

Entry/Lateral Police Officer Exam Vendor Due Diligence Overview

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Objective

Compare the current police officer exam and vendor services provided by National Testing Network with the police officer exam and services offered by Public Safety Testing, and:

- Provide a written “apples-to-apples” analysis of the two exams and vendor services, and appendices providing further context.
- Make recommendations to the PSCSC, as appropriate.

Scope

Investigated exams and services of National Testing Network and Public Safety Testing for the rank of police officer (NTN), and police officer/corrections officer (PST).

Tried to answer the following questions:

- Do the exams measure characteristics that are necessary to perform the job of a Seattle police officer?
- Are there differences between groups' test performance? Is there any adverse impact? Are there other ways in which changing the police officer exam vendor could impact candidate diversity or other racial equity outcomes?
- If available, would use of PST's exam and candidate pool result in increased applications/potential hires? To what degree?
- What are the benefits, as well as the potential undesired outcomes, of using multiple assessment instruments for a single rank/eligible list?

Limitations

Lack of available information/data.

Without data, cannot determine:

- Whether Seattle would receive more applications if it changed tests.
- How much overlap exists between candidate pools.
- How Seattle's applicant pool could be impacted by a change, impacting the demographics of the pool of hires.
- Cannot conduct an exhaustive “apples-to-apples” analysis of the two exams and services.

Methodology

The Executive Director and exam team members:

- Discussed the request with stakeholders, sought information and data for desired outcomes.
- Reviewed literature related to each vendor's products, including user manuals and validation reports.
- Asked 40+ written questions to PST and NTN
- Surveyed Seattle Community Police Commission on dimensions important to assess for police officer candidates.
- Interviews with the exam's developers and administrators, police officer unions
- Researched police officer exams and processes of comparator and regional competitor jurisdictions.
- Applied and completed the NTN and PST exams.

Due Diligence Criteria

Exam Accessibility	Exam Characteristics	Candidate Pool	Customer Service	Experience with Comparable Agencies	Other
<p>Number of testing slots available per day (across all testing platforms)</p> <p>Number of in-person testing centers across the United States</p> <p>Virtual testing capabilities (compatibility across Mac, PCs, etc.)</p> <p>Candidate support</p> <p>Score transfers</p>	<p>Validation evidence</p> <p>Measurement methods</p> <p>Exam dimensions (“standard” and “add on”)</p> <p>Component weights and cut scores</p> <p>Ability to customize weights and cut scores</p> <p>Integrity measurement</p> <p>Pass rates</p> <p>Evaluations of test performance and adverse impact</p>	<p>Demographics (% of candidates with active test scores who identify as BIPOC or women)</p> <p>Number of candidates in Washington state</p> <p>Exam completion and no-show rates</p>	<p>Vendor communication/support for applicants</p> <p>Defense of exam if legal challenge occurs</p>	<p>Experience with “comparable” agencies (similar # of officers, similar size and diversity of communities served)</p> <p>Experience with “competitor” agencies (Western Washington agencies)</p> <p>Experience with agencies under consent decrees</p>	<p>Contract costs</p> <p>Other terms</p>



How long does the hiring process take?

- On average, candidates spent **27.7 days** in the PSCSC-operated phases of the hiring process.
- This metric based on an analysis of candidates' actual application and referral dates. It reflects the average amount of time that passes between when a candidate applies and when they're referred to SPD on an eligibility list.

Key Findings

- **PST declined to participate in the due diligence. IOS/PST requested not to be considered as a vendor for the police officer exam.**
- **If PST were interested, its current exam is not likely an option for Seattle.**
- **Use of two different exam instruments would create practical and legal complexities.**

Key Finding 1

PST declined to participate in the due diligence. IOS/PST requested not to be considered as a vendor for the police officer exam.

Key Finding 2

The likely outcome of a validation process of the PST exam would be to develop a new and different exam, not PST's current exam.

- Test developer shared that it would require a rigorous validation process, which could take months.
- The likely results would be to develop a customized exam, and not permission use PST's standard test.
- Developing a new custom exam would not achieve the purpose of the request.

Key Finding 3

Use of two different exam instruments would create practical and legal complexities.

- **Challenge: Ranking candidates when using two different entry exams.**
 - **Unknown degree of overlap in test content: KSAs**
 - **“Blended” register**
 - **PST is not required to defend**
 - **NTN does not recommend**
- **Developing a custom PST/IOS exam would not achieve the purpose of the request.**

Key Finding 4

Seattle's current exam effectively assesses qualities related to constitutional policing and are important to community, is validated for Seattle's use, and does not have adverse impact.

- **NTN also serves Seattle's peer/comparator cities:**
 - **Larger, more racially diverse populations.**
 - **6 of the West Coast 7.**
 - **Cities under consent decrees.**

Aligned with Community Expectations

Seattle Community Police Commissioners rated dimensions measured by the NTN exam as “very important for a police officer candidate,” to “extremely important for a police officer candidate.”

Top Dimensions as rated by CPC

**De-escalation and Restraint in the
Use of Force**

Equity Orientation

Integrity/Ethics

Service and Teamwork

Judgment and Initiative

Recommendation 1

Continue using NTN as sole vendor for police officer exam

- NTN is our current consultant
- NTN also provides Firefighter examination, since 2018. NTN won that contract as result of an RFP and after in-depth and thoughtful review of the entire hiring process.
- Their exam content and test practices are highly appropriate for testing for the job of a Seattle police officer.
- Use of a single exam is recommended, due to legal and practical challenges.
- Seattle is 3+ the size of the next largest city using the PST exam (Spokane).

Recommendation 2

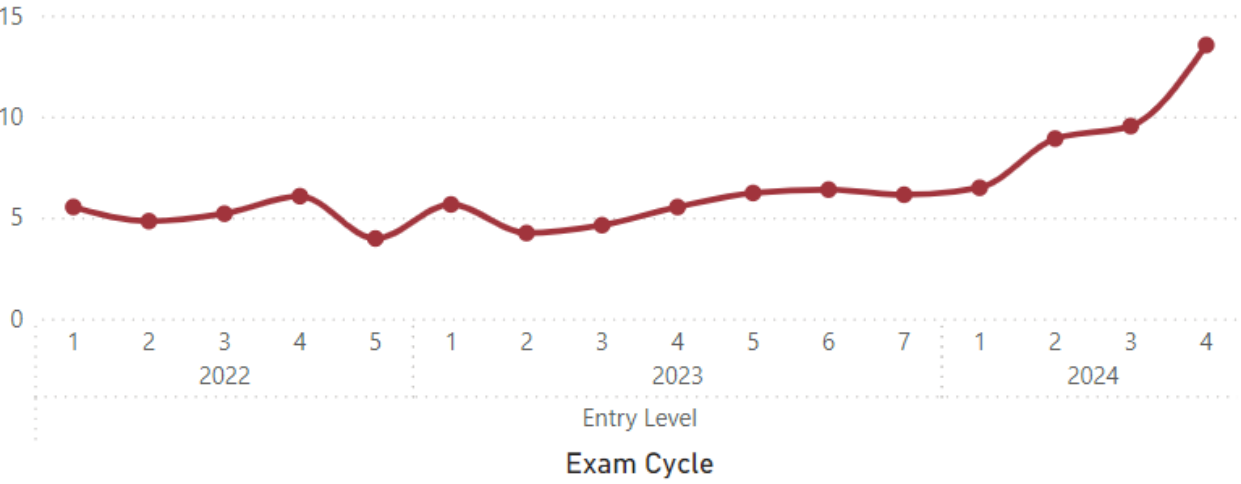
PSCSC should conduct a request for proposal process (RFP) for a sole police exam vendor in 2025.

Recommendation 3

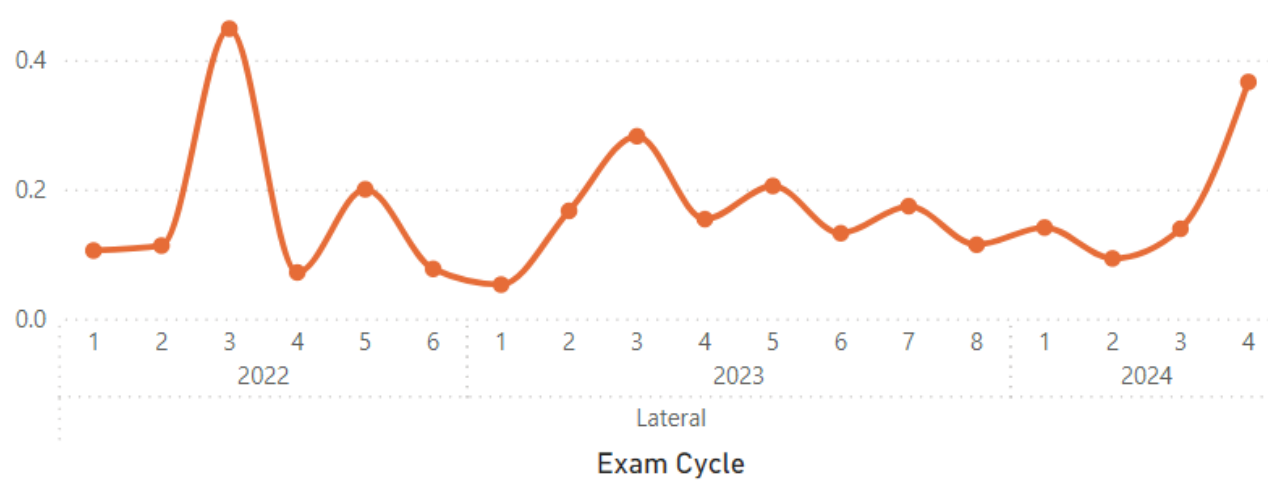
PSCSC should continue to engage in continuous improvement.

2022-2024 Police Officer Application Count

ENTRY Qualified Applications Per Day by Exam Cycle



LATERAL Qualified Applications Per Day by Exam Cycle



Please note that some applications do not pass the minimum qualifications audit. The graphs above reflect the number of "qualified" applications per day (i.e., the number of applications per day that passed the minimum qualifications audit). It is common for entry level applicants to mistakenly apply for the lateral police officer exam. These applicants are directed to apply for the entry level exam and notified of the criteria and instructions for being considered an "exceptional entry" candidate if this is applicable to them.

CLASSIFICATION

YEAR

EXAM CYCLE

APPLICATION WINDOW:

OPENS

Friday, May 10, 2024

CLOSES

Friday, June 28, 2024

APPLICATION DATA:

578
TOTAL APPLICATIONS

555
PASSED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

14.10
APPLICATIONS PER DAY

13.54
QUALIFIED APPS PER DAY

ENTRY LEVEL YTD:

1614
TOTAL APPLICATIONS

1553
PASSED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

9.99
APPLICATIONS PER DAY

9.61
QUALIFIED APPS PER DAY

LATERAL YTD:

96
TOTAL APPLICATIONS

34
PASSED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

0.50
APPLICATIONS PER DAY

0.18
QUALIFIED APPS PER DAY