



CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

CITY OF SPOKANE

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Mark Lindsey	Chair
Judith Gilmore	Vice Chair
Craig Hult	
Scott Stephens	
Nicole Palmerton	

COMMISSION STAFF

Kelsey Pearson	Chief Examiner
Jerri Bjork	Examination & Classification Analyst III
Bryan Sullivan	Examination & Classification Analyst III
Ken Hoekema	Examination & Classification Analyst III
Colin Martin	Examination & Classification Analyst II
Lisa Olson	Examination & Classification Analyst II
Tisha Heath	Office Manager
Dustin West	Administrative Specialist
Sarah Deatrich	Clerk III
Stephanie Puckett	Clerk II

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Mission Statement, Values, and Vision

MISSION

The Commission is to provide an efficient, effective, merit-based system of employment ensuring that the most qualified applicants are equitably selected and retained.

VISION

Our well-trained, competent, and professional team will utilize best practices, cost-effective technology, and innovation to provide a merit-based employment system that is recognized for excellence in public service.

VALUES

Teamwork

Excellence

Service

Transparency

Equal Opportunity

Merit Principles

Civil Service Commissioners

The Spokane Civil Service Commission is an independent body created by the City Charter to administer that portion of the Charter pertaining to Civil Service. By mandate of the citizens of Spokane, the Commission is specifically charged with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a classification plan, a comprehensive recruitment program, and practical selection standards for all classified positions in the municipal government.

It is also responsible for providing procedural rules for administration of classified employment and for resolving any differences which may arise as a result of these rules or the Charter. The Spokane City Charter, Article VI, provides the mandate and authority for the City of Spokane's civil service system.

The Civil Service Commission consists of five members: two nominated by the Mayor and appointed by the city council, two appointed by the city employee groups, and one appointed by the other four members. The Commission conducts public meetings on the third Tuesday of each month.

Current Commissioners and terms

Mark Lindsey, Chair.....	Jan. 2015 – Present
Uniformed Employee Groups Appointee.....	Current term ends Dec. 2022
Judith Gilmore, Vice Chair.....	Sep. 2016 – Present
Employee Retirement Board Appointee.....	Current term ends Dec. 2024
Nicole Palmerton.....	Apr. 2021 – Present
City Council Appointee	Current term ends Dec. 2024
Scott Stephens.....	Aug. 2017 – Present
Civil Service Commission Appointee	Current term ends Dec. 2025
Craig Hult	Mar. 2011 - Present
City Council Appointee	Current term ends Dec. 2022

Commission Legal Counsel

Mike Piccolo

Chief Examiner

Kelsey Pearson

Previous Commissioners and Terms

Pam Decounter	Jan. 2017 – Dec. 2020
Kathryn Sewell.....	Mar. 2015 – Feb. 2017
Jim DeWalt.....	Feb. 2011 – Dec. 2014
Phyllis Gabel	Aug. 2008 – Dec. 2016
Cheryl Beckett.....	Dec. 2007 – Jun. 2016
Ronald Stanley	Aug. 2007 – Dec. 2010
Robert Van Leuven.....	Mar. 2002 – Dec. 2006
Gerald Sailing	Jul. 2001 – Dec. 2007
Carol Lawton.....	Jun. 2000 – Dec. 2010
Ivan Bush.....	Jul. 1997 – Dec. 2000
James L. Kirschbaum	Jan. 1995 – Sep. 2001
John Krall	Apr. 1993 – Apr. 1995
Kate Quinn	Jan. 1992 – Apr. 2000
John M. Maurice.....	Dec. 1991 – Dec. 2007
Barry E. Ryan.....	Oct. 1988 – Mar. 1993
Douglas Amsbury.....	Oct. 1987 – Dec. 2002
Delphine Faison.....	Apr. 1987 – Jan. 1992
Paul P. Nolan	Jan. 1987 – Oct. 1987
James E. Bates.....	Apr. 1986 – Sep. 1988
O’Neil Vinson.....	Jan. 1985 – Nov. 1996
Howard A. King.....	Sep. 1984 – Feb. 1986
Seaton M. Daly, Jr.....	Feb. 1979 – Dec. 1986
Frances N. Scott.....	Jan. 1979 – Dec. 1991
Richard A. Moser	Feb. 1973 – Jan. 1985
Elmer L. Bierly	Apr. 1972 – Jan. 1973
Howard A. Anderson	Jan. 1971 – Dec. 1986
C. Grover Wilson.....	Dec. 1986 – Nov. 1978
Jerome C. Kopet.....	Nov. 1967 – Nov. 1978
James E. Borg	Jan. 1966 – Mar. 1972
John Edgar.....	Apr. 1965 – Dec. 1965
Arthur M. Hansen.....	Jan. 1965 – Aug. 1984
William S. J. May.....	Apr. 1964 – Dec. 1970
Robert M. Hardy.....	Sep. 1963 – Apr. 1965
Verne D. Warren	Jan. 1961 – Dec. 1964
George E. Robey.....	Jan. 1961 – Mar. 1967
Dr. Robert Southcombe	Jan. 1961 – Mar. 1964
Peter Piper	Jan. 1961 – Mar. 1963
Thomas F. Meagher.....	Jan. 1961 – Nov. 1967

Classification Work

In accordance with the City Charter, the Spokane Civil Service Commission is charged with the responsibility to classify all positions of the City with the exception of elective, appointive, and temporary/seasonal positions. Selection to such classified positions are required to be in conformance with Civil Service Commission Rules and Charter provisions.

An equitable classification plan is imperative for all large, well-established organizations. Position classification looks at the position itself, not the individual employee currently doing the job. This approach helps to provide position comparisons within the organization, determine the skills, knowledge and abilities needed, determine the level of responsibilities, and relationships among different levels of work.

Classification Actions

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Begin Year	315	318	298	322	340	360	347	357	355	358
Added	6	11	30	26	41	22	12	5	13	8
Deleted	3	31	6	8	21	35	2	7	10	4
Year End	318	298	322	340	360	347	357	355	358	362

Positions Filled

(permanent FTEs; totals at year end)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Classified	1807	1759	1768	1808	1864	1888	1942	1940	1898	1906
Non-Classified	106	104	113	113	113	113	113	104	113	111
Total	1913	1863	1881	1921	1977	2001	2055	2044	2011	2017
Percentage Non-Classified	5.5%	5.6%	6.0%	5.9%	5.7%	5.6%	5.5%	5.1%	5.6%	5.5%

Non-Classified Positions

As noted in the previous section, non-classified positions number 111 at the end of 2021. This includes elected officials. Library personnel, temporary/seasonal and project employees are excluded.

Distribution of counted non-classified positions follows:

Non-Classified Positions

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Mayor's Office	7	7	5	6	6	7	7	6	5	6
City Council	13	14	15	16	16	15	15	16	21	21
Division Directors	5	5	8	5	6	7	6	3	6	6
Dept. Heads	21	30	28	26	26	27	28	26	27	24
Asst/Deputy Dept. Heads	12	12	24	23	25	20	16	13	13	14
Legal Office	24	25	22	25	24	24	24	25	24	24
Police	4	4	3	4	3	6	7	6	7	6
Regional Transportation	11*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Municipal Court	8	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8
EMS/Fire	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	2	2
TOTAL	106	104	113	113	113	113	113	104	113	111

Turnover

Employment turnover rates for an organization can indicate the degree of health or efficiency of that organization. Turnover rates may also be used in succession planning. High turnover may usually – but not always – indicate problems in areas such as morale, compensation, or working conditions. The turnover rate in the City has historically been relatively low. Over the past 10 years the average rate has been about 7.3%.

The past several years have seen an increase in the turnover rate among all employees (classified and non-classified). The year of 2021 saw the highest total turnover, highest turnover rate, and highest 10-year trailing turnover rate in the data available (going back 28 years to 1994).

Turnover Causes

Year	Retired	Deceased	Laid Off	Failed Probation	Discharged	Resigned	Leave of Absence to Exempt	TOTAL	Rate
2012	49	1	20	3	1	21	*	95	5.3 %
2013	85	4	16	3	1	28	*	137	7.8 %
2014	74	3	11	3	2	32	6	131	7.4 %
2015	71	4	6	7	1	27	2	118	6.5 %
2016	81	3	1	8	2	36	2	133	7.1 %
2017	64	2	7	15	3	33	5	129	6.8 %
2018	73	1	7	16	2	31	2	132	6.8 %
2019	82	2	17	17	1	36	2	157	8.1 %
2020	82	4	6	13	3	12	6	126	6.6 %
2021	82	1	20	25	0	62	2	192	10.1 %

*Leave of Absence to Exempt was not tracked prior to 2014.

Among reasons for separation, voluntary resignation and probation failure have become a larger proportion. For 2021, probation failures as a proportion of separations are up nearly 60% above the 10-year average proportion. Voluntary resignations are up 37% in this same measurement.

The following page provides some interesting figures showing turnover-related trends.

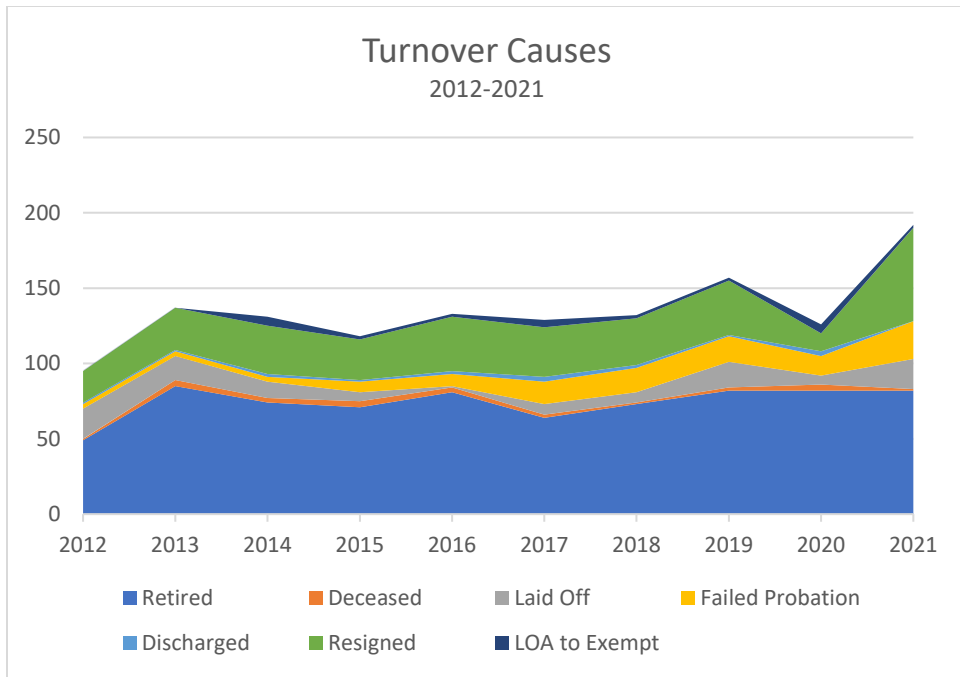


Chart 1

The proportion of separations of any given separation reason fluctuates from year-to-year. This visualization helps show the increase in probation failure as well as the drastic year-over-year rise in voluntary resignations.

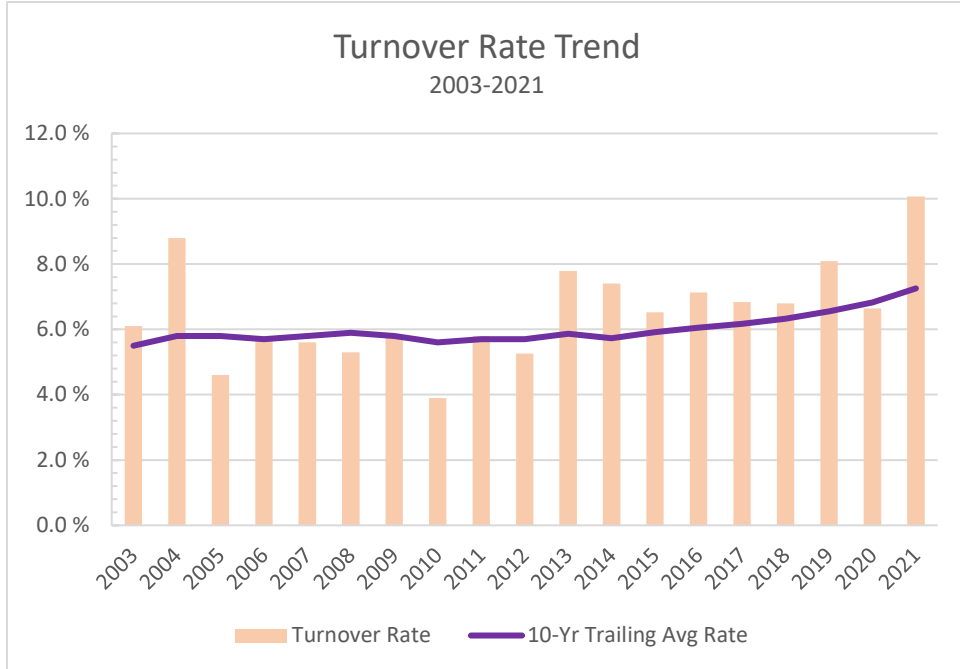


Table 2

The last few years have seen the 10-year trailing average turnover rate rise above 6%, a mark at which the rate has historically hovered.

Recruiting Update

The Civil Service Commission is responsible for establishing and maintaining eligibility standards for all classified positions in the City work force and for recruiting qualified applicants to fill those positions. Fulfillment of the recruiting responsibility is accomplished through the use of multiple channels and platforms. These include NEOGOV/governmentjobs.com, the City's jobs website, the City's social media profiles, various online job boards, professional organizations, newspapers, and the City Gazette.

2021 saw a 49% increase in total recruitments over the year 2020, and represents the highest number of total recruitments since at least 2016 (the first year of NEOGOV). Total recruitments will continue to rise into 2023 as many current employees retire. We expect recruiting to become increasingly challenging with the current job market and labor pool.

Recruitments

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Open-Entry Recruitments	58	42	69	50	50	86
Promotional Recruitments	44	35	30	32	35	40
Other (Transfer/demotion, layoff, etc)	0	0	0	3	4	7
Total Annual Recruitments	102	77	99	85	89	133

Applications

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Applications Received	4348	4742	5850	4486	3938	4621
Unique Applicants/People	3390	3711	4397	3520	3246	3202
Average Applications per Recruitment	42.6	61.6	59.1	52.8	44.2	34.7

Trends for Key Classifications

The two below classifications are regularly recruited, are employed in large numbers across multiple departments in the City, and have minimal entry qualifications. These are typically the easiest classifications to recruit for, and they both serve as internal talent development pipelines for higher classifications.

Laborer I	<i>2015</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2021</i>
Recruitment Length (weeks)	1	2	2	4
Applications Received	123	293	219	111
Candidates on Eligible List	119	161	103	65
Candidates Hired	11	13	29	17
Clerk II	<i>2015</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2020</i>
Recruitment Length (weeks)	3	2	2	2
Applications Received	265	364	340	189
Candidates on Eligible List	88	91	113	91
Candidates Hired	14	15	2	11*

* Asterisk indicates the eligible list is still active, and number hired could increase.

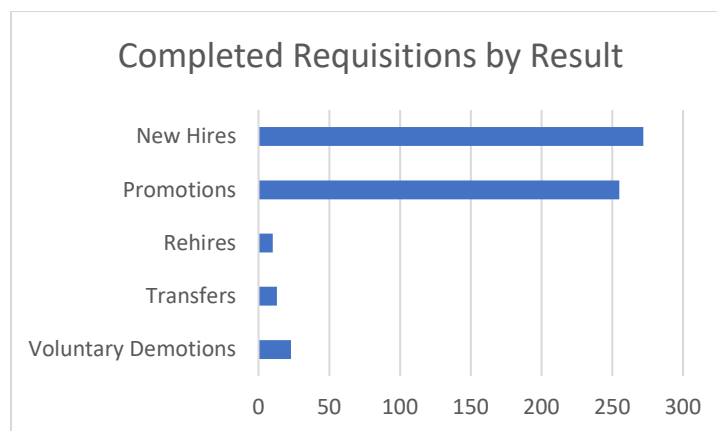
Examinations

Under the City Charter, the Civil Service Commission has the duty of providing for open, free, and competitive examinations to test the relative fitness of applicants for all classified positions. Of growing importance today is the concept of openness in government. This is reflected both in legislation and in the interest shown by private citizens in the way their government operates. Congress has expressed its concern that selection in government career service be based upon objective and equitable standards reflecting merit at all levels of government: local, state, and federal. The City of Spokane is subject to audit by a variety of federal and state compliance agencies to assure adherence to such standards, including the Uniform Guidelines for Employee Selection Process.

Applications Received	4621
Candidates Eligible	2520

Requisitions

Requisition Approved	602
Requisitions Completed	573



Nearly 45% of 2021 requisitions were promotional in nature and led to movement upwards for internal employees. This is a bright spot for 2021 where many external openings were very difficult to recruit high quality candidates in significant numbers.

Eligible Lists & Timelines

Civil Service has established a goal for just-in-time approach when re-establishing eligible lists that are to be maintained continuously. The goal is to ensure that 100% of eligible lists to be maintained have a new eligible list ready to take effect as an existing list expires. This goal is not easily realized, as a number of factors come into play, such as possible uncertainty on the part of the appointing officials as to whether a list will be needed, having current employees on laid off status, difficulty in obtaining exam subject-matter experts, and high workloads for exam analysts due to reorganizations, new classifications, etc.

The years 2020 and 2021 were particularly difficult times to meet this goal. The Coronavirus global pandemic shut work down in much of the City for most of Q2 of 2020; the rest of 2020 and much of 2021 saw periodic shutdowns, extended sick leaves, and restrictions on gatherings. Coordinating with other departments, meeting with internal subject matter experts, and arranging testing with candidates were challenges throughout the entirety of 2021.

One success from this time period was Civil Service's rollout and implementation of FastTest, an online testing platform that allowed the department to quickly move many tests from the in-person classroom setting to an online environment. This flexibility made it possible to test even when in-person meetings were restricted, and lowered a long-standing barrier for out-of-area applicants.

Progress Report

2021 was a busy and difficult year. We experienced a high volume of resignations and retirements and a new and unusual recruiting environment where low numbers of applicants drove the need to re-recruit for the same classifications on a regular basis. We were also testing for a variety of classifications that had not been tested for in many years. We have made great strides on the technology side with the addition of online testing and increases in computer-based testing in-person. Utilizing testing space in the community to offer evening and weekend testing options and offering promotional testing at worksites are other strategies that we have implemented.

There is much more work to be done. Significant effort on a classification plan and internal test development procedures are being worked on now. New software has been purchased and is in the testing stage to help increase our productivity and ensure a more professional and quality product. Our recruiting plan is evolving to ensure that we are maximizing our abilities to attract and retain a high-quality workforce.

Appeals & Complaints

It is the responsibility of the Spokane Civil Service Commission to investigate and pass upon any and all matters relating to the conditions of Civil Service employment with the City of Spokane. The Commission is also responsible for investigation and determination of any claim by employees, on eligibility lists or in classified positions, who feel that they have been deprived of, or separated from, a position to which they are entitled under the provisions of the City Charter and the Rules of the Commission.

The Commission must also hear claims and complaints against certain types of administrative actions which are non-disciplinary in nature.

The following tables provide details of disciplinary actions and complaints/appeals to the Commission.

Disciplinary Actions

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Discharged	1	1	2	1	0	3	7	5	3	0
Suspended	6	14	4	0	6	4	14	13	9	4
Demoted	0	0	2	34	0	0	1	1	0	1*
Total	7	15	8	35	6	7	22	19	12	0

*The demotion in 2021 was due to failure of probation.

Formal Appeals

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Filed	2	2	4	6	4	7	3	1	0	2
Withdrawn	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0
Denied	2	1	3	4	2	4	0	1	0	2
Dismissed	**	**	**	**	**	1	2	0	0	0

**Appeals dismissed were not tracked separately prior to 2017, and were generally recorded as "Denied"