



Alex Subers/The Pew Charitable Trusts

Hiring and Employment in Philadelphia City Government

An examination of the structure, processes, and challenges with the current system

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Overview

In hiring municipal employees, Philadelphia, like many U.S. cities, faces the challenge of attracting top talent and diversifying its workforce while adhering to long-standing regulations that often restrict the pool of candidates. To residents, municipal workers embody city government; and to a large degree, their performance determines the quality and perception of city services.

The city of Philadelphia employs over 30,000 full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees in more than 700 different types of jobs at roughly 200 sites throughout the city. Based on rules established by the 1952 city charter, about 81 percent of these workers are hired, promoted, and sometimes fired through the city's civil service system, which was created to reduce nepotism and cronyism and establish personnel policies based on merit. The other 19 percent are exempt from these rules. Every year, about 73,000 people apply for jobs with the city, and 1,500 get hired.

Philadelphia's personnel mission, as stated by the city's Office of Human Resources, is to "attract and maintain a competitive and diverse workforce." Top city officials, in a process that began in the final days of former Mayor Michael Nutter's administration and continued after Mayor Jim Kenney took office in January 2016, asked The Pew Charitable Trusts to examine municipal hiring practices for two reasons. One was that three-quarters of Philadelphia's municipal workforce has reached retirement age or is scheduled to reach it in the next 15 years, creating both a challenge in terms of lost institutional knowledge and an opportunity to bring in a new generation of workers. And the other was a perception on the part of city officials that current recruiting and hiring practices are inefficient, making it difficult to attract qualified applicants, particularly younger people to replenish the aging workforce as well as highly skilled workers who might be enticed by higher compensation or more flexible work environments in the private sector. City officials also asked Pew to compare with other large U.S. cities the demographics of Philadelphia's workforce relative to its overall population.

Pew conducted this research, relying in part on detailed personnel data from 2010 to 2016 provided by the city as well as interviews with city officials, analysis of human resources data from city and federal governments, examination of the human resources practices and workforce of the nation's 30 most populous cities, and data from a 2016 Pew poll with questions related to Philadelphians' attitudes toward city employees and public employment. Researchers compared Philadelphia's regulations, staffing, and policies with those of the nation's 29 other most populous cities. Listed in order of population size, the cities are New York; Los Angeles; Chicago; Houston; Phoenix; San Antonio; San Diego; Dallas; San Jose, California; Austin, Texas; Jacksonville, Florida; San Francisco; Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis; Fort Worth, Texas; Charlotte, North Carolina; Seattle; Denver; El Paso, Texas; Washington; Boston; Detroit; Nashville, Tennessee; Memphis, Tennessee; Portland, Oregon; Oklahoma City; Las Vegas; Louisville, Kentucky; and Baltimore.

This resulting report sets out to describe the hiring processes in Philadelphia city government, the challenges connected with them, and how other cities are handling similar concerns. While there was wide variation in hiring practices among the cities surveyed, all cited attracting a talented and diverse workforce among their top human resources priorities. Some cities have adjusted or revised civil service regulations to try to achieve those goals.

There is no way to quantify the degree to which Philadelphia's current hiring practices may have limited its ability to attract the workforce city officials want and need. But in interviews with over 40 officials who deal with the process on a daily basis, hiring and promotion practices were almost universally described as cumbersome, inflexible, and slow. From 2013 to 2015, the median time between an individual submitting an application and

getting selected for a position was 360 days—and applicants can sit on a list waiting to be hired for up to two years. As a result, some of the most desirable candidates have no longer been available by the time a job offer could be made.

Hiring through the civil service in Philadelphia has changed little since the system was put in place in 1952. It is based on clearly stated standards and rules, designed to make hiring managers accountable to applicants and taxpayers as well as to elected officials. Some of the rules are enshrined in the city charter, which can be changed only with voters' approval; others have been enacted by the city's Civil Service Commission or worked out through the collective bargaining process with the unions representing municipal workers.

The research for this report found that some of Philadelphia's civil service regulations offer hiring managers less latitude than their counterparts in other cities have. One example is the so-called Rule of Two, which limits a hiring manager in Philadelphia to considering only the two candidates who place highest on an eligibility list for a position, with each applicant given a precise numerical rating based on exam scores and other factors. Among the nation's 30 largest cities, the 29 others all give managers more options, although several other large cities limit the selection to the top three candidates. In addition, Philadelphia's charter dictates that "vacancies shall be filled by promotion whenever possible." In practice and with few exceptions, this charter language limits the infusion of new talent at the middle and higher levels of civil service.

In evaluating job candidates, Philadelphia tends to rely more heavily than other cities do on exam scores rather than resumes. In addition, Philadelphia gives applicants more ways to add bonus points to their exam scores that may or may not be related to the work—through language fluency, advanced degrees, military service, or having a parent or grandparent who was killed in the line of duty as a police officer or firefighter.

And unlike most cities studied, Philadelphia does not have a centralized recruiting office. As a result, recruitment efforts are limited, with departments responsible for generating candidates for open positions—a task they are not always well-prepared or incentivized to perform.

Pew's analysis of Philadelphia's workforce data showed that blacks and whites accounted for higher shares of the city's workforce than of the city's population as a whole, while the growing Latino and Asian populations accounted for smaller shares. This was true, to a greater or lesser degree, of nearly all cities studied. And in Philadelphia, the situation does not appear to be changing; in the past several years, new hires have more closely matched the makeup of the existing municipal workforce than the makeup of the city as a whole.

Among city workers, men are paid more than women, and whites make more than members of other racial and ethnic groups. Much of this is a result of some groups being more heavily concentrated in certain job categories than others. In data for 2015, black employees accounted for 81 percent of all service and maintenance workers, the job category with the lowest median salary. On the other hand, black employees represented only 32 percent of officials and administrators, where the median salary was the highest. Like the other cities examined, Philadelphia had more men than women on the payroll, largely because the police and fire departments, which are predominantly male, make up a large percentage of municipal workforces.

With hiring processes characterized by many officials as rigid and slow, Philadelphia and other cities must now determine how to adapt their employment practices to become more nimble and competitive in a fast-moving job market. Municipalities must balance the conflicting priorities of finding and retaining the talent they will need for tomorrow while maintaining a commitment to fair and equitable hiring, the backbone of the civil service system.

Philadelphia's civil service system

City government is the second-largest employer in Philadelphia, behind only the federal government. The city employs approximately 30,000 full-time, part-time, and seasonal workers in positions that provide a variety of services and require a range of skills and competencies. About 81 percent of these positions are governed by civil service, and most are considered stable and secure middle-class jobs; the other 19 percent are exempt from civil service.

As of June 2017, 75 percent of all city employees were on track to be eligible for retirement in the next 15 years. Seventeen percent were already eligible, and 771 employees retired in 2016. The Center for State & Local Government Excellence workforce survey found that, generally, retirements in local and state government accelerated between 2012 and 2016.¹

How human resources is structured in Philadelphia

Three elements determine how the city's workforce is hired and promoted. They are job class specifications, exams, and eligibility lists. For definitions of these and other terms used in this report, see the glossary in Appendix A. All of the comparison cities examined for this study use these elements to ensure fairness within their civil service systems, especially in the police and fire departments.

Job class specifications

In civil service, job descriptions are called job class specifications. They describe the duties and tasks associated with each civil service position and the necessary experience and qualifications. Specifications are created by the staff of the department or departments employing people in that job class and by the Office of Human Resources; they must be approved by the Civil Service Commission and the administrative board. In some cases, the classifications are broad and apply to a type of job available in many city departments; in others, the classifications apply to a single job in a single department. Philadelphia's practices in this regard are similar to those in the other cities studied.

History of Civil Service in Philadelphia

Philadelphia adopted a civil service system in its 1919 city charter. The system was meant to establish merit-based hiring while limiting the role of politics in personnel decisions. However, numerous loopholes allowed for patronage and corruption.* The current charter, which took effect in 1952, closed those loopholes and limited the number of exempt positions, opening doors to broader participation in the municipal workforce. In his 2011 book *AFSCME's Philadelphia Story*, Francis Ryan documented what was happening at the time, stating that "the appeal of a 'city job' reached unprecedented heights. ... Philadelphia's Personnel Department noted that while only 3,600 people had applied for city positions in 1951, 59,000 did so in 1955."[†]

Continued on next page

Since the 1950s, there have been several external reviews of the city's civil service system.[‡] A number of recommendations from those reviews, including an increase in the number of exempt employees per department, were implemented.[§] Even so, the system in 2018 is essentially the same as it was in 1952.

* The Committee of Seventy, "The Charter: A History" (1980), <https://www.seventy.org/uploads/files/127709242549666483-1980-charter-history.pdf>.

† Francis Ryan, *AFSCME's Philadelphia Story: Municipal Workers and Urban Power in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).

‡ National Academy of Public Administration, "A Review of the Philadelphia Civil Service System: Design for Accountability" (July 1981); Philadelphia Independent Charter Commission, "Briefing Materials" (March 25, 1994).

§ Philadelphia Independent Charter Commission, "Briefing Materials."

Exams

Depending on the job, the city requires that eligible applicants be evaluated using one or more of several types of exams—written, oral, performance, or training and experience, the last of which is essentially a review of the applicant's resume.² (See Table 1.) Oral or written exams are used to evaluate candidates for most positions. Training and experience evaluations are used for about a quarter of all jobs, with performance exams administered in a small number of cases. A mix of exam types is used for the rest.³

Table 1
Types of Civil Service Exams

Type of Exam	Description
Written	An applicant takes a standardized exam in written form.
Oral	An applicant is interviewed using standardized questions, with answers rated by a panel of reviewers.
Performance	An applicant is provided a set amount of time to complete a specific task for which he or she should have prior experience or training.
Training and experience	An applicant is reviewed and scored on professional experience, certifications, and training.

Applicants can be assessed using a combination of more than one type of exam.

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Philadelphia’s August 2017 municipal career fair drew several thousand job seekers to the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

There are also four types of exam availability. (See Table 2.)

For anyone who takes a civil service exam and passes it, bonus points are available for qualifying conditions such as veteran status or language fluency. Table B.1 in Appendix B shows the points available to applicants for nonuniformed positions. For the more extensive list of bonus points available to applicants for uniformed positions in Philadelphia’s police and fire departments, see Tables B.2 and B.3. Philadelphia offers more ways than most other cities to add points. The results of the exams, combined with the bonus points, create the order in which people are eligible to be hired for most city positions.

Every city has rules or laws in place offering points or preferences to veterans who take and pass civil service exams. Some cities offer bonus points for items on which other cities impose requirements. For instance, San Antonio gives applicants a point for living in the city;⁴ Philadelphia requires new employees to establish city residence within six months of being hired.

The extent of the point system in Philadelphia can make it difficult for applicants with no bonus points to get ranked high enough on the eligibility list to be considered for employment, no matter how well they do on the test. The first 239 applicants on the 2013 firefighter eligibility list had scores over 100, meaning they performed well on the test and had additional points added.

Table 2
Types of Exam Availability

Exam	Availability
Open competitive	Available to anyone
Citywide promotional*	Available to eligible city employees
Departmental promotional	Available to eligible city employees in the designated department
Concurrent	Available to city employees and external candidates concurrently

* In the civil service regulations, citywide promotional exams are referred to as “interdepartmental” examinations.

Educational Attainment

In assembling its workforce, Philadelphia's city government seeks educated and qualified employees. At the same time, the workforce development strategy announced by Mayor Kenney in February 2018 calls for reducing barriers to municipal employment and giving opportunities to adults lacking workforce skills and credentials. The recent history of the police department highlights how the city strives to balance these two goals.*

Under Commissioner Charles Ramsey, who ran the department from 2008 to 2015, applicants for the police academy had to have 60 college credit hours, the amount required to obtain an associate degree.† Some large cities, including New York, Chicago, Houston, Washington, and Dallas, specify that applicants must have either college credit or military experience. Others, including Los Angeles, Phoenix, Miami, and Detroit, do not.

Under Ramsey's successor, Richard Ross, the educational requirement was reduced to a high school diploma, with points added to applicants' exam scores for additional education.‡ The impact was immediate, with a big increase in the number of candidates taking the test required of academy applicants.

For individuals in any department who wish to continue their education while employed, the city partners with select area colleges and universities to offer a 25 percent tuition discount to municipal employees.

* Mensah M. Dean, "City Nears Ending Requirement of 60 College Credits for New Cops," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 3, 2016.

† David Gambacorta, "Ducking the Bad Apples," *Philadelphia Daily News*, May 10, 2010.

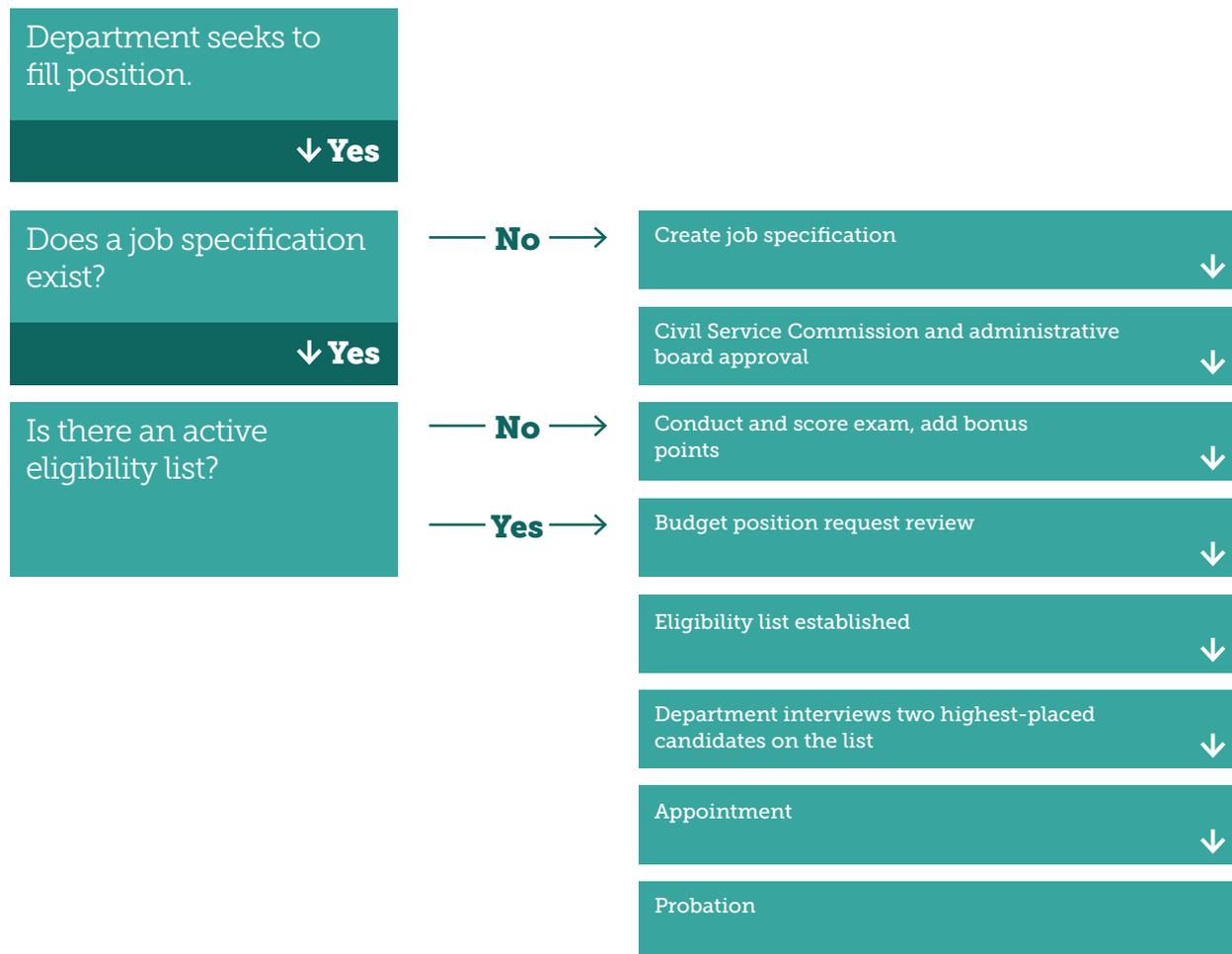
‡ In addition to the change in the educational requirement, the minimum age for police recruits was increased from 19 to 22.

Eligibility lists

Job vacancies are filled using eligibility lists. Each job class specification has its own list, and applicants are ranked in order of their scores, including bonus points. When there is a job vacancy, a department interviews the first two people on the list in accordance with the city charter's Rule of Two, which is discussed later in this report.⁵ If there is a tie for the top two positions on the list, human resources breaks the tie based on applicants' scores in the sections of the test that had greater weight. If applicants remain tied, in the case of open competitive positions, candidates who have lived in Philadelphia for at least one year are given preference. If that does not resolve the issue, a computerized random drawing is conducted. Before the certification of the eligibility list, the city's Budget Office must review and approve the department's request to fill the vacancy. This step was added to the process as a result of the city's hiring freeze during the Great Recession. (See Figure 1 for Philadelphia's hiring process.)

Depending on the job classification, some eligibility lists are citywide and some are department-specific. For example, an individual on a citywide eligibility list for an industrial electrician 1 position is eligible for any vacant position in that classification, regardless of department. This can cause problems when the actual job requirements are more demanding, as is sometimes the case at Philadelphia International Airport. Said Rosalie I. Hornbuckle, the airport’s chief human resources officer: “Each of the 8,000 runway lights that our electricians maintain is in essence an individual computer,” and, she added, not every electrician has the skills to do the work. Although departments can request department-specific job classifications, the Office of Human Resources does not grant all such requests. Other cities reviewed followed a similar practice.

Figure 1
Philadelphia’s Hiring Process



Source: Philadelphia Office of Human Resources, “General Hiring Process” (2012)

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Eligibility lists remain in place for up to two years, and departments seeking to fill positions must use them. In some cases, this means calling in applicants who applied for employment well over a year earlier. The process of reaching out to these applicants can result in additional delays if they have already found other employment, are hard to reach, or are slow to respond.

Eligibility lists are not unique to Philadelphia, but the two-year life span is longer than in some other cities. In Denver, lists expire after one year.⁶ In Los Angeles, they are active for six months to a year and can be extended for up to four years. Phoenix similarly maintains lists that are active for six to 12 months. In Chicago, eligibility lists typically remain active for two to three years.

Poll Results: Rating Public Servants

In Pew's 2016 survey, Philadelphia residents were asked to rate the quality of the city's public servants. Fifty-five percent rated them as fair or poor, and 41 percent as excellent or good. The rest said they did not know or would not answer. City employees received higher ratings from residents who had lived in Philadelphia less than 10 years and from people 65 and older, and lower ratings from blacks and Hispanics.

How the process looks to a job applicant

An applicant can see all available positions by visiting the city's phila.gov/personnel site. Civil service and non-civil service jobs are listed, with new job opportunities highlighted in red.

For civil service positions, the jobs are divided into open competitive, citywide promotional, and departmental promotional. Depending on the position, an applicant may be considered by any number of departments; exam announcements do not list a hiring department. For example, an applicant for an administrative assistant position could wind up working in the Revenue Department or the Department of Human Services. A new applicant may seek only the non-civil service and the open competitive civil service positions; the open competitive slots represented 37 percent of civil service vacancies between 2010 and 2017. According to the Chief Administrative Office, no record of the number of exempt vacancies was available before 2016.⁷ An examination of human resources data shows that 70 percent of new hires were civil service positions.

To get the process started, the applicant creates a profile on the website, answering questions related to education, work history, trade licenses, certifications, skills, and any relationship to current city employees. The profile also asks whether the applicant is entitled to any bonus points.

After applying for the position, which is generally open for about two weeks, the applicant waits to hear from the city whether he or she is eligible to take the required exam, which is held on a specific date in a specific location. If the applicant passes the exam, his or her score can be increased based on associated bonus points and is ranked on the eligibility list.⁸

The applicant then waits for a response from the departmental hiring manager, which can come quickly, slowly, or not at all, depending in large part on the applicant's ranking on the eligibility list. If and when contacted, the applicant is asked if he or she is still interested in the position. If the answer is no, the applicant is removed from consideration. If the answer is yes, the applicant is considered. If the applicant wants to work in the job classification but not in the particular agency or department that has the opening, he or she may remain on the list to see if jobs in the same classification become available in other departments. Individuals on an eligibility list can remove their names from consideration by a department up to three times. After that, the candidate is removed from the list. Candidates may remove their names from an eligibility list for other reasons as well, such as the job location.

If interviewed and selected for the position, the applicant must go through a medical assessment, an indebtedness check, and, in some cases, a psychological evaluation and a federal background check. Then, a start date is selected, followed by a six-month probationary period. Once the probationary period is complete, the individual's position is protected by regulations that slow and limit dismissals or suspensions.⁹ In fiscal year 2017, 96 percent of new hires remained in city government one year after being hired.

Challenges with the current system

In interviews for this report, city officials frequently cited recruitment policies, regulations designed to ensure merit-based hiring, and timing as obstacles to securing a qualified workforce.

Recruitment

Recruitment efforts are one way to attract talented employees and make sure that the city's workforce is representative of the population it serves, a priority for the city and the Legislature. City Council President Darrell Clarke has said, "Philadelphia's workforce should reflect the diversity of our population."¹⁰ Philadelphia once had a recruitment office in the Personnel Department, but it was eliminated in the early 2000s. Since then, the city has done little to market the overall attractiveness of employment within city government. "We have to improve our recruitment efforts and promote the benefits of working for the city," said Michael Zaccagni, chief of staff in the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems. "We need to position ourselves as an employer of choice." Posting job descriptions on phila.gov/personnel is often the extent of the Office of Human Resources' involvement in the recruitment process.

The city does host occasional job fairs in which multiple departments participate. More than 4,200 people attended a fair at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in August 2017. These events, though, have their limits. Job seekers can get information about available positions and submit applications for jobs that are exempt from civil service. But they cannot apply for the far more numerous civil service positions; they must do so online. Nor can they be interviewed. They must first take the exam, which may not be available for six to 12 months.

Most recruiting efforts, when they occur, are conducted by the hiring department—rather than by the city's Office of Human Resources (OHR)—and focus on department-specific positions. Departmental human resources staff members report to the head of their department rather than to OHR. Therefore, there is little incentive for a department to recruit anyone who might wind up working elsewhere in city government.

Such efforts present challenges of their own. A department’s human resources staff often lacks the experience or qualifications to mount effective campaigns, and there is no money budgeted for recruiting. Even so, some departments, such as the fire department, have spent money to expand their efforts. Said Fire Commissioner Adam Thiel: “If we don’t do active recruitment, we don’t receive a diverse and inclusive applicant pool.” The Philadelphia Police Department has created its own recruitment website, joinphillypd.com. Other departments have advertised on billboards, posted openings on external job websites, conducted direct outreach at high schools and colleges, used staff networks to generate word-of-mouth, and participated in outside job fairs.

In contrast with Philadelphia, and as shown in Table 3, most of the nation’s 15 largest cities have centralized the recruitment process in their citywide personnel office, although there is considerable variation in recruitment efforts. For example, Phoenix has 20 full-time-equivalent staff members and a budget of \$3.6 million, while Columbus has only one full-time staffer in an office with a budget of \$122,268. Because of the way Philadelphia’s budget is structured, there is no way to determine how much Philadelphia spends in its decentralized recruiting efforts.

Table 3
How the 15 Largest U.S. Cities Handle Recruitment

	Central recruiting office	No central recruiting office
Austin, TX	X	
Chicago	X	
Columbus, OH	X	
Dallas	X	
Houston	X	
Indianapolis	X	
Jacksonville, FL	X	
Los Angeles		X
New York		X
Philadelphia		X
Phoenix	X	
San Antonio	X	
San Diego	X	
San Francisco	X	
San Jose, CA	X	

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Poll Results: Preferences for Public vs. Private Sector Employment

In Pew's 2016 poll, Philadelphians were closely divided over whether they would rather work in the public or private sector.

Forty-five percent said they would prefer to work for government and 39 percent for business, with the rest undecided or expressing no preference. Among blacks, government work got the nod by 53 to 31 percent, while whites preferred business 48 to 37 percent.

Forty-five percent of Philadelphians said they saw government as offering better benefits, such as health insurance and retirement plans. Seventeen percent said the benefits in the private sector were better. Asked which sector provided better job security, 42 percent of residents cited the public sector, while 16 percent chose the private sector. Thirty-four percent said the private sector offered higher salaries; 28 percent said the public sector did.

Asked which type of employment offered better opportunities to contribute to society, 31 percent said the public sector and 18 percent the private sector. The rest saw no difference or had no opinion.

City officials say the job specifications themselves can be barriers to attracting top candidates. For instance, some applicants with strong practical work experience are unable to move forward in the hiring process if they lack a particular degree. This is because the current rules require that applicants have all of the listed experience, skills, and education for each opening.¹¹

The requirement for most civil service positions that applicants live in the city can also be an obstacle. Michael Piper, head of the city's Office of Property Assessment, told the city council during budget hearings in April 2017 that one reason he has had trouble recruiting assessors was "because it's a very specialized field, and there are only so many people that are qualified to do it that live within the city."¹² In response, the Civil Service Commission granted a residency waiver giving new assessors 10 years to move into Philadelphia. The city also allows one-year residency waivers for some job classes, such as Office of Information Technology positions, and permits police officers and firefighters to move out of Philadelphia after five years in the department, a policy change garnered through arbitration.

To improve recruitment across city government, the Office of Human Resources revamped its job website in 2017 to make it more user-friendly; for instance, candidates can now use the site to sign up for notifications when specific positions become available. In addition, the office has partnered with Esperanza College of Eastern University and Community College of Philadelphia to train students for specific city jobs.

All of the other cities surveyed use their city government website for recruitment. Some cities have also posted jobs in newspapers, used third-party employment websites, reached out to professional organizations, hosted job fairs, set up neighborhood human resources offices, recruited at high schools, employed social media, and focused on highlighting the benefits of working for city government, in addition to salary. For example:

- Denver operates a marketing campaign called Where Denver Works, which highlights the varied roles and job openings available in municipal government. The city's human resources staff now has recruiter access on LinkedIn, a common private sector practice.¹³
- Baltimore has an online user guide that provides step-by-step instructions on how to apply for civil service positions.
- Louisville's human resources department uses its job-posting website to highlight ancillary employee benefits, including a wellness initiative.
- Charlotte's human resources department has an employment compliance and departmental consulting office that helps city departments with recruitment and job training.
- Chicago uses an outside media firm to support efforts to increase diversity in its police force.¹⁴
- Portland has specific recruiters for the disabled and communities of color.

City Workforce Programs

City government has implemented a number of procedures and policies aimed at providing particular groups of Philadelphians—people who might not otherwise be able to obtain civil service jobs—opportunities to start public service careers.

These efforts, most of which are modest in scope, target 16- to 29-year-olds who are neither working nor in school, those who were formerly incarcerated, seasonal employees who would like to work year-round, and individuals lacking workforce credentials and skills. Said Maari Porter of the Managing Director's Office, "We ask employers all the time to hire more opportunity youth* or 'returning citizens,'" as the city calls released prisoners, "so it is important that city government is also walking the walk, which is what we are doing with a new initiative, City as Model Employer."

To this end, the city is expanding internship, apprenticeship, and seasonal employee programs already in existence in 10 departments and agencies: the airport, the Community Life Improvement Program, fleet management, the Free Library, parks and recreation, water, streets, the Office of Information Technology, prisons, and Philly 311.

Continued on next page

Since 1993, fleet management has operated an apprenticeship program for students in the city's career and technical education schools. The students earn credit while apprenticing in the department and receive support when applying for full-time positions. In all, 119 interns have participated, with 52 hired to full-time civil service positions as automotive apprentices as of April 2018.

The Streets Department operates Future Track, which provides on-the-job training for young Philadelphians with an interest in neighborhood beautification, construction, roadway maintenance, and traffic investigations. Of 40 participants in the paid five-month program, 17 have been hired into civil service positions.

Another program, working with the Water Department and Parks and Recreation, is PowerCorpsPHL. Launched in September 2013, it is an AmeriCorps program operated in partnership with EducationWorks, a nonprofit that supports career readiness programs. Focused on helping the formerly incarcerated and opportunity youth onto career pathways, especially in environmental fields, PowerCorpsPHL provides paid work experiences for six to 12 months for approximately 120 individuals a year; upon graduation, participants receive access to supportive services and three months of transitional assistance. From September 2013 through June 2017, some 214 people graduated from the program. Of these, 159 found jobs after the program ended, 38 of them with the city.

One problem with linking city internships and apprenticeships to city careers is that, in some cases, successful participants cannot simply be hired, promoted, or transferred into permanent civil service jobs. Instead, they must go through the same application and examination process as all other candidates, although their on-the-job experience may help them on the test. To address this issue, the city created at least two “bridge” job classes, allowing interns or seasonal workers to move into full-time civil service employment.

* “Opportunity youth” is the term the city uses to refer to 16- to 24-year-olds who are neither in school nor working.

Regulations designed to ensure merit-based hiring

In an effort to guarantee that the hiring process is based on merit, civil service hiring decisions in Philadelphia are largely determined by exam results and the Rule of Two. Compared with their counterparts in other cities reviewed, hiring managers in Philadelphia have relatively little say about which candidates qualify for a job, how they are scored, and who is ultimately selected.

The use of exams

One of the main features of a civil service system is the assessment of job candidates on what is meant to be an objective basis—thus the reliance on exams. Of the 30 cities reviewed, all administer written civil service exams for uniformed police and fire positions. There is considerable variation regarding how exams are used and assessed in hiring for nonuniformed civil service posts.

For these positions, most of the cities require exams of some kind for the vast majority of jobs. But often the exam is not a written or oral test. A number of cities—including Dallas, Indianapolis, Houston, and Jacksonville—rely primarily on the results of an interview. Other cities, including San Antonio, Phoenix, and Columbus, most often leave the decision to the hiring manager. On the whole, cities in the Northeast and Midwest tend to have highly structured hiring systems that are dependent on exams, while those in the South and West tend to depend more on managerial discretion.

Some cities, including Louisville, have done away with exams for jobs in departments with highly technical work. In these cases, hiring managers make decisions based on candidates' training and experience. In addition, Louisville's human resources department can waive civil service exams for nonuniformed positions with fewer than three qualified applicants.¹⁵

Many Philadelphia officials say the exams the city uses do not always identify the best fits for the vacancies. Said Jessica Shapiro, first deputy commissioner at the Department of Human Services: "There are some people who could be very good at the job who do not test well. Excluding them from the process may not always benefit the city." Mike Bresnan, a vice president of the Philadelphia Fire Fighters' and Paramedics' Union, faulted the quality of some promotional exams, saying, "For my own promotion, the questions were too simple. ... I was going to be responsible for 35 people and for putting out complicated high-rise fires. Two questions—one fire-related and one administrative—were not enough."

A 1994 commission that reviewed Philadelphia's city charter concluded: "Undue reliance on test scores substitutes one unfair system for another [patronage]. The principle behind civil service is that employees should be hired, based not on who they know but what they know. Written tests alone may not adequately measure what a candidate knows or can do."¹⁶

Philadelphia does not conduct any ongoing review of the exams that might determine their efficacy in identifying quality candidates or any built-in biases that weigh against any groups of applicants.¹⁷ Phoenix uses statistical tools to gauge the effectiveness of its hiring processes by measuring which methods predict what it considers to be "good employees," based on how long new hires remain with the city and other factors. As a result, the city has expanded its use of structured interviews while de-emphasizing other types of testing. In Austin, the human resources department's in-house consultants work with department staff to evaluate each step of the hiring process and make improvements as needed. No similar analysis connecting exam scores to future job performance has been conducted in Philadelphia.¹⁸

The way the tests are administered may also limit the pool of applicants. In Philadelphia, applicants must take a particular exam at an assigned time and place.¹⁹ New York gives applicants more options regarding the location, date, and time to take exams.

Rule of Two

The Rule of Two, which is included in the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, limits hiring managers to the two top-scoring candidates for each civil service vacancy. Meant to place the emphasis on merit selection, the rule gives hiring managers little discretion in assembling their teams. A number of cities, including New York, Chicago, and Boston, have Rules of Three. Others allow managers to consider a wider range of candidates. In Los Angeles, anyone who records one of the three highest scores is eligible; in Phoenix, Dallas, Indianapolis, and a number of other cities, all candidates with passing scores on the exam can be considered. (See Table 4.)

In Philadelphia, many city officials said that the rule, by drawing hard-and-fast distinctions between candidates of roughly equal qualifications, can undermine a manager’s ability to hire a diverse and talented workforce. Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown has said of the rule: “No major company would interview only two people for a job based on how they scored on a test; that is an old way of thinking,” adding that there are “a host of other critical thinking skills and abilities that just don’t shine through on the civil service exam.”²⁰ Said Jessica Shapiro of the Department of Human Services: “Limiting the selection to one of two people decreases the ability of the city to select from a diverse and wide range of skill sets.”

A hiring manager unhappy with the two candidates has limited options. One is to seek to remove one or both of the candidates from the eligibility list—something that can happen if the candidates can be shown, for instance, to have been deceptive about their qualifications or if they have previously had disciplinary action taken against them for inefficiency, delinquency, or misconduct.²¹ Another option is to wait to see if another department hires one of the candidates, thereby making a third person eligible—or to wait for up to two years for the list to expire. The police and fire departments admit candidates from the eligibility list without interviews because recruits must complete training at the academies to be eligible for full employment.

Celia O’Leary, a deputy director of human resources, said that her department “suggests that changes could be considered to the Rule of Two during every mayoral administration; for example, we could explore a Rule of Three or a Rule of Five.” Interviews with union leaders indicated that they did not think the Rule of Two should be changed.

Table 4
Regulations on the Number of Candidates Considered per Job Vacancy in Philadelphia and Other Cities

Rule of Two	Philadelphia
Rule of Three	Boston; Chicago; Denver;* Detroit; Houston; Jacksonville, FL; New York; San Diego; San Francisco
All candidates earning the top three scores	Los Angeles
All passing scores	Austin, TX; Charlotte, NC; Dallas; El Paso, TX; Fort Worth, TX; Indianapolis; Las Vegas; Louisville, KY; Memphis, TN; Nashville, TN; Oklahoma City; Phoenix; Portland, OR; San Antonio;† San Jose, CA; Seattle
All scores in a given range	Columbus, OH;‡ Washington
Rule of Five	Baltimore

* In Denver, three is the minimum number of candidates who can be considered for a vacancy, not the maximum.

† In San Antonio, there is no floor or ceiling on the number of candidates who can be considered, but the human resources department recommends that hiring managers consider at least three for each vacancy.

‡ If there are at least five eligible applicants, only those in the highest band will be placed on the eligibility list in Columbus.

Hiring managers in San Francisco, one of the cities with a Rule of Three, said that the rule, in some cases, has limited their ability to hire qualified workers by not always giving managers access to the best candidates. And if managers want to hire someone with scores below those of the top three candidates, it can add more time to an already time-consuming process. In recent years, two smaller cities, New Orleans and Minneapolis, have abolished the Rule of Three in favor of processes that provide more managerial input.²²

Although many cities reviewed for this report have not pressed for changes to these rules in recent years, the city of Detroit updated its civil service regulations in the fall of 2017, moving from a Rule of One to a Rule of Three.²³ The move, which did not require a change in the city charter, was approved by the Civil Service Commission and city council. The city's chief recruitment officer, Daryl Conrad, traced the change to Detroit's 2013 municipal bankruptcy, which, he said, led to the arrival of "new talent" who challenged the status quo.²⁴ In the end, he said, the rationale for the new policy had to do with improving the selection process. "It's absolutely critical we select the best candidates because municipalities are underfunded and have challenges competing with the private sector," Conrad said. "When we make a selection, we have to live with it; we have the employee for 30 years."

Nashville has a very different approach to hiring than does Philadelphia. There are no exams, except for police and fire; instead, all applicants for open competitive vacancies are rated based on training and experience. Applicants with ratings in the highest range are ranked "outstanding"; those in the next lower band are considered "well-qualified"; and those in the lowest passing groups are considered "qualified."

Hiring managers are free to interview any applicant from the "outstanding" group and must interview those who are veterans or are already working in civil service. A hiring manager may select a candidate from the other bands if he or she feels the candidates in the higher category are not a good fit for the position.²⁵ This option is rarely used.

Because applicants within bands are not assigned numerical rankings, hiring managers can use their discretion to select a candidate with a technical skill the office needs or to take other factors such as diversity into account.

Timing

The amount of time it takes to hire new employees in Philadelphia makes it difficult to land the most talented applicants, officials say. From 2013 through 2015,²⁶ the median period between a job candidate's submission of an application and the day he or she was selected for a position in the same classification was 360 days. The life span of the eligibility list and the Rule of Two contribute to the wait. Applicants are interviewed in the order in which they appear on the list, and only two candidates are considered for each position at any one time. Depending on the number of open positions, the process can move slowly, and a candidate can sit on an eligibility list for up to two years. Pew was unable to obtain comparable numbers from other cities.

Some other cities monitor how long it takes for a hiring manager to fill a specific position after it becomes available, which is a different measure.²⁷ In San Francisco, the median length of time was 120 days, one of the longer times among the cities that keep track.²⁸ In September 2017, San Francisco started what it labeled the Hiring Modernization Process. The goals include identifying bottlenecks, such as those resulting from information systems that do not work together and wait times that stem from civil service regulations or interactions between departments.

To some degree, the wait times in the hiring process reflect the desire by city governments to be accountable to their job applicants (most of whom are taxpayers) and to avoid potential lawsuits by giving applicants substantial time to respond to outreach from the city at various stages of the process. The decentralization of human resources functions in Philadelphia can add to the time it takes to post an open position. And from the perspective of a city department, the time to hire a candidate starts before the job is posted. City officials often put in several months of work, including identifying whether a new test is needed or an existing eligibility list can be used.

The exams themselves can be a source of delay. Fire Commissioner Thiel recalled meeting someone he described as “a well-prepared guy” who asked to submit his resume. “I had to tell him it’d be 18 months before he could possibly take an exam,” Thiel said. “He’ll be on to something else by then.”

All of this can be particularly problematic for recent college graduates thinking about working in city government. Donald F. Kettl, professor and former dean of the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, said, “People are graduating from college with more debt, and they need to get to work more quickly. The ability of people to wait out a civil service job offer is less because the press of loans means they can’t afford to wait.”

Promotions

City employees become eligible for promotional opportunities at different points in their employment based on seniority, enhanced educational attainment, or new licenses or certifications. And promotions are determined largely by exam results. There are two types of promotions: citywide and departmental. Citywide promotional positions are open to individuals in any department who meet the minimum qualifications to apply. Departmental promotions are available only to individuals currently working in the department.

The Home Rule Charter states that “vacancies shall be filled by promotion whenever possible.”²⁹ This has been interpreted to mean that only current city employees may be considered for most civil service positions above entry level, unless all options have been exhausted. For example, most midlevel positions can be opened to the public only if the internal candidate pool is unqualified or too small.³⁰ This limits the options of hiring managers—sometimes to candidates who have previously been passed over. The unions strongly support limiting eligibility for these jobs to current civil service employees.

The result, Kettl said, is that “the city doesn’t have the opportunity to have managers with vision or knowledge of what is out there; mid- and upper managers [in city government] are those who were [initially] hired 15 or 20 years ago. They don’t reflect the current population, and they might not have the skills necessary to manage technological or generational change.”

Many cities have similar rules in their charters or codes.³¹ An exception is Phoenix, which fills vacancies at all management levels without regard for whether the candidate is a current civil service employee.³²

The promotion process is designed to be straightforward and accessible. But the Office of Human Resources does not provide information or suggestions about study materials for nonuniformed positions. Staff members must rely on support from one another, potentially disadvantaging those who do not receive such support.

Fred Wright, president of District Council 47, the union representing white-collar city workers, said the system is working as it should. “If people are on the eligibility list, they are qualified,” he said. If there is a lack of qualified candidates, Wright said, it is only because the city does not offer its employees adequate opportunities for professional development. “This is a training issue,” he added.

In most cases, performance ratings are a factor in determining eligibility for promotion. But because less than 1 percent of employees receive unsatisfactory, unacceptable, or improvement-needed ratings, the system screens out few people, making it of little value to hiring managers, according to former Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Jackie Linton.

Reporting authority

All 30 cities studied in this report attempt to insulate municipal hiring from politics through an independent civil service commission. A key distinction, however, is to whom a city’s human resources director reports.

In the vast majority of the 30 cities, the director is appointed by and reports to the mayor, a member of the mayor’s staff, or the city manager. In Philadelphia—as well as in San Diego, Fort Worth, Denver, and Nashville—the director is hired by and accountable to the civil service commission or career services board, not the mayor. (See Table 5.) And in the case of Philadelphia, the three members of the commission, though appointed by the mayor, serve staggered six-year terms, meaning a mayor might have to be well into a second four-year term before his or her appointees control the body.

Philadelphia has a chief administrative officer reporting to the mayor and a director of human resources reporting to the Civil Service Commission, a structure that makes it difficult for the mayoral administration to make significant changes in the city’s human resources practices. Dallas also has two human resources executives—one reporting to the city manager, the other to the civil service board; it is in the process of streamlining that system.³³

Table 5

Who Has Authority to Appoint the Human Resources Director in the 30 Most Populous Cities

Human Resources Director Appointing Authority	
Mayor or mayor’s staff	Boston; Columbus, OH; Detroit; Indianapolis; Louisville, KY; New York; Portland, OR; Washington
City manager	Austin, TX; Charlotte, NC; Dallas;† El Paso, TX; Las Vegas; Oklahoma City; Phoenix; San Jose, CA
Mayor, with city council approval	Baltimore; Chicago; Houston; Jacksonville, FL; Los Angeles;† Memphis, TN; San Antonio; San Francisco; Seattle
Civil service commission	Dallas;† Denver; Fort Worth, TX; Nashville, TN; Philadelphia; San Diego

* Dallas has two human resources executives. One reports to the city manager, the other to the civil service commission.

† Los Angeles has a general manager who oversees personnel, rather than a human resources director.

How Rules Are Set

In Philadelphia, hiring and promotion rules are governed by three sets of documents.

Civil service regulations are the purview of the Civil Service Commission; changing those regulations requires a vote of the commission, which must then be confirmed by the administrative board. Leaders of the city's four main labor unions monitor the regulation changes, regularly attending monthly Civil Service Commission meetings.

A few key provisions, such as the Rule of Two and the preference of internal candidates for promotions, are written into the Home Rule Charter. Generally, amendments to the charter must be approved by the city council and then by voters.

Other elements, such as the residential waivers for police and firefighters, are in contracts negotiated between the city and its unions—and can be changed only through negotiations. While most cities reviewed have civil service regulations and city charters, Philadelphia and a number of other cities in the Northeast, Midwest, and California have higher rates of nonuniformed civil service unionization than does the rest of the country.

Composition of the workforce

The remainder of this report focuses on the composition of the workforce that Philadelphia's existing hiring system has produced. It analyzes city employees in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, salary, and age—and compares those results with those of other cities.

The demographic makeup of the workforce has become a key concern for city officials. Upon taking office in 2016, Mayor Jim Kenney established the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, charging it to “build a more inclusive city workforce related to race, ethnicity, disability, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation.” The office is overseen by Nolan Atkinson, the chief diversity and inclusion officer. Other cities with diversity offices include Boston, Columbus, Pittsburgh, and San Antonio.

Pew's analysis found that the city government's workforce is representative of its overall population in some ways but not in others. It also found that the makeup of recent hires and the applicant pool suggest that significant change is not likely to come quickly.

About the Data Used in This Report

Data used in this report come from two sources. One is Philadelphia's Office of Human Resources, which provided demographic characteristics, job categories and functions, and salary information for anyone who worked for the city over the entire period from January 2010 to April 2016 or was hired during that period and was still on the payroll in 2016. The data do not include information for employees who stopped working for the city during that period, making it impossible to draw conclusions about the nature of the people who left. The department also provided the demographic characteristics of the people who submitted 424,586 job applications from August 2010 to July 2016.

Data on comparison cities come from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's EEO-4 survey. The survey, performed in odd-numbered years, asks about employment totals, job categories, and salary by sex and race/ethnicity. Data used in this report come from 2011 and 2015.

Race and ethnicity

Current employees

Relative to the overall population of Philadelphia, the city's municipal workforce has higher percentages of employees who are white or black and lower proportions of employees who are Latino or Asian.

As shown in Figure 2, 41 percent of Philadelphians are black. Among all city workers from 2010 to 2016, 48 percent were black, including 51 percent of civil service employees and 37 percent of exempt workers.

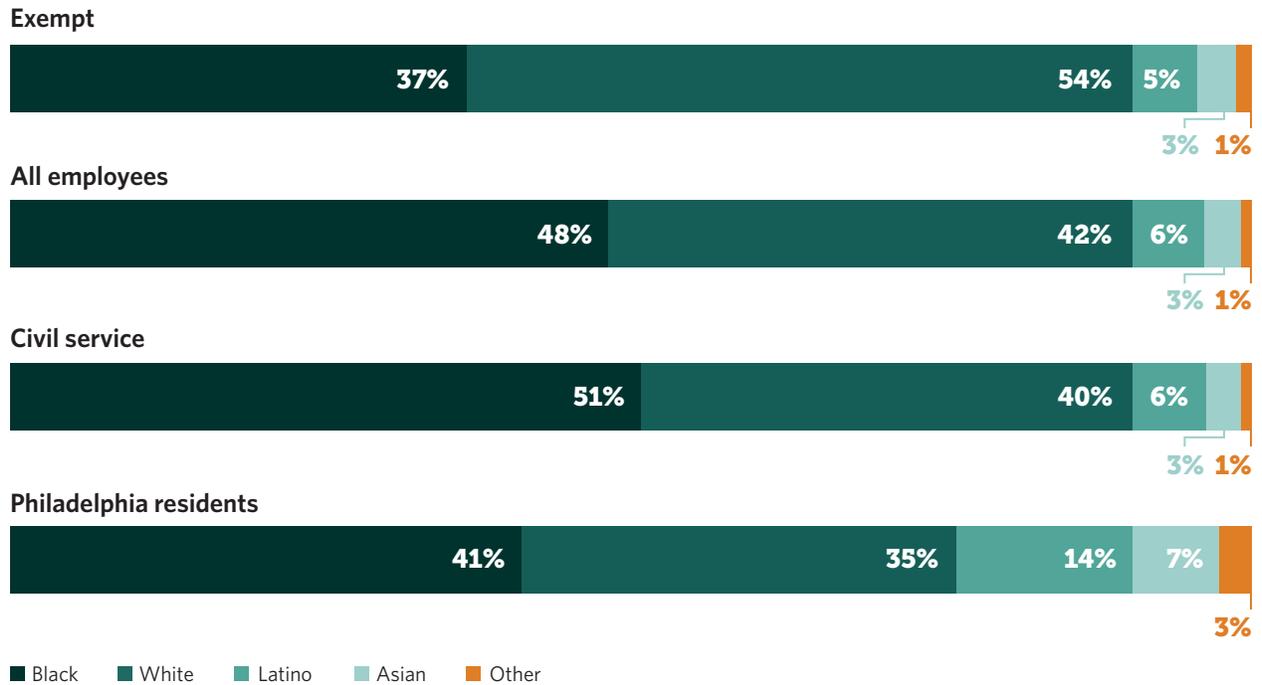
Thirty-five percent of all Philadelphians are non-Hispanic whites. This group accounted for 42 percent of all city employees, including 40 percent of civil service workers and 54 percent of the exempts.

Latinos, who make up 14 percent of the city's population, held 6 percent of all city jobs, including 6 percent of civil service posts and 5 percent of exempt positions.

Asians, with 7 percent of the city's population, held only 3 percent of city jobs, both civil service and exempt.

Figure 2

Philadelphia’s Municipal Workforce by Race and Employment Type Compared with all city residents



Sources: Pew analysis of city of Philadelphia data; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimate, 2016
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In the past several years, the racial and ethnic composition of the city’s workforce has remained relatively unchanged. Of the 8,335 people hired for full-time, part-time, and seasonal positions from January 2010 to April 2016, 46 percent were black, 42 percent white, 6 percent Latino, and 5 percent Asian—proportions similar to the workforce as a whole.

Applicants

The applicant pool does not track the overall population, either. (See Figure 3.) Between August 2010 and July 2016, nearly two-thirds of the applicants who provided information about race—which less than half of all applicants did—identified as black, with small percentages identifying as Latino or Asian.

Figure 3
Racial Composition of Municipal Job Applicants
 August 2010 to July 2016



Source: Pew analysis of city of Philadelphia data
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Geographically, the largest number of applications came from parts of North Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, and the lower Northeast. (See Figure C.1 in Appendix C.)

How the makeup of Philadelphia’s city workforce compares with those of other cities

Philadelphia was not alone in having a workforce that varied from its overall population in racial and ethnic terms. Pew analyzed data from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for the 15 most populous cities and found that nearly all had higher percentages of white employees than residents. The largest difference was 23 percentage points in San Jose; in Philadelphia, it was 8 percentage points. (See Table 6.) Dallas did not provide data, so it is not represented in the analysis, and Phoenix provided only 2015 data and was therefore not eligible for comparisons over time.

In most of the cities studied, including Philadelphia, the percentage of black employees was higher than the percentage of black residents. In all of the cities analyzed, except San Francisco, there was a lower percentage of Latinos in the municipal workforce than in the overall population. Nearly all cities, Philadelphia included, had a lower percentage of Asians employed by the city than in the population as a whole. Only Los Angeles and San Francisco had a significantly higher percentage of Asian municipal employees than residents. (See Table 6.)



Job seekers attend Philadelphia’s municipal career fair at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in August 2017.

Table 6

Difference in the Racial/Ethnic Percentages of Municipal Employees and Residents

In 13 of the 15 most populous cities

City	White	Black	Latino	Asian
Austin, TX	8%	7%	-7%	-4%
Chicago	16%	-1%	-10%	-3%
Houston	9%	14%	-21%	-1%
Indianapolis	10%	2%	-7%	-2%
Jacksonville, FL	9%	1%	-5%	-2%
Los Angeles	3%	9%	-14%	5%
New York	7%	12%	-10%	-6%
Philadelphia	8%	7%	-8%	-4%
Phoenix	16%	1%	-12%	0%
San Antonio	6%	-1%	-3%	-2%
San Diego	6%	7%	-4%	-3%
San Francisco	-11%	11%	0%	5%
San Jose, CA	23%	1%	-5%	-15%

Positive numbers indicate the existence of a higher percentage of the group in the overall population than in city government. Negative numbers indicate the opposite.

Source: Pew analysis of EEOC data

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Departments

According to the city's human resources data, Philadelphia city departments varied considerably in terms of racial and ethnic composition. Departments that were at least 70 percent white included the offices of transportation, sustainability, and labor relations; the planning commission; the historical commission; the city representative's office; and the district attorney's office. Most of these are small departments; only the district attorney's office has more than 40 full-time employees. Black employees made up at least 70 percent of employees in the offices of supportive housing and community empowerment and the prisons, streets, revenue, and human services departments.

Job functions and job categories

Among the cities studied in this report, race and ethnicity varied in both the departments in which city employees worked, labeled "functions" by the EEOC, and the type of work they performed, called "job categories." Looking

at the data from either perspective, some races and ethnicities were more concentrated in some groups than in others. This was largely true for all of the cities studied and over time.

In the functions data, Philadelphia, like all of the cities studied, had a higher percentage of whites in police and fire than in the city’s workforce overall. Philadelphia had the biggest gap, 15 percentage points, between the percentage of employees working in the police function who were white and the percentage of all workers who were white. Black workers were employed in higher proportions in public welfare and corrections in Philadelphia and all other cities performing those functions, except San Francisco.³⁴ Most cities studied, including Philadelphia, had lower percentages of Asian workers in the fire function than overall.

In job category data, black employees accounted for 81 percent of all service and maintenance workers in Philadelphia and only 32 percent of officials and administrators. While many other cities had lower percentages of black officials and administrators than black municipal workers overall, in no other city was the gap larger. Officials and administrators include employees who set and implement policies, such as commissioners, deputy mayors, directors, and managers. In Philadelphia, it is the job category with the highest median salary.³⁵

As was the case in Philadelphia, most of the other cities had relatively high percentages of white employees in two categories: technicians, and officials and administrators. All of the cities had relatively high percentages of white workers in protective services. All also had fewer white employees working in the administrative support category, which includes clerks, assistants, and cashiers.

Salaries

In Philadelphia, the median salary for all full-time city employees between 2010 and 2015 was \$53,354.³⁶ The median salary, not including overtime pay, for full-time staff was slightly higher for civil service than exempt staff. But the salary distributions of each group differed. Eighty-four percent of civil service employees earned between \$30,000 and \$75,000 annually, compared with 68 percent of exempt staff. And while only 3 percent of civil service staff were paid \$100,000 or more, 18 percent of the exempts were. Whites were paid substantially more than members of other racial and ethnic groups. (See Table 7.)

Table 7
Median Salary of City of Philadelphia Full-Time Employees by Race

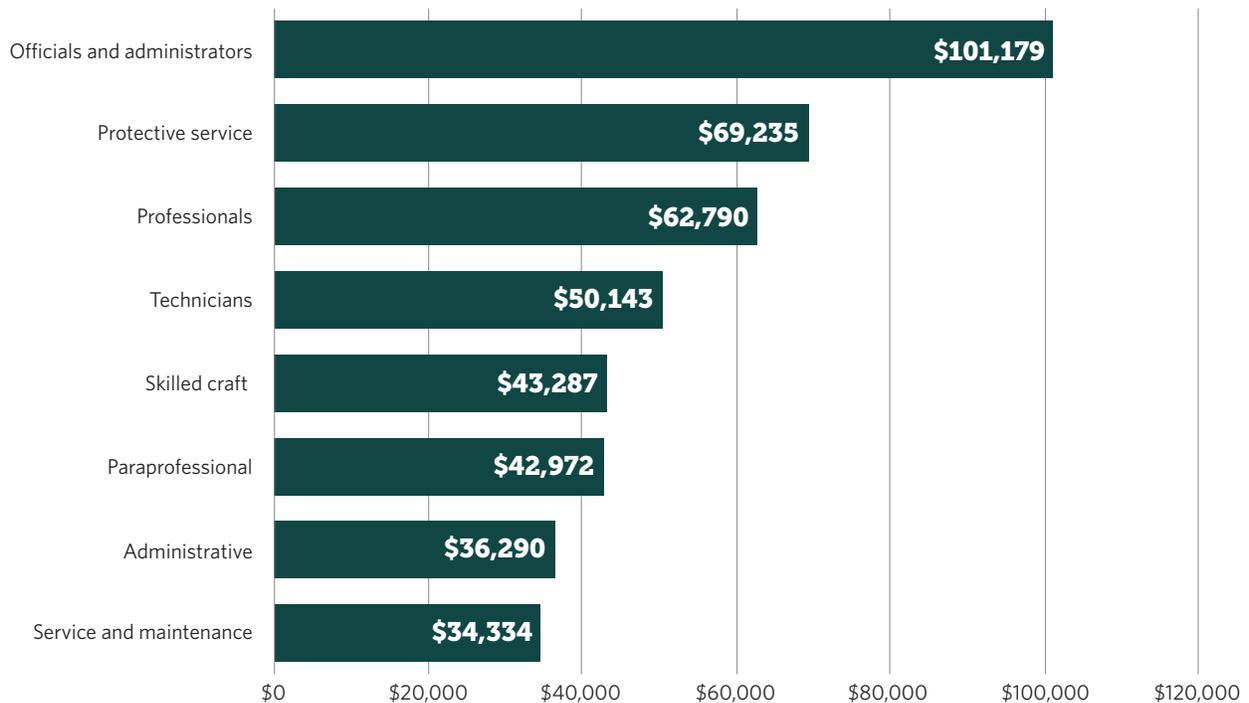
	All staff	Civil service	Exempt
Black	\$45,821	\$45,821	\$47,483
White	\$65,366	\$69,190	\$52,320
Latino	\$55,907	\$59,898	\$46,575
Asian	\$51,856	\$51,245	\$55,964
All	\$53,354	\$54,724	\$50,553

Source: Pew analysis of city of Philadelphia data

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Much of the salary variation shown in Table 7 is attributable to the concentration of some racial and ethnic groups in job categories that generally have higher or lower rates of pay. Employees working as officials and administrators had the highest median salary, \$101,179, while service and maintenance workers had the lowest, \$34,334. According to the city’s human resources data, 60 percent of individuals working as officials and administrators were white, while 80 percent of those working in service and maintenance were black. (See Figure 4.) These salary figures represent total base salary and longevity compensation but exclude overtime pay.

Figure 4
Median Salary of City of Philadelphia Full-Time Employees by Job Category



Source: Pew analysis of city of Philadelphia data
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While differences in job categories explain some of the pay differences, they do not explain all of them. For instance, median salaries for Asian protective service employees were \$22,751 lower than the median salaries for all employees in this category, and the median for black protective service employees was \$12,009 lower. This difference is largely due to higher concentrations of Asians and blacks in corrections, where salaries tend to be lower than in the police and fire departments, where whites are more numerous. To see how salaries vary in Philadelphia by job category and by race, see Figure C.2 in Appendix C.

In all of the cities studied, white employees were more numerous among workers earning \$70,000 or more than in the overall workforce. In Philadelphia, white workers made up 43 percent of the full-time municipal workforce and 65 percent of top earners; the gap between those two percentages was larger than in any other city.³⁷ In all cities except San Jose and San Antonio, there were lower percentages of blacks in the \$70,000-plus salary bracket than among black city workers overall.³⁸ In Philadelphia, blacks represented 48 percent of all full-time

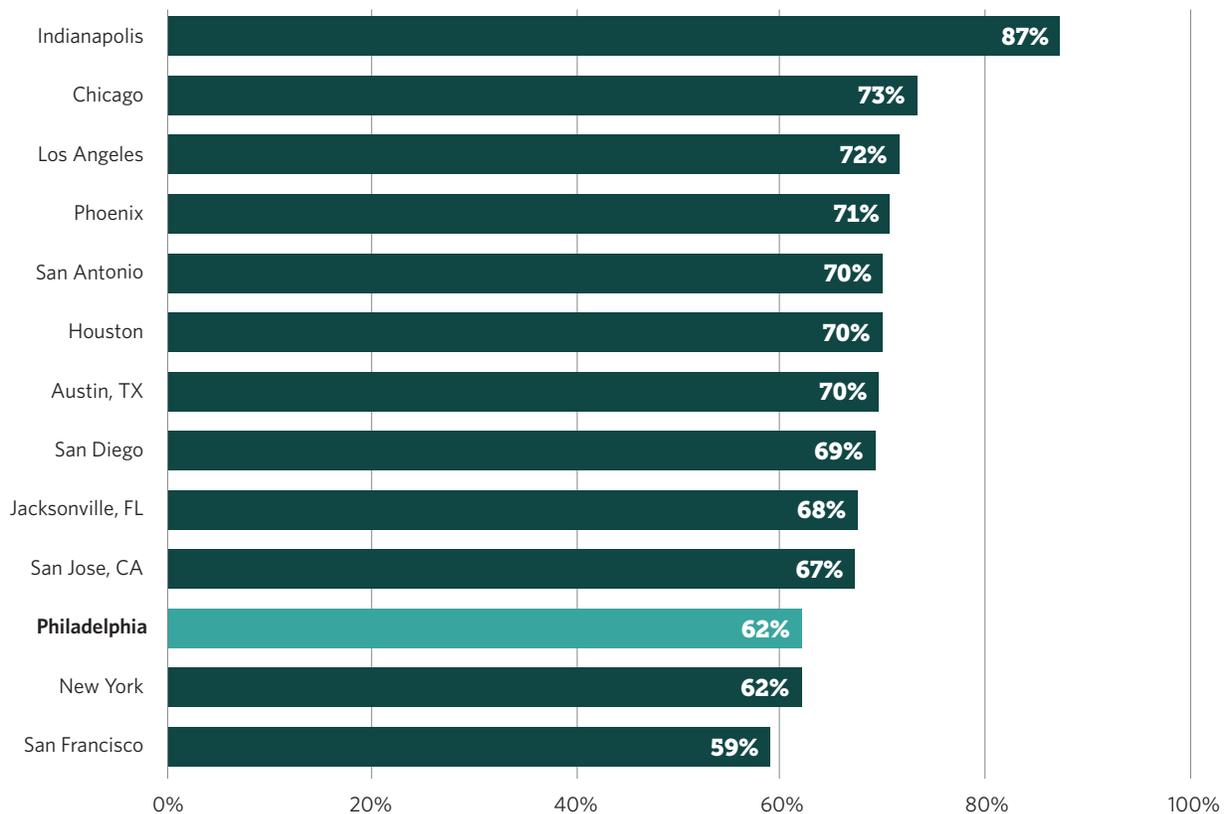
workers and 28 percent of the high earners; in none of the cities studied was the gap larger. (See Figures C.3 and C.4 in Appendix C.)

Gender

According to the EEOC data, Philadelphia's municipal workforce was 62 percent male and 38 percent female in 2015; all cities studied employed more men than women. This is largely due to the high percentage of men in police and fire protection. Those functions account for the largest total number of employees in each city.

As shown in Figure 5, Philadelphia, New York, San Francisco, and Jacksonville have lower percentages of men in their workforces than in other cities. One reason for this is that those places function as both cities and counties, which makes them responsible for public welfare, health, and corrections functions that some other cities do not perform. Philadelphia, New York, and San Francisco have large and predominantly female staffs in public welfare and health.

Figure 5
Percentage of Male Employees in the Municipal Workforce, 2015
In 13 of the 15 most populous cities



Note: Percentages are for employees earning \$25,000 or more annually.

Source: Pew analysis of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission EEO-4 survey data

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Salary

In Philadelphia, the median full-time salary for men was higher than it was for women. This was the case for both civil service and exempt employees, with the pay gap larger for civil service employees. Men's median civil service salary was \$58,144; women's was \$46,263. (See Table 8.)

Table 8
Median Salary of City of Philadelphia Full-Time Employees by Gender

	Male	Female
Civil service	\$58,144	\$46,263
Exempt	\$52,114	\$48,083
All employees	\$56,206	\$46,841

Source: Pew analysis of city of Philadelphia data

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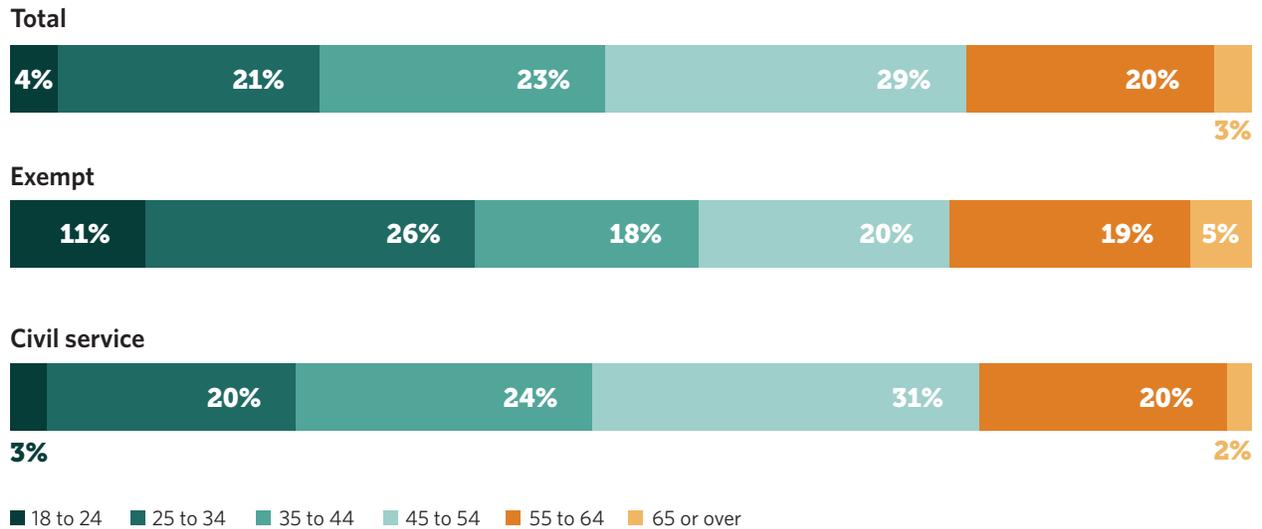
In all cities reviewed, a higher percentage of men were in the highest salary category—those making \$70,000 a year or more. In Philadelphia, 72 percent of workers earning more than \$70,000 annually were men. In Indianapolis, 97 percent of city workers in the top pay bracket were men, compared with 62 percent in San Francisco. (See Table C.1 in Appendix C.)

In Philadelphia, salary differences among men and women in civil service were largely attributable to the different type of work that men and women performed. Philadelphia, like all cities studied, had a higher percentage of male employees working in protective services than in the city workforce overall. The median salary for protective service workers in Philadelphia was second highest among all job categories, trailing only officials and administrators.

Age

Twenty-three percent of Philadelphia's workforce was age 55 or over, and 29 percent was between the ages of 45 and 54. (See Figure 6.) Generally, civil service employees were slightly older than exempt employees. The median age for civil service employees was 45; for exempt employees, it was 41. There were no available data to compare the ages of Philadelphia city employees with the ages of municipal workers in the other cities, nor to see how the age makeup of city workers has changed in recent years.

Figure 6
Age Composition of City of Philadelphia Employees



Source: Pew analysis of city of Philadelphia data

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According to Philadelphia’s Office of Human Resources, three-quarters of the city’s workforce will be eligible for retirement in the next 15 years. Pew’s analysis shows that some job categories and functions have a high percentage of older workers and others do not.

Overall, 21 percent of full-time employees making more than \$10,000 a year were age 55 or older.³⁹ For employees working as officials and administrators—high-level positions often requiring substantial work experience—it was 38 percent. For skilled craft workers, including bridge maintenance workers and electricians, it was 37 percent. There are fewer older workers in the protective services, just 12 percent. The category includes police and fire employees who are eligible for retirement at age 50.⁴⁰ (See Figure 7.)

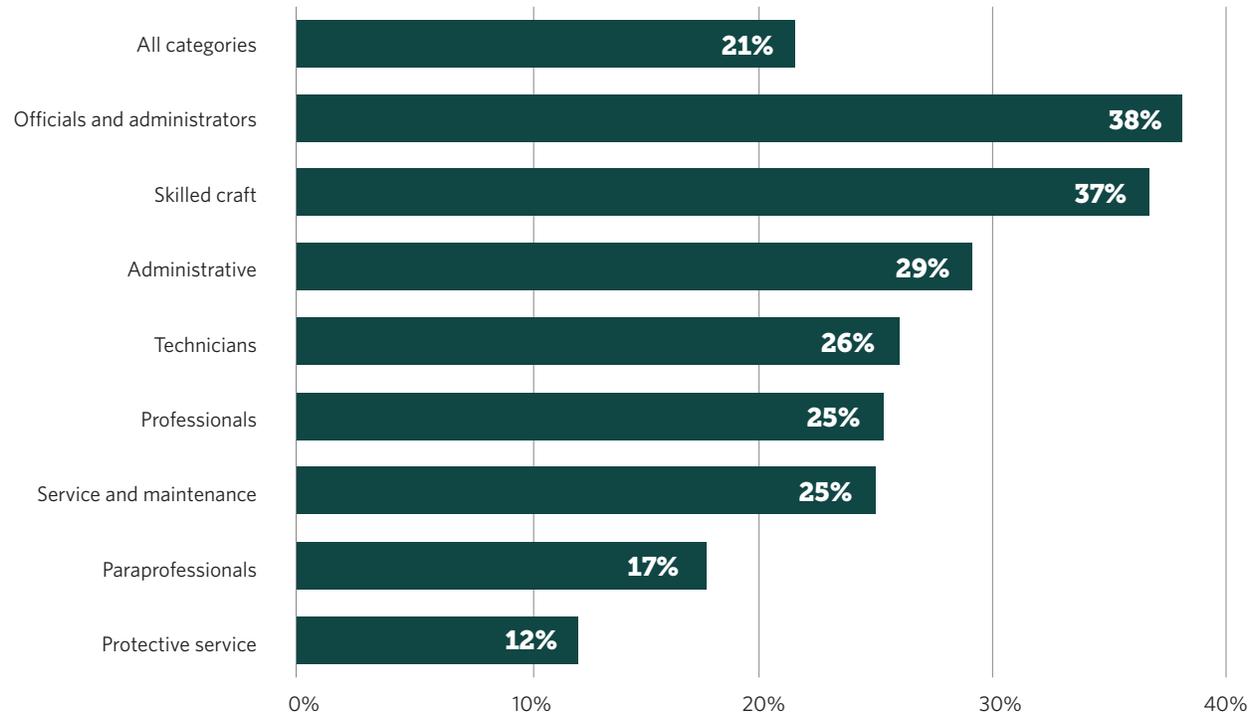


Alex Subers/The Pew Charitable Trusts

A representative of the Free Library of Philadelphia talks with attendees at the city’s municipal job fair in August 2017.

Figure 7

Percentage of Employees Age 55 or Older by Job Category Full-time employees



Source: Pew analysis of city of Philadelphia data

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Looking at the percentage of older workers in Philadelphia by job function also shows variation. More than 30 percent of employees in housing, streets and highways, and other functions were age 55 or over. Corrections, police, and fire protection had the lowest percentages of older workers. In all three cases, individuals age 55 or older accounted for 16 percent or less of their job function. (See Figure C.5 in Appendix C.)

The city's concerns about losing talent to retirement are not new. In 1999, the city introduced the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) as a way to entice employees to continue working after they are eligible to retire (age 50 for police and fire employees, age 60 for municipal employees, and age 55 for elected officials). The idea was to help retain valuable workers. A recent study by the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority (PICA) concluded that the DROP program has increased the retirement age substantially among uniformed workers, raising it by 5.9 years and for police by 4.8 years, on average. For other workers, DROP increased the retirement age by only two months.⁴¹

Conclusion

The municipal workforce in Philadelphia is governed largely by policies that took effect in 1952, a different time with different priorities. Hiring through the city's civil service system—which governs 81 percent of all city positions—is often characterized by inflexibility and delay, complicating efforts to build a more talented and inclusive workforce with a variety of skill sets and age groups. Other cities have systems in place designed to give managers more discretion while seeking to maintain the notion of merit-based hiring that is essential to civil service.

Philadelphia's municipal workers are representative of the city they serve in some ways but not in others. As a group, they include higher percentages of blacks and whites than the population as a whole and lower percentages of the Latino and Asian communities. There are significant salary differences by race, ethnicity, and gender, linked to the types of jobs in which members of various groups are more numerous. Similar trends exist in other large cities to a greater or lesser extent.

The challenge for Philadelphia is to figure out how best to compete for the hardworking, committed, and talented individuals its workforce will need in the years ahead.

Appendix A

Glossary

Administrative board: The administrative board consists of the mayor, managing director, and finance director. It reviews all changes to job class specifications and rules approved by the Civil Service Commission. The administrative board provides final approval for new or revised civil service regulations.

Civil Service Commission: The commission has three members appointed by the mayor to staggered six-year terms. It advises the mayor and the city's personnel director on hiring, promotions, probation, and dismissal matters and oversees appeals of civil service employees regarding dismissal, demotion, or suspension. The commission appoints the personnel director and approves all changes to job class specifications.

Civil service employees: Eighty-one percent of city employees are hired through the civil service system. These employees are generally represented by a union, which negotiates collectively on their behalf, and they have more employment protections than do exempt or nonrepresented employees.

Departmental hiring managers: These are members of the human resources staff who are assigned to city departments and report to the departmental commissioners. They perform hiring services and human resources functions for their department.

Eligibility list: This is the final ranking of job applicants, based on scores on civil service exams plus bonus points for military or other experience and skills. The lists are designed to fill vacancies by job class specification; as a result, lists can often be used by multiple departments. Lists expire after two years.

Exempt employees: Nineteen percent of city employees are considered "exempt," meaning they are not hired through the civil service system, are not in unions, and can be dismissed for any reason.

Job class specifications: The official job descriptions for civil service positions include information such as title, duties, qualifications, and pay range.

Nonrepresented employees: Approximately 1,000 city employees are hired through the civil service system but are not represented by any public sector union.

Office of Human Resources: This office implements new job specifications, classifications, and tests for new or promotional hires; strategizes with departments to identify staffing requirements; and administers employee benefits.

Personnel director: The director oversees the Office of Human Resources and directs the hiring and testing of all city employees in the civil service system.

Rule of Two: This Philadelphia regulation stipulates that in filling a vacancy, the city's hiring managers can consider only the two candidates who ranked highest on the eligibility list. Other cities have different regulations.

Union representatives: Most city employees hired through civil service belong to labor unions. Representatives of those unions monitor the work of the Civil Service Commission. They lodge concerns, complaints, or support for changes in civil service regulations and assist civil service employees who are appealing dismissals, suspensions, or other changes of employment status. The four major unions for city workers are the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 5; the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 22; the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) District Council 33, representing blue-collar workers; and AFSCME District Council 47, representing white-collar workers.

Appendix B

Table B.1

Additional Points Applied to Open Competitive and Promotional Exams for Nonuniformed Positions

Reason points are awarded	Applicability	Number of points
For soldiers, widows and widowers of soldiers, and spouses of disabled soldiers	Open competitive positions	10
For children and grandchildren of Philadelphia firefighters or police officers who died in the line of duty	Open competitive positions	10
For Peace Corps service—2 years	Open competitive positions	5
For AmeriCorps service—1 year or 1,700 hours	Open competitive positions	5
For AmeriCorps service—900 hours	Open competitive positions	3
For AmeriCorps service—675 hours	Open competitive positions	2
For AmeriCorps service—450 hours	Open competitive positions	1
For fluency in a language other than English	Open competitive positions with a bilingual specialty, selective factor certifications of fluency, other open competitive positions determined by the director of human resources	3
For any of the automotive service excellence (ASE) master-level certifications issued by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence or emergency vehicle technician (EVT) master-level certifications issued by the Emergency Vehicle Technician Certification Commission	Promotional exams for fleet maintenance supervisor, assistant fleet manager for operations, and fleet management quality assurance director	Up to 2 points
For completion of a structured internship that has been certified by the Department of Human Services	Open competitive social work services trainee or social work services manager 1	3

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Table B.2

Additional Points Assigned for Police Exams in Philadelphia

Reason points are awarded	Applicability	Number of points
For completion of Philadelphia Police Explorer Cadet Program	Police officer recruit and police officer 1 open competitive exams only	3
For associate degree or 60 college credits	Police officer recruit and police officer 1 open competitive exams only	1
For bachelor's degree	Police officer recruit and police officer 1 open competitive exams only	2
For master's degree	Police officer recruit and police officer 1 open competitive exams only	3
For fluency in another language	Police officer recruit and police officer 1 open competitive exams only	3
For associate degree or 60 college credits	Police promotional exams	0.5
For bachelor's degree	Police promotional exams	1
For master's degree	Police promotional exams	1.5

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Table B.3

Additional Points Assigned for Fire Exams in Philadelphia

Reason points are awarded	Applicability	Number of points
For fire service paramedics and emergency medical technicians with five or more years' experience with the city of Philadelphia	Firefighter open competitive class only	10
For certification as firefighter 1 by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	Firefighter open competitive class only	2
For certification as emergency medical technician by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	Firefighter open competitive class only	2
For certification as firefighter 1 by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	Emergency medical technician	3
For certification as emergency medical technician by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	Emergency medical technician	3
For completion of Fire Explorers cadet program	Firefighter open competitive class only	3
For completion of Philadelphia High School Fire & EMS Training curriculum	Firefighter open competitive class only	3
For completion of associate degree in fire science from an accredited college or university	Firefighter open competitive class only	3
For overall performance ratings of superior or outstanding	Promotional exams for District 47 and nonrepresented employees	1.5 to 3
For associate degree	Fire lieutenant, fire captain, fireboat engineer, fireboat pilot, fire paramedic lieutenant, fire paramedic captain, fire service paramedic exposure control officer, fire paramedic services chief, and fire paramedic deputy chief	0.5
For bachelor's degree	Fire lieutenant, fire captain, fireboat engineer, fireboat pilot, fire paramedic lieutenant, fire paramedic captain, and fire service paramedic exposure control officer	1
For master's degree	Fire lieutenant, fire captain, fireboat engineer, and fireboat pilot	1.5
For associate degree	Fire battalion chief, fire deputy chief, and fire special operations deputy chief	0.5
For bachelor's or master's degree	Fire battalion chief, fire deputy chief, fire special operations deputy chief, fire paramedic services chief, and fire paramedic deputy chief	1
For master's degree	Fire paramedic lieutenant, fire paramedic captain, and fire service paramedic exposure control officer	1.5

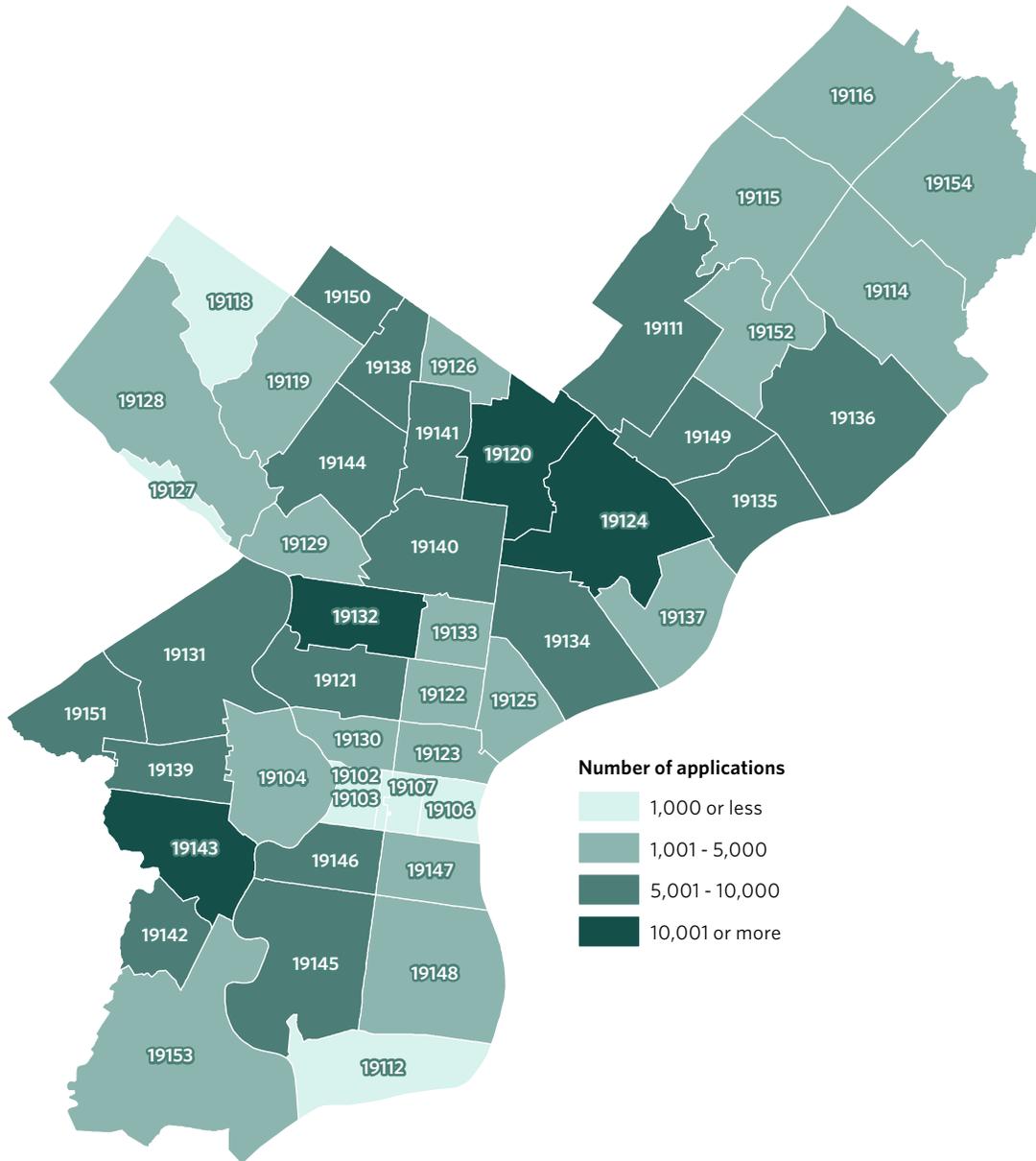
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Table B.4
 City of Philadelphia Unions

AFSCME District Council 33	Local 159 (Department of Human Services, Juvenile Justice Services Center, Office of Supportive Housing, Corrections)
	Local 222 (Parks & Recreation)
	Local 394 (Water)
	Local 403 (Streets—Highway Division)
	Local 427 (Streets—Sanitation Division)
	Local 488 (Health)
	Local 696 (Library, Finance, Office of Information Technology, Managing Director’s Office, Licenses & Inspections, Records, Revenue, Procurement, Law, City Planning, City Commissioners, Board of Pensions, Human Relations Commission, Board of Revision of Taxes)
	Local 1510 (Commerce, Airport)
	Local 1637 (Police, Fire, Public Property)
	Local 1927 (Fleet Management)
	Local 1956 (School Crossing Guards)
	Local 1971 (Office of Housing and Community Development, Philadelphia Housing Development Corp., Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority)
AFSCME District Council 47	Local 2187 (rank and file)
	Local 2186 (supervisory)
	Local 810 (Courts)
Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 5	Lodge 5 (sworn police officers)
	Lodge 5 (Sheriff’s Office and Register of Wills)
International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 22	Local 22 (uniformed firefighters)

Appendix C

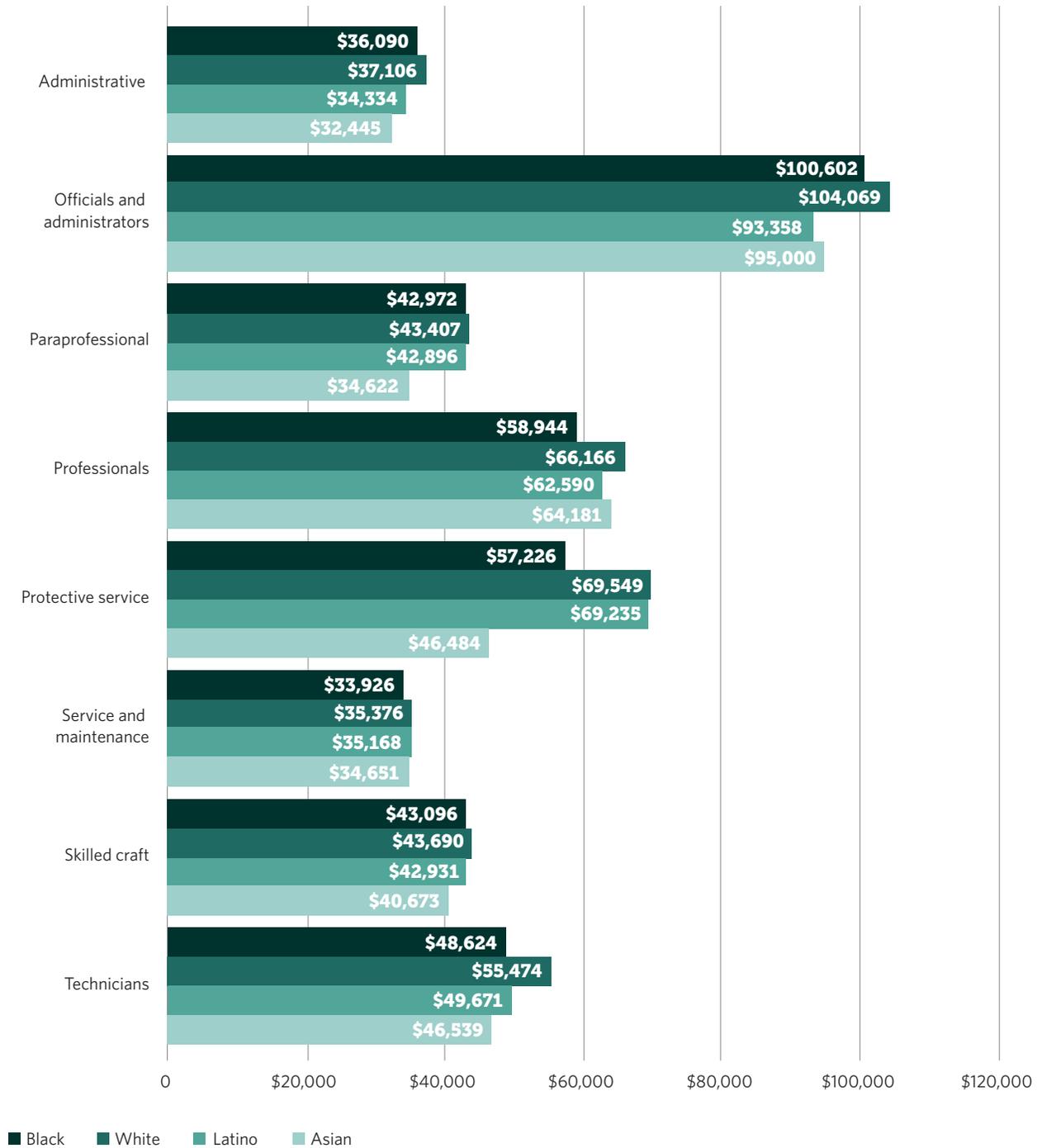
Figure C.1
Number of Applications for City Jobs by ZIP Code
August 2010 to July 2016



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Figure C.2

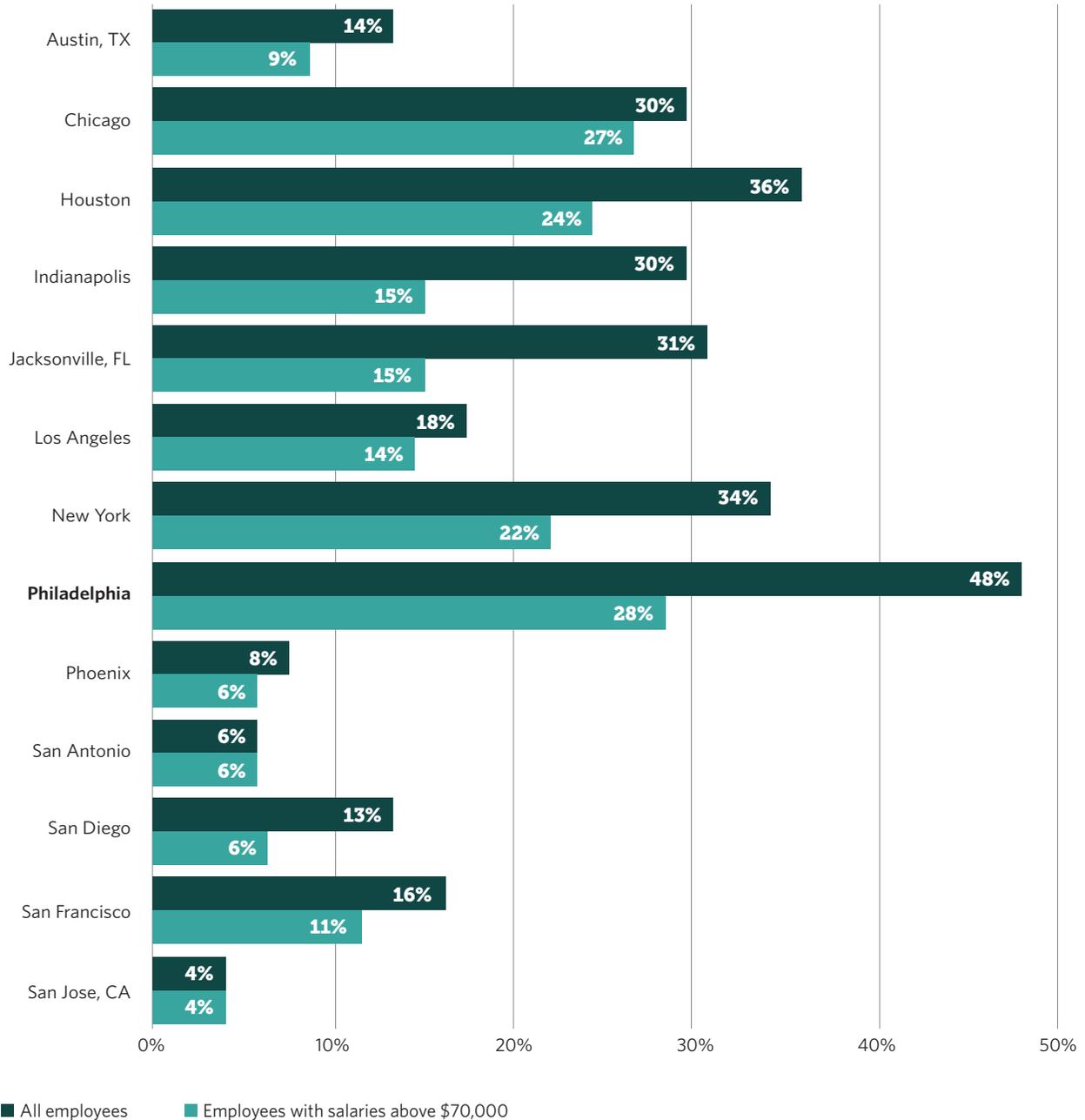
Median Salary for Philadelphia City Employees by Race and Job Category, 2010-16



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Figure C.3

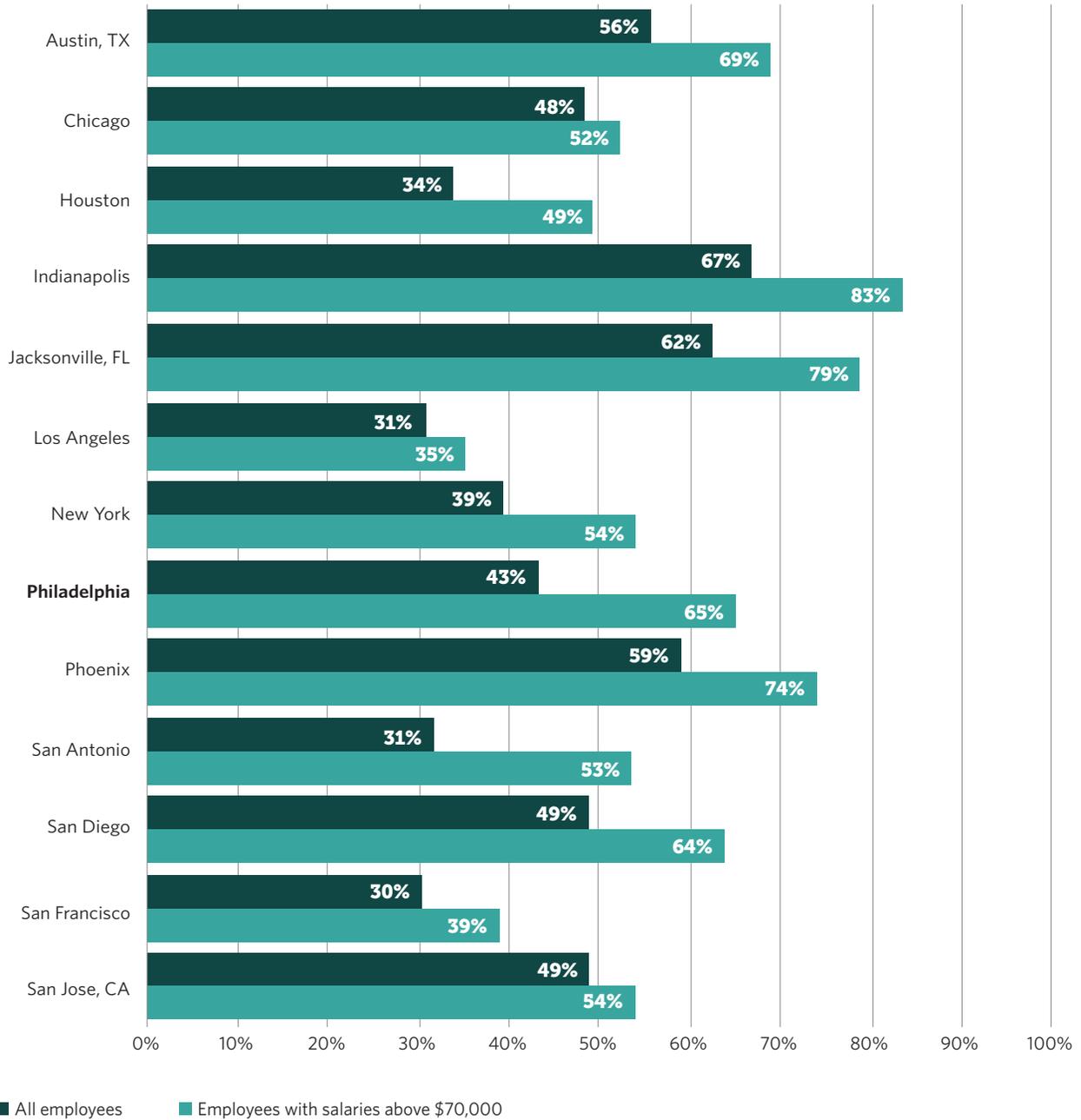
Percentage of Full-Time Municipal Workers Earning \$70,000 or More Who Are Black Compared With Percentage of Full-Time Municipal Black Workers Overall



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Figure C.4

Percentage of Full-Time Municipal Workers Earning \$70,000 or More Who Are White Compared With Percentage of Full-Time Municipal White Workers Overall



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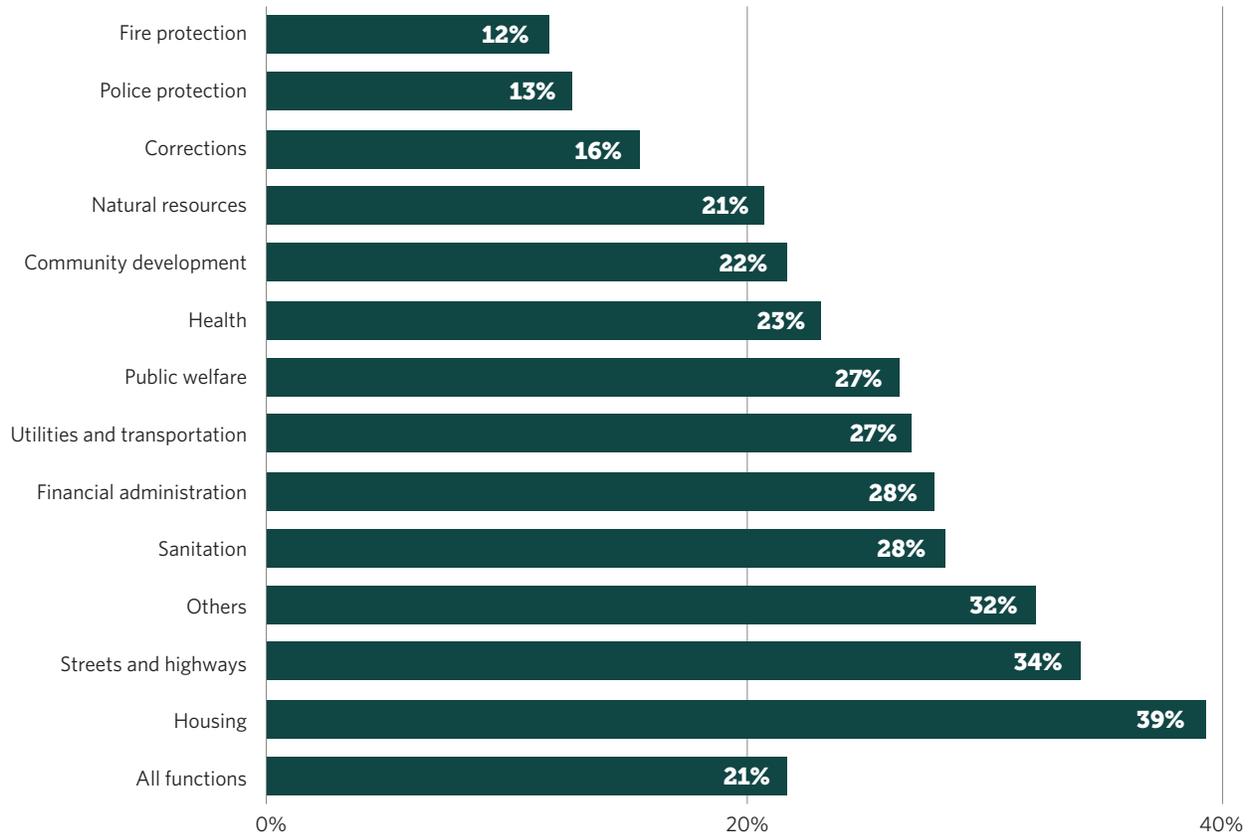
Table C.1

Percentage of Municipal Employees Earning \$70,000 a Year or More by Gender, 2015

City	Men	Women
Austin, TX	79%	21%
Chicago	79%	21%
Houston	73%	27%
Indianapolis	97%	3%
Jacksonville, FL	77%	23%
Los Angeles	75%	25%
New York	77%	23%
Philadelphia	72%	28%
Phoenix	80%	20%
San Antonio	78%	22%
San Diego	75%	25%
San Francisco	62%	38%
San Jose, CA	74%	26%

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Figure C.5
Percentage of Employees Age 55 or Older
Full-time employees earning \$10,000 a year or more

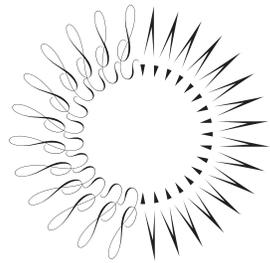


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Endnotes

- 1 Center for State & Local Government Excellence, “Survey Findings: State and Local Government Workforce 2012 Trends” (May 2012), https://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/S-L-Govt-Workforce-2012_12-195_web.pdf; Center for State & Local Government Excellence, “Survey Findings: State and Local Government Workforce 2016 Trends” (May 2016), <https://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/State-and-Local-Government-Workforce-2016-Trends.pdf>.
- 2 According to the civil service regulations, “An examination may, as determined by the Director, consist of one or more of the following parts: written tests, oral tests, tests of physical condition, performance tests, evaluations of the competitors’ training and experience, ratings of seniority, medical examinations, psychiatric examinations, and any other appropriate tests.” The city primarily uses written, oral, training and experience, and performance tests for most jobs. The other tests used are often supplementary.
- 3 This does not include a few job classifications, including laborer, for which there are no exams and candidates are chosen by lottery.
- 4 San Antonio requires employees to live within the city following a probationary period.
- 5 Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, § 7-401(h), [http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Pennsylvania/philadelphia_pa/thephiladelphiacode?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:philadelphia_pa](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Pennsylvania/philadelphia_pa/thephiladelphiacode?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:philadelphia_pa).
- 6 In Denver, eligibility lists can be extended for a second year if not exhausted by the end of the first year or if there is not a new test to refresh the list. Denver Personnel Rules, § 7 2(l), <https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/590/documents/rules/Rule%207%20Final%2011-01-07%20Annot%2012-23-08%20WEB.pdf>.
- 7 In 2016, the chief administrative officer streamlined the application process for exempt positions. For an analysis of exempt positions in Philadelphia, see the city’s “2017 Philadelphia Workforce Diversity Profile Report,” <https://beta.phila.gov/documents/2017-philadelphia-workforce-diversity-profile-report>.
- 8 According to documents from Philadelphia’s Office of Human Resources, if an applicant thinks his or her exam score was incorrect, the eligibility list is frozen until the matter is resolved, meaning that no open positions related to that exam can be filled. In the case of an oral exam, there is a hearing by the Civil Service Commission. If the applicant is not satisfied with the commission’s judgment, he or she can appeal to municipal court. Appeals concerning written exams are reviewed by the Office of Human Resources; the office’s decision is final. See also <https://www.phila.gov/personnel/appeal.htm#DECISIONS>.
- 9 City of Philadelphia, Civil Service Regulation 17, <http://www.phila.gov/personnel/webregs/reg17.htm>.
- 10 Council of the City of Philadelphia, “Council President Clarke Calls for City to Increase Enforcement of Workforce Diversity Requirements,” last modified Jan. 21, 2016, <http://phlcouncil.com/council-president-clarke-calls-for-city-to-increase-enforcement-of-workforce-diversity-requirements>.
- 11 If a rejected applicant feels the result of the hiring process was unfair, he or she can appeal to either the Office of Human Resources or the Civil Service Commission. If still unsatisfied, an applicant can appeal to municipal court.
- 12 Council of the City of Philadelphia, budget hearings before the Committee of the Whole, April 5, 2017.
- 13 Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene, “Can Government Hiring Get Out of the Stone Age?” *Governing*, February 2016, <http://www.governing.com/topics/mgmt/gov-government-hiring-best-practices.html>.
- 14 Jacqueline Toledo (assistant human resources director, Chicago), interview with The Pew Charitable Trusts, April 15, 2016.
- 15 Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government Code § 34.001 and Louisville Metro Civil Service Board § 5 5.5(1).
- 16 Philadelphia Independent Charter Commission, “Briefing Materials,” 56.
- 17 Pew requested access to exams—those being used now or in the recent past—in order to send them to an expert in the field to be analyzed for fairness and relevance; the exams have not been subject to outside review since 1981. The city’s Law Department denied that request, expressing a lack of confidence in the ability of an outside expert to assess the exams and noting the risk of litigation if the analysis cited problems.
- 18 The Human Resources Department indicated that the city does consult with departments for feedback on testing and their exam evaluations. The department tracks the number of applicants eligible to take the exam, the percentage who actually do so, and the percentage of test takers who have correctly answered each exam question.
- 19 Applicants can ask for an exam to be rescheduled in some circumstances, including religious observation, jury or witness duty, active service in the uniformed services, and other extraordinary circumstances determined by the director of human resources, <https://www.phila.gov/personnel/webregs/reg09.htm>.
- 20 Council of the City of Philadelphia, “Councilmembers Call for Hearings on City’s ‘Rule of Two,’” news release, Sept. 17, 2015, <http://phlcouncil.com/councilmembers-call-for-hearings-on-citys-rule-of-two>.

- 21 Philadelphia Civil Service Regulation §10.093, <http://www.phila.gov/personnel/webregs/index.htm>.
- 22 Erin Golden, "Minneapolis Sets Expanded Goals for Diversifying Its Workforce," *Star Tribune*, July 28, 2016, <http://www.startribune.com/minneapolis-sets-expanded-goals-for-diversifying-its-workforce/388492991>; Robert McClendon, "New Rules on City Hiring and Promotions Increase Flexibility, Transfer Power to Landrieu Administration," *The Times-Picayune*, Aug. 25, 2014, http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/08/new_rules_on_hiring_will_affect.html.
- 23 Detroit Civil Service regulation Rule 4 § 1(a) states: "On an eligible register, the highest three (3) ranking eligible(s) ('Rule of Three') will be provided to the department for each open vacancy. The employing department may select from any of these eligible for the Human Resources Department to hire."
- 24 Daryl Conrad (chief recruitment officer, Detroit), interview with The Pew Charitable Trusts, Jan. 31, 2018.
- 25 Mary Alice Emigh (human resources manager, Nashville), interview with The Pew Charitable Trusts, Aug. 31, 2017. Emigh said that hiring managers had to provide reasons for rejecting candidates from the "outstanding" or "well-qualified" categories before considering candidates from lower-ranked categories. Nashville Civil Service Rules § 2.10 C-I, <http://www.nashville.gov/Human-Resources/Civil-Service-Commission.aspx>.
- 26 Data supplied by the city included very few individuals who had both submitted an application and been selected for hire for 2011, 2012, and 2016. Those years were excluded from this calculation.
- 27 Information about budget, positions, and staff exist in disconnected information systems that do not easily communicate with each other. This makes it difficult to calculate time-to-hire, according to Celia O'Leary of the city's human resources department.
- 28 Shawn Sherburne (human resources manager, San Francisco), interview with The Pew Charitable Trusts, Nov. 21, 2017.
- 29 Philadelphia Home Rule Charter § 7-401(e), [http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Pennsylvania/philadelphia_pa/thephiladelphiacode?fn=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:philadelphia_pa](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Pennsylvania/philadelphia_pa/thephiladelphiacode?fn=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:philadelphia_pa).
- 30 According to the Office of Human Resources, at least 39 non-entry-level jobs were announced as open competitive because there were more vacancies than there were internal qualified candidates.
- 31 Large U.S. cities with similar restrictions include New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, San Antonio, San Diego, Dallas, Austin, and Columbus. Jacksonville does mandate that internal candidates be given preference in filling the position but advertises externally only if a vacancy cannot be filled internally.
- 32 Keith Poole (human resources supervisor, Phoenix), interview with The Pew Charitable Trusts, Aug. 31, 2017.
- 33 Dallas City Manager A.C. Gonzalez, Dec. 7, 2016, memorandum to mayor and city council on Hire Dallas program, 7, 25-29, http://www.dallascityhall.com/government/Council%20Meeting%20Documents/c_hire-dallas_combined_120716.pdf.
- 34 San Francisco's public welfare function was 16.37 percent black, and its overall workforce was 16.43 percent black.
- 35 Based on Pew analysis of city of Philadelphia data.
- 36 Discussion of salaries was limited to employees earning at least \$10,000 to prevent seasonal employees from skewing the numbers in an unrepresentative way. Salary includes base pay and longevity bonus but not overtime pay.
- 37 The highest salary category in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission EEO-4 survey is \$70,000 or more.
- 38 This number differs slightly from the data provided by Philadelphia's Office of Human Resources. The data used to compare Philadelphia's municipal workforce with those of other cities comes from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
- 39 Some full-time employees included in the data were not employed for the entire year and therefore earned less than \$10,000 in salary for the year. These records were excluded from the analysis.
- 40 Philadelphia Board of Pensions and Retirement, "Summary Plan Description" (May 2013), <http://www.phila.gov/pensions/PDF/Plan%2087.pdf>.
- 41 Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority, "Update on the City of Philadelphia's Deferred Retirement Option Plan ('DROP') (December 2017).



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