



# What Is Civil Service?

The City of Seattle uses a civil service system to ensure that employment is free from political pressures, and that municipal workers are hired and retained based on their ability to competently provide critical public services.

**What are my civil service rights?** Seattle City Charter and ordinances give covered employees the right to:

- ✓ Open and competitive hiring processes, and freedom from political coercion in hiring
- ✓ Limited probationary periods
- ✓ Just cause and due process for disciplinary actions and termination
- ✓ Appeal higher levels of discipline and alleged policy violations
- ✓ Continued employment (with limited exceptions)

**Am I covered by civil service?** Most regularly appointed employees are covered, except:

- ✗ Elected officials, department heads, Executive job titles, and Assistant City Attorneys
- ✗ Temporary employees
- ✗ Seattle Public Library employees
- ✗ Other job titles or positions exempted by ordinance

Ask your [HR representative](#) or contact us to know your status. Uniformed police and fire personnel are covered by a separate [public safety civil service](#) system.

**How does civil service work in Seattle? What is an appeal?** City departments follow civil service [Rules](#), laws, and policies. If an employee believes that these were not properly applied, they may file a grievance, and [appeal](#) to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to decide their issue, if covered. The CSC is an independent body comprised of three members who decide such matters. Some employees are also covered by [collective bargaining agreements](#), which are outside the jurisdiction of the CSC.

**How can I support the civil service system?**

Anyone can:

- ✓ Attend a monthly Civil Service Commission meeting to follow current business
- ✓ See our [website](#), subscribe to our [email list](#), or follow us on [LinkedIn](#) for news and events
- ✓ Serve a three-year term as a Civil Service Commissioner (subject to eligibility and appointment)

Civil service covered City employees can:

- ✓ Run in an election to serve as a commissioner
- ✓ Vote for the employee-appointed Civil Service Commissioner (next election is Fall of 2026)

**Where can I find more information?**

- ✓ See <https://www.seattle.gov/civil-service-commission> . You can also contact us at [civilservice@seattle.gov](mailto:civilservice@seattle.gov) or (206) 586-1991.
- ✓ Many employment standards and processes that uphold the civil service system are found in the City's [Personnel Rules](#).