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a Better Future Now”

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# Civil Service Jobs: The Test is Back

Dreaming of a government career? Start preparing now for the big exam

**Lisa Loving**  
*Of The Skanner News*

The federal government is putting the exam back in the civil service. The Washington Post reported this month that the federal government is turning the clock back in an attempt to update its hiring systems by reforming the way it tests people for new positions and promotions. In generations past, civil service tests, including an essay, were required in government hiring — and not just for positions that required extra training and certification, such as being a firefighter or a communications dispatcher. Criticism that the tests were biased and screened out applicants of color triggered lawsuits in the late 60s and early 70s. Eventually most civil service tests were thrown out, mak-

Criticism that Civil Service tests were biased and screened out applicants of color triggered lawsuits in the late 60s and early 70s

ing a civil service job the same as any government job. A few years ago President Barack Obama moved to “reform” the way government job applicants were tested, quietly developing and implementing a battery of online exams. Now, those’re being required by some three dozen agencies, The Washington Post reports, because overwhelmed bureaus are seeking ways to cut down on the number of applicants and improve the quality of hires, according to officials. The Times reports that now up to 10 percent of civilian government hires are based on these tests, using a software program called USA Hire which is administered through the United States Office of Personnel Management web-

# Law Careers



Looking for a career in law enforcement? Get started on a rewarding civil service career in criminal justice or corrections at Clackamas Community College. CCC is located just south of Portland in Clackamas County. The college has three convenient campuses in Oregon City, North Clackamas and Wilsonville. CCC offers a two-year associate’s degree in Criminal Justice that leads to work as a law enforcement officer at the local state or national level, as well as in Homeland Security. The program covers criminal investigation, patrol, and criminological theory, community policing and more. CCC also offers an associate’s degree in

Corrections and a one-year certificate in Juvenile Corrections. Career opportunities include work in jail and prison facilities and may include work as correctional officers and probation and parole officers. Classes in Criminal Justice and Corrections at CCC are taught by experienced, working professionals who know the work first-hand. Students in the program have the chance to work with CCC’s Campus Safety Cadet Program, gaining valuable experience working under professional officers. Students can start the programs any term. For more information, contact Ida Flippo, Criminal Justice instructor at 503-594-3363 or email [iflippo@clackamas.edu](mailto:iflippo@clackamas.edu).

Traditionally, civil service job categories range from diplomats to air traffic controllers, postal workers, transportation security administration agents and translators of all kinds. Civil service jobs exist in all levels of government — many are federal jobs that are actually performed at the local level. Many are also union jobs, which generally pay better, and also offer more workplace rights of supports and other jobs. Not all these positions require a four year college degree; but some of the most interesting—including those in the emerging field of emergency preparedness —require some sort of specialized training. As “ban the box” campaigns take hold across the country — prohibiting government employers from asking about an applicant’s arrest record at the early stages of the job interview process — more applicants might be eligible for civil service jobs previously out of their reach.

Here are a few places where you might look for more information on careers in civil service. The U.S. Department of State Domestic/Civil Service careers page offers basic information on how to apply, what the benefits are and what kinds of positions are available. The US Office of Personnel Management website has all the information about the USA Hire software, how it works and is a great stop even though it is not designed for applicants. Anyone with testing anxiety who wants to succeed on the civil service exam should check out this page. There are several websites offering help in preparing for a civil service exam. Some include test questions, including and . Try to avoid paying any site for access to test questions. The City of Seattle Civil Service Commission has the power to help adjudicate in

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# Homeland Security Simulator in Portland

**By Arashi Young**  
*Of the Skanner News*

A wind storm has knocked over an old oak tree on a desolate country road. Power lines are entangled with branches, trapping a small car with passengers. A fire breaks out in a nearby house — what do you do? This is the question being asked at the Homeland Security Simulator at Concordia University, a state-of-the-art facility that can create thousands of different training scenarios. This simulator serves as a teaching instrument for Homeland Security students at Concordia and is available for disaster training for other businesses and public agencies. The simulator features a 43 foot by 10 foot semi-circular display that provides a fully immersive experience as if the incident commander was actually at the scene of an emergency.

This involvement is key in learning to make decisions, according to Jason Nairn, the director of the Homeland Security Simulation Lab.

Nairn said the students like the simulator, but it also stresses them out

“The simulator has a number of functions, but one of the things it does well is put leaders in the position to have to make critical thinking judgments and ethical decisions,” Nairn said. Attached to the large display are six video monitor stations which also interact within the simulation. These stations support other active participants like emergency medical personnel who treat injured people.

In a nearby room there is the Emergency Operations Center that also shows the simulation. This room offers training for executives like the chief of police, the fire chief, or the mayor — people who wouldn’t be on the scene, but would still be responsible for decisions and resources. There is even a broadcast studio on site for the instructors to create newscasts to deliver disaster information. The system is designed to train all levels of emergency responders simultaneously and allow for different emergency teams such as police, fire and rescue and hazardous materials crews to work within the same scenario. Concordia spent \$1 million for simulator software and the building modifications. According to Nairn, the FBI and the NYPD also use the same simulator software, called

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