

New Jersey Civil Service Commission

First and Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2011 Highlights

Selection Services:

During the first half of Fiscal Year 2011, Selection Services is completing two of its most time and labor-intensive initiatives: the entry-level Firefighter and entry-level Law Enforcement Examinations (LEE). Over 17,500 job applications were received for the entry-level Firefighter position. Testing involves three parts: a written cognitive test, a video-based test to assess teamwork skills and a physical performance exam. Results of the Firefighter exam will be issued to over 200 local fire departments. Over 39,000 job applications were received for entry-level law enforcement titles, including Police Officer (municipal, campus, and Human Services), Sheriff's Officer, Corrections Officer, and for the first time as part of this testing process, Parole Officer.

Testing for the entry-level Fire Fighter and LEE was conducted over 12 dates during an eight week period in October, November and the first week of December. Selections Services staff spent a significant amount of time processing applications, and scheduling test centers and test monitors for approximately 50,000 candidates covering more than 100 test locations and 700 hours of testing. Staff adjusted their schedules to monitor at the test locations, reducing time normally spent on regular testing that normally occurs each month.

Merit System Practices and Labor Relations (MSPLR):

MSPLR's Performance Indicators (the number of pending written record appeals and the percentage of completed appeals that are less than six months old) appear to be driven by external variables beyond the imposition of the \$20 filing fee for an appeal that was instituted in July 2010. These include the number of layoffs (which has greatly increased in county and municipal government) and the number of examinations held (which has decreased).

As result of the material increase in layoffs by local governments, layoff rights appeals rose by 200 percent. Exam eligibility appeals dropped 26 percent, exam scoring appeals dropped 40 percent and exam test administration and makeup appeals dropped 75 percent. In addition, although there was only one appeal from a fine in FY 2010, there were 249 in FY 2011, almost all of which were related to a job action in the Department of Corrections.

There are two categories of appeals: written record appeals, which are decided on a review of documents and records submitted by the parties, and Hearing Matters, which are decided on testimony from the parties and other witnesses. The amount of Hearing Matters rose 224 percent and written record appeals rose nine percent. In the Hearing Matters area, appeals challenging

that a layoff is in “good faith” increased by 2,100 percent. Disciplinary removal appeals rose by 30 percent.

Finally, due to lack of a quorum, there were no Civil Service Commission meetings in November and December, and only one in October (October 6), thus reducing the number of written record appeals that could be finalized and increasing the number of pending written record appeals.

State and Local Operations:

Layoff plans

A trend analysis of the data collected over the past five months reveals that the number of permanent layoff plans being approved continues at a steady rate. From July 2010 to November 2010, State and Local Operations approved an average of 15 plans per month. A comparison of this data to data from 2009 for the same five-month period reveals a significant increase. In 2009, the total number of permanent layoffs approved during the same five-month period was 22, versus 77 in 2010.

A total of 75 permanent layoffs had effective dates during July, August, September, October, or November in 2010. A comparison of this figure to 2009 data again reveals a significant increase. In 2009, the total number of permanent layoffs with effective dates during the same five-month period was 24.

Title consolidation

Since March 2010, the Title Consolidation Initiative at the New Jersey Civil Service Commission (CSC) has resulted in the elimination of over 650 State and local titles that were not being used, were obsolete, or had zero incumbents. Specifically, during July, August, and September, 273 titles were eliminated (no title eliminations occurred in October and November). Cross-divisional workgroups at the CSC continue to work to identify outdated titles for potential elimination, and will be reviewing titles with similar functions in an effort to combine similar titles into more broadly defined classes. On November 15, 2010, the CSC rolled out a redesign of its website search engine for job specifications. We are collapsing duplicative job specifications (due to workweeks and variants) into one base job spec, and shifting the search engine’s focus from title codes to title names.