



Seattle
Civil Service Department

2025 Annual Report



Message from CIV's Executive Director

Civil Service Members and Community,

I am proud to share the Civil Service Department's (CIV) 2025 Annual Report with our department's highlights, achievements, and ongoing work of 2025.

During a season of political change locally and nationally, CIV, the Seattle Civil Service Commission, and the Seattle Public Safety Civil Service Commission, continue to provide steady guidance and oversight of the City's civil service systems. The work of our department ensures that employees are hired and retained based on their ability to perform critical municipal services, providing continuity to voters and residents of Seattle even while elected officials and their administrations come and go.

2025 was a year of growth and learning for CIV as an organization. In addition to the achievements highlighted in this report, 2025 was the first full year as a department after Exam staff transferred from the Seattle Department of Human Resources (SDHR) to CIV. Exams staff also undertook significant new bodies of work in 2025, with a focus on more frequent firefighter exams and a new lateral entry paramedic firefighter exam.

Thank you to all who uphold our civil service systems by serving as commissioners, participating in meetings, sharing public comment, and educating your City of Seattle colleagues and members of the public about civil service rights and processes. I look forward to continuing our good work in 2026 and beyond!

Andrea Scheele

Andrea Scheele, CIV Executive Director

Introduction

Upholding Excellence in Public Service

Every day, City of Seattle civil servants play a vital role in shaping the community for people who live, work, and visit. From public safety and emergency response to maintaining utilities, powering the city, and fostering arts and recreation, these dedicated professionals keep Seattle running.

Seattle’s commitment to a strong, capable municipal workforce dates back to 1896, when voters approved a City Charter that codified a civil service system, to ensure that hiring and employment decisions are based on merit—not politics. This system remains a cornerstone of Seattle city government, ensuring fair treatment of employees and the delivery of high-quality public services.

Oversight and Integrity

Today, two independent commissions uphold the integrity of Seattle’s civil service system:

- The Civil Service Commission (CSC)
- The Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC)

These commissions serve as independent governing bodies with quasi-judicial and regulatory authority. The civil service commissions conduct hearings, issue administrative rulings, and ensure compliance with civil service laws and rules.

A key function of the PSCSC is overseeing the development and administration of rigorous civil service exams for entry-level and promotional positions in public safety, ensuring that the city’s police and fire personnel are selected through a fair, competitive process. The CSC and PSCSC are housed in the Civil Service Department (“CIV”), a hub of expertise dedicated to maintaining fair, transparent, and effective employment systems that uphold the values of public service. Through oversight, accountability, and accessibility, the independent Civil Service Department and Civil Service Commissions help sustain a diverse, professional workforce, committed to serving Seattle.

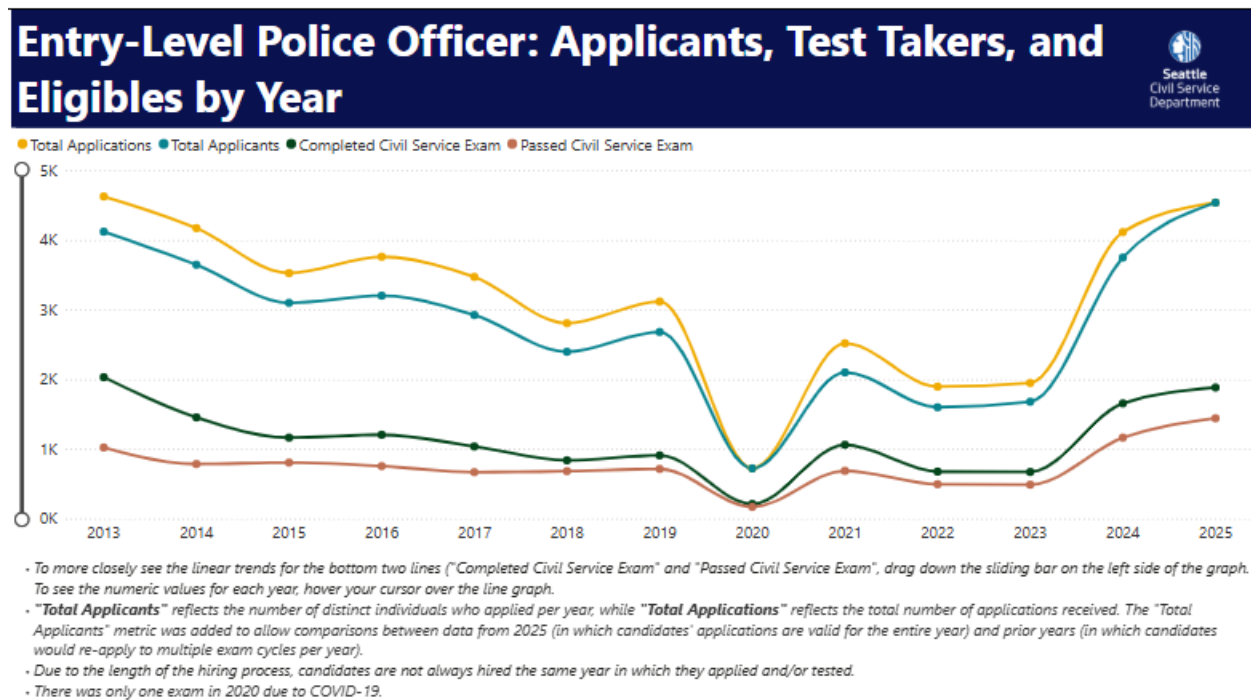
2025 Highlights

1. Expanded Focus on Fire Civil Service Exams

- CIV Exam staff began holding entry firefighter exams on an annual basis (up from every two years) to provide more frequent lists of candidates.
- CIV Exam staff developed and administered a one-time exam for firefighter paramedic, (lateral entry) to meet an acute need for experienced paramedics in the Seattle Fire Department (SFD). Of this exam cycle, SFD hired 7 firefighter lateral paramedics

2. Maintained High Volume of Police Officer Application Processing and Exams to Support Record Police Officer Hiring

CIV Exam staff continued to process applications, administer tests, and publish bi-weekly eligible lists to Seattle Police Department (SPD) in 2025. As a result of increased candidate interest in policing and sustained turnaround of applications and exams, SPD hired 165 police officers in 2025.



3. Staffing and Commissioner News

By year-end 2025, CIV onboarded a new commissioner, and was fully staffed and well-positioned to meet the civil service commissions' needs in the coming year.

- Queniya Mays joined the PSCSC Commission in January 2025, to serve a term through December 2027. Commissioner Mays brings with her experience in human resources practices and public sector service. Commissioner Mays will serve as PSCSC Chair in 2026.
- Exam staff positions are filled and operating in full capacity. CIV promoted internal staff to fill a Senior Examiner vacancy and welcomed a new staff member with a deep background in public safety testing for a journey-level Examiner role.
- CIV hired a graduate intern in summer of 2025 to complete project work examining the applied standard of proof in public safety civil service disciplinary appeals, and precedential decisions by CSC and PSCSC.
- PSCSC Commissioner Richard Greene was reappointed by City Council, to serve a second three-year term through December 2028.
- The CSC and PSCSC Commissions jointly reappointed CIV Executive Director Andrea Scheele to a third three-year term through December 2028.
- Commissioner Ray Ceaser served as CSC Chair from mid-2024 through December of 2025. Commissioner Ceaser will step down as Chair in 2026, and Commissioner Denise Wells was elected to serve as Chair of the CSC in 2026.

4. Improved Outreach and Engagement

The CSC created and shared resources for employees and City managers in 2025 on how to access and uphold civil service at the City, including:

- Guest speakers at monthly CSC meetings from the Office of Employee Ombud, Seattle Department of Human Resources, and the Office for Civil Rights on:
 - Employee conflict resolution options and processes
 - Civil service pre-appeal processes
 - City hiring policies and processes
- Employee FAQs on pre-appeal employee grievance procedures
- Trainings to HR staff on civil service fundamentals

CIV Department: Who We Are and What We Do

Civil service ensures that qualified employees are hired to perform critical municipal services, and that employment decisions remain free from political pressure. Together, Seattle’s two civil service commissions provide employment protections for over 10,000 City employees across 38 City departments.

The [Civil Service Commission \(CSC\)](#) covers most City employees¹ while the [Public Safety Civil Service Commission \(PSCSC\)](#) includes employees in non-command staff sworn police and fire personnel². [The Civil Service Department](#) (CIV) staffs both commissions and is an independent City department, not reporting to the Mayor, City Council, or other elected City official.

Each commission is comprised of three members, with one appointment each by the Mayor and the City Council, and one commissioner elected by employees within the respective civil service system. CIV’s Executive Director is appointed jointly by CSC and PSCSC commissioners and confirmed by the City Council. Both commissions have quasi-judicial authority to hear appeals and issue remedies in accordance with their rulings.

The commissions derive their authority from State Law, City Charter, Seattle Municipal Code. Each commission’s rules authorize them to ensure that City departments comply with civil service processes and Personnel Rules, and that the broader personnel systems function with fairness and integrity.

As of 2025 year-end, CIV was staffed by ten full time employees (FTEs). Three of CIV’s FTEs support the commissions’ general operations such as required open and public meetings, rulemaking, personnel system oversight, conducting disciplinary appeals, and other ongoing department and commission business. The remaining seven FTEs complete the work of developing and administering entry level and promotional exams for thousands of employees and potential employees each year.

¹ City Charter and Seattle Municipal Code authorize exemptions from the Civil Service for certain job titles across the City; other titles may be exempted if they meet the criteria of Personnel Rule 2.2, subject to approval by City Council. Employees of the Seattle Public Library and temporary employees are not covered by civil service.

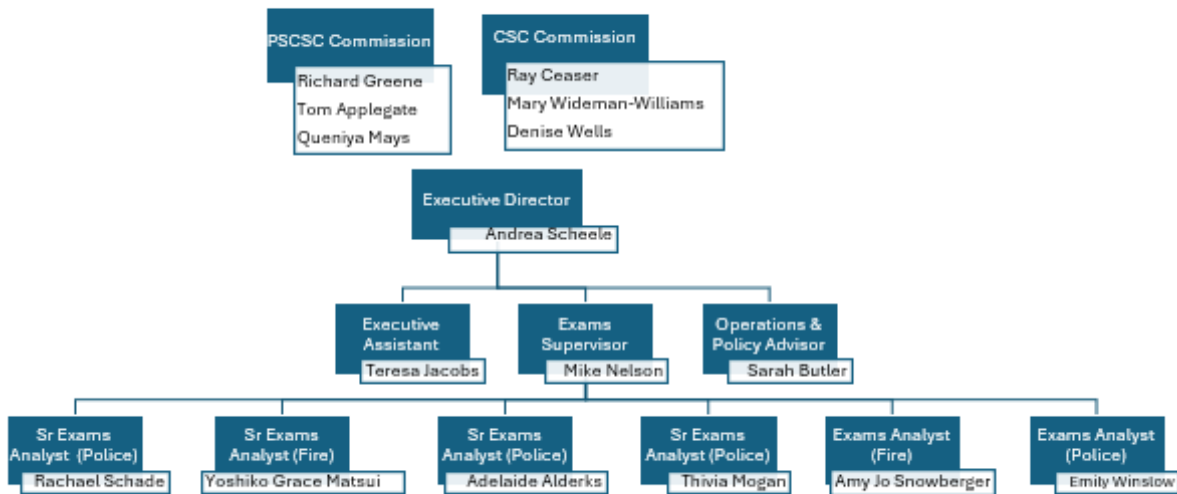
² Seattle Municipal Code provides public safety civil service coverage for the following classifications: police special recruits, police recruits, police officers, police sergeants, police captains, police lieutenants, fire fighter pre-recruits, fire fighters, fire lieutenants, fire captains, fire battalion chiefs, fireboat pilots, fireboat engineers and assistant fireboat engineers.

CIV 2025 Highlights

In 2025, CIV staffed 21 open and public meetings in a hybrid format via video conference and in-person attendance at the Seattle Municipal Tower.

CIV continued to expand outreach throughout the year, with a focus on employee and management education about the civil service framework and improving our digital engagement. CIV established a [Civil Service Department website](#) landing page, which gives better visibility to internal and external users.

CIV Organizational Chart (December 2025)



Civil Service Commission and System Overview

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) system is the larger of the two civil service systems in Seattle and currently serves approximately 8,300 City employees. Established by the Seattle City Charter, the CSC’s oversight responsibilities are further defined by the [Seattle Municipal Code 4.04.250](#), the City’s [Personnel Rules](#), and the [Civil Service Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure](#). The CSC operates under core principles of **integrity, equity, and accessibility**, and is committed to upholding these values in its oversight and governance of the civil service system.

CSC 2025 Commission Roster

Commissioner	Appointment Type	Term
Ray Ceaser, Chair	Employee Elected	January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026
Mary Wideman-Williams	Mayor	January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2025
Denise Wells	City Council	January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2027

Mary Wideman-Williams ended her commissionership this year after serving the CSC for six years. We thank her for her expertise, leadership, time, and her service. Steven Zwerin was appointed by Mayor Wilson to fill the commissioner vacancy starting in 2026.

CSC Core Functions

- **Rulemaking and Compliance, Political Patronage Investigations**
The CSC is authorized to address allegations of political patronage in hiring and promotion, through investigations and public hearings. Departments are required to report disciplinary actions and probationary separations for employees in civil service positions to CSC.
- **Recommendations to the Mayor and City Council**
CSC makes recommendations regarding administration of the personnel system to policymakers.
- **Disciplinary and Other Appeals**
The CSC conducts quasi-judicial hearings for employee appeals of suspensions, terminations, and demotions, and other alleged violations of the Personnel Rules and/or the Personnel Ordinance (SMC 4.08).
- **Outreach and Education**
The CSC is dedicated to educating employees, HR staff, unions and departments about civil service rights and procedures. We live our values of service and accessibility by reaching our diverse employees where they are, when they need us.

Rulemaking, Compliance, and Political Patronage Investigations

In 2025, the CSC did not amend its Rules, or receive any complaints of political patronage.

The CSC received and monitored notices of higher-level disciplinary action, and probationary dismissals involving civil service-covered employees.

2025 Summary of Probationary Dismissals and Discipline Reported to the CSC				
(Notes actions that resulted in settled/other outcomes)				
Department	Probationary Dismissal	Suspension	Demotion	Termination
CARE Department	9	1	0	0
City Light	5	24	1	6 (4)
Finance and Administrative Services	1	0	2	2
Human Services Department	2	1	0	0
Information Technology	0	1	0	0
Parks & Recreation	5	0	0	8
Seattle Center	3	0	0	1(1)
Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections	0	1	0	0
Seattle Department of Transportation	3	6	0	2
Seattle Municipal Court	0	0	0	2 (1)
Seattle Police Department	0	5	0	0
Seattle Public Utilities	2	1	1	4
Total	30	40	4	25 (6)
Notes:				
Data is based on information reported by departments and may not reflect all actions. Departments not listed here reported zero higher-level disciplinary actions or probationary dismissals.				

Disciplinary and Other Appeals

The CSC received one appeal from civil service-covered City employees in 2025. CIV staff received two premature filings and three inquiries from civil service members, and provided consultation for navigating the available pathways to resolution.

2025 Appeals Received by the CSC						
Type	Case No.	Appellant	Dept	Date Filed	Issue	Status
Appeal	25-01-005A	Brown	Parks	2-15-25	Suspension	Withdrawn

Public Safety Civil Service Commission

The Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC)’s jurisdiction includes over 2,200 sworn police and uniformed fire employees in Seattle’s Police and Fire Departments. The PSCSC is authorized and required by [Seattle City Charter](#) and the [Revised Code of Washington 41.08](#) and [41.12](#); its oversight is directed by the [Seattle Municipal Code 4.08](#), and the [PSCSC Rules of Practice and Procedure](#).

PSCSC 2025 Commission Roster

Commissioner	Appointment Type	Term
Richard Greene, Chair	City Council	January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2025
Queniya Mays	Mayor	January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2027
Tom Applegate	Employee Elected	January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026

Richard Greene was reappointed in December of 2025 by City Council to serve a second term, until December of 2028.

PSCSC’s core functions:

- **Merit-based Hiring and Promotional Exams for Fire and Police**

Utilizing subject matter experts, CIV personal assessment professionals develop and administer entry-level and promotional civil service exams that are used to hire and promote qualified police officers, firefighters, and higher ranks. The PSCSC rules set forth how appointing authorities hire and promote public safety employees.

- **Rulemaking, Oversight, Compliance**

The [PSCSC Rules of Practice and Procedure](#) govern the public safety personnel system of The City of Seattle, including discipline and discharge, position classification, discipline appeal hearings, entry and promotional examinations, certification and appointment, probation, service credit, layoff, application of veteran’s preference, etc. Political patronage is prohibited in the public safety civil service system. Police and Fire Departments are required to report certain employment actions to the PSCSC.

- **Disciplinary and Other Appeal Hearings**

The PSCSC presides of employee appeals of serous disciplinary actions, and alleged violations of the [PSCSC Rules](#) and Public Safety Civil Service Ordinance ([SMC 4.08](#)).

Merit-Based Public Safety Hiring Processes

PSCSC’s Public Safety Examiners in 2025 administered over 5,600 entry level tests (these include “oral boards,” which are interview panels, and practical exams). Exam staff processed nearly 9,000 applications for entry and promotional ranks in the public safety civil service.

Public Safety Applications, Exams, and Registers in 2025				
Rank	Applications Processed	Written Tests Administered	Oral Boards/ Practical Exams Administered	Eligible Candidates Placed on Register
Firefighter	3,884	2,387	1,220	705
Firefighter (Lateral)	84	46	31	26
Police Officer (Entry)	4,538	1,883	NA	1,441
Police Officer (Lateral)	211	50	43	41
Police Lieutenant	29	20	19	17
Police Captain	29	NA	17	17
Fire Lieutenant	80	55	48	28
Fireboat Engineer	5	3	2	2
Total	8,860	4,444	1,380	2,277
Notes: <u>The Firefighter exam</u> included a multidimensional test battery (situational judgement, math, reading, mechanical ability, suitability inventory) and an oral board interview. <u>The Police Officer exam</u> included a multidimensional test battery (situational judgement, reading, writing, suitability inventory). Lateral Police Officer exams also included oral boards (interview and situational judgement). <u>The Police Lieutenant, Police Captain, and Fire Lieutenants exams</u> included a knowledge based written exam, and oral board exam (interview and job simulations). <u>The Fireboat Engineer exams</u> included a knowledge based written exam and a practical exam (skill assessments).				

PSCSC approved 33 requests from former SPD and SFD employees for placement on the Reinstatement to Eligible Register, which allows eligible individuals to be considered for return to their rank by their department chief.

PSCSC approved 27 requests to extend employee probationary periods from SPD and SFD departments.

Rulemaking, Oversight, and Compliance

In April of 2025, the PSCSC revised the [PSCSC Rules of Practice and Procedure](#) to reflect the reorganization of Exam staff employees from SDHR to CIV.

The PSCSC received and monitored notices of higher-level disciplinary action, and probationary dismissals for covered employees.

2025 Notice of Probationary Dismissals and Discipline Received by the PSCSC				
Department	Probationary Dismissal	Suspension	Demotion	Termination
Seattle Fire Department	0	5	5	0
Seattle Police Department	7	12	0	1
Total	7	17	5	1
Notes: Data is based on information reported by departments.				



Disciplinary and Appeal Hearings

The PSCSC received the following appeals in 2025. No appeals went to hearing.

2025 Appeals/Exam Protests/Requests for Decision/Complaints Received by the PSCSC						
Type	Case No.	Appellant	Dept	Date Filed	Issue	Status
Appeal	25-01-001A	Dave	SPD	1-10-25	Discharge	Withdrawn
Appeal	25-05-002RPro	Schenkelberg	SFD	1-31-25	Eligible register expired	Dismissed
Appeal	25-01-004A	Allen	SPD	2-11-25	Suspension	Withdrawn
Appeal	25-01-024A	Englund	SPD	8-28-25	Suspension	Withdrawn
Appeal	9-29-2005	Rigon	SPD	9-29-25	Discharge	Pre-hearing
Other	25-07-046A	Johnson	SFD	10-10-2025	Committee selection	Dismissed