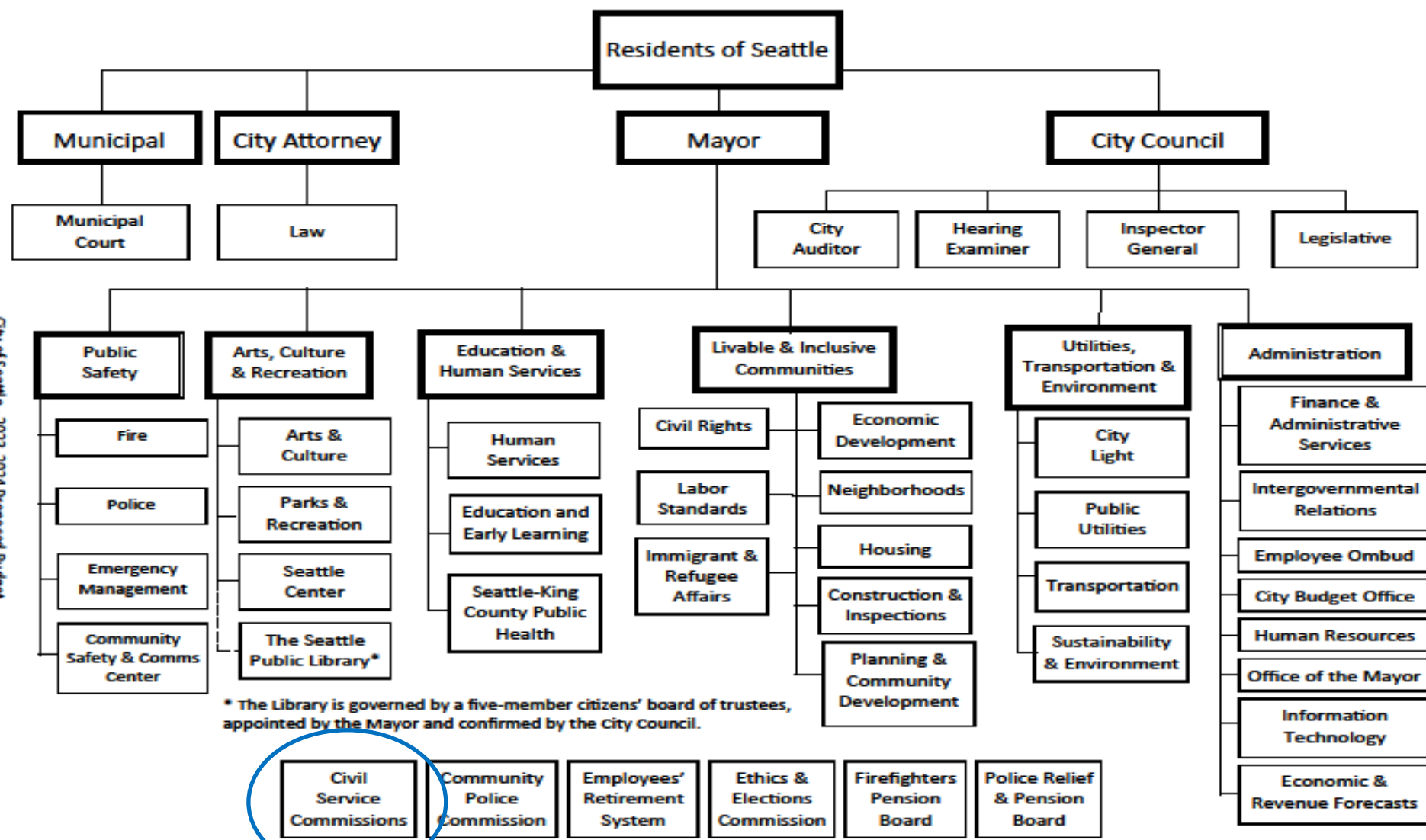
Rights embedded into Rules/municipal law, enforced by appeal process (ultimately decided by independent commission)



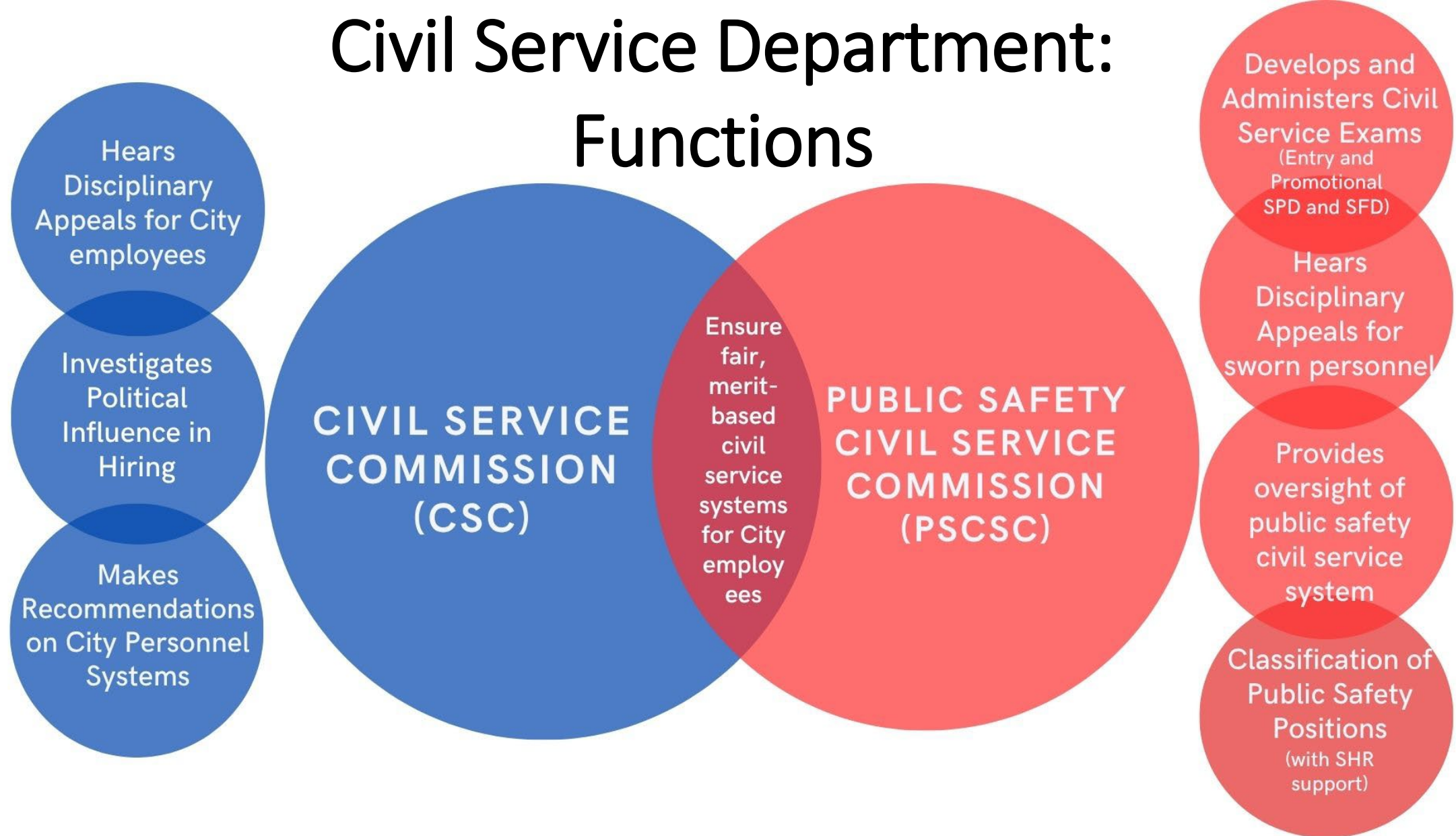
History and Organization

- Established in 1896, re-organized in 1977
- Creates a merit-based system of City employment to hire/retain qualified employees
- Two systems
 - Civil Service – most City employees (City Charter, SMC 4.04)
 - Public Safety Civil Service - "uniformed" police and fire (State law requires the work PSCSC to be separate from executive branch), City Charters, SMC 4.08
- Housed in Civil Service Commissions or "CIV" Department
 - Staffed by 10 FTE (most are Exam staff)

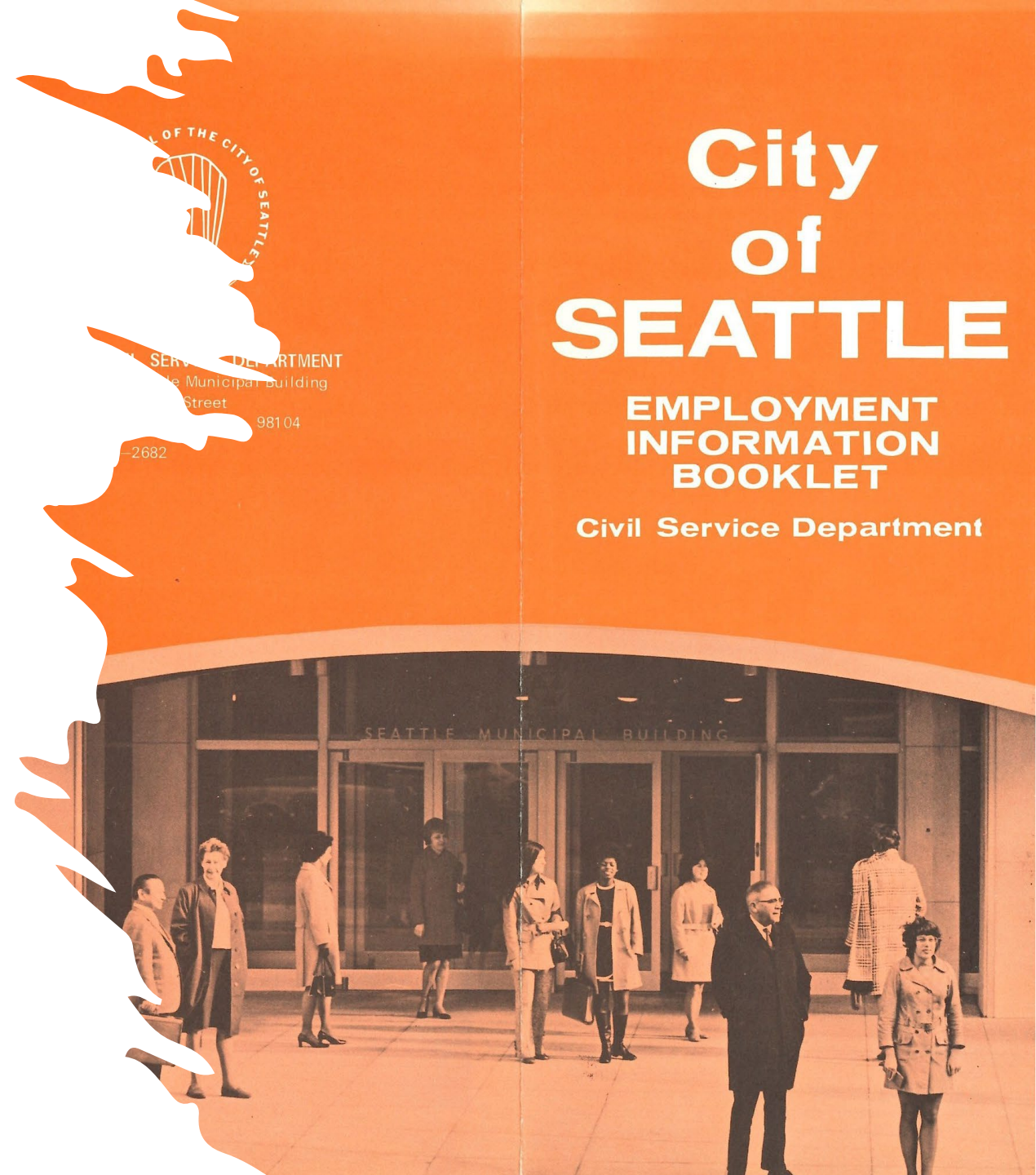




Civil Service Department: Functions



The Public Safety Civil Service System, and the Commission (PSCSC)



City of **SEATTLE**

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION BOOKLET

Civil Service Department

PSCSC Commissioners

Jointly, commissioners work to ensure a merit-based employment system for covered City employees

- Commission Chair Queniya Mays (Mayor appointee)
- Commissioner Richard Greene (City Council appointee)
- Commissioner Tom Applegate (Employee elected)



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What does
the
Commission
do?

Make and enforce Rules regarding the functioning of the public safety personnel system:

- Examination
 - Appointments
 - Promotions
 - Discipline (demotions, suspensions, terminations)
 - Reinstatements
 - Suspensions
 - Layoffs
 - Other employment matters
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What does the Commission do? (cont.)

Oversee Merit-based Exams

- Entry level and promotional
- Police and Fire Department
- Seven FTE develop and administer exams

Hear and Decide Appeals

- Serious disciplinary concerns
- Examination and testing
- Decisions may be appealed to Superior Court

Position Classification

- Analysis by SHR staff
- Executive Director is decisionmaker on classification



What does the Commission do? (cont.)

Oversee Department Business and Collaborate with CIV Staff

- Attend monthly meetings and receive updates about department operations
- With the CSC, jointly appoint and supervise the Executive Director.

Time Commitment and Compensation

- 2-4 hours/mo (longer if hearing appeals)
- \$400/mo stipend



Attributes of a successful commissioner:

- Ability to put aside personal opinions and apply Civil Service Rules, Personnel Rules, etc.
- Ability to work collaboratively with people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives
- Commitment to objectively review decisions made by higher-level commanders
- Willingness to learn about and implement City RSJ and anti-racist practices
- Willingness to collaborate with CIV staff
- Availability to participate in several trainings and workshops



Attributes of a successful commissioner (cont.):

- Ability to remain neutral and exercise independence when making decisions that impact City employees
 - Recognize conflicts of interest and recuse self from such matters as appropriate
 - Observe Appearance of Fairness doctrine
 - Uphold Public Safety Civil Service Commission as an independent decision-making body
- Understanding or willingness to learn and apply the principles of due process



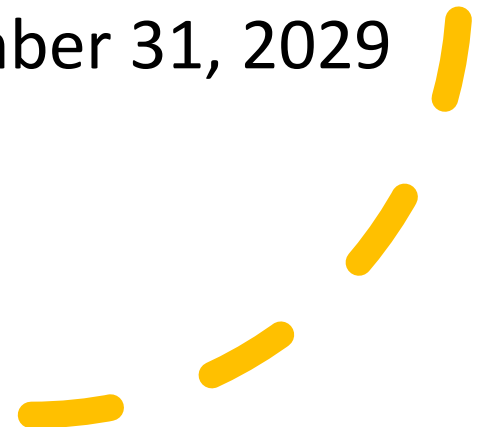
Commissioner Election



City of Seattle

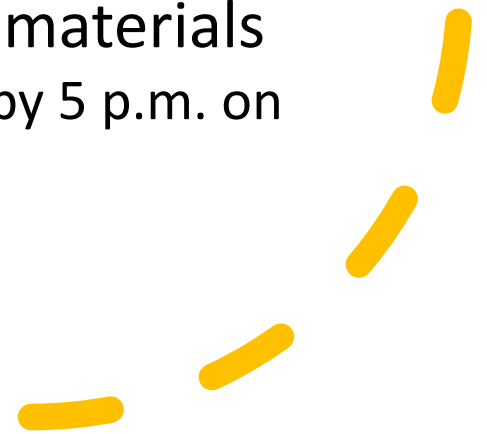
Commissioner Election & Timeline:

- Any member of the public safety civil service system may declare candidacy and/or vote
- Election is administered by the City Clerk's Office
- Candidate filing week is October 5 - 9
- Voting occurs November 2 - 6
- Results will be certified mid-November
- Term is January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2029



Declaring Candidacy:

- Complete and submit the Notice of Candidacy form
- The form must be signed in the presence of a notary public or the City Clerk or her designee
- The form must be submitted to the Office of the City Clerk in person, or by mail. The form will not be accepted by email or by fax.
- Forms must be received by the Office of the City Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, October 9.
- Candidates may, if they choose, submit a statement of up to 200 words and a 2x3 in. black and white photo to be included with election materials
 - These must be received by the Clerk by 5 p.m. on Friday October 9.



Voting



- Voting takes place November 2 – 6
 - Online
 - Paper ballots
- Election vendor
- Ranked choice voting



Questions?



- For questions about the civil service system, or role of commissioners:
sarah.butler@seattle.gov, (206)586-1991
- For questions about the election process, including declaring candidacy and voting:
ann.vuong@seattle.gov, (206)233-3896
- Additional information
 - Commission <https://www.seattle.gov/public-safety-civil-service-commission/who-we-are/get-involved>
 - Election: <https://www.seattle.gov/city-clerk/city-clerk-services/employee-elections>

