



**HCR 25 REPORT**  
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The mission of the Office of State Examiner, Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service, is to administer an effective, cost-efficient civil service system based on merit, efficiency, fitness, and length of service, consistent with the law and professional standards, for fire fighters and police officers in all municipalities in the State having populations of not less than 7,000 nor more than 500,000 inhabitants to which the law applies, and in all parish fire departments and fire protection districts regardless of population, in order to provide a continuity in quality of law enforcement and fire protection for the citizens of the State in rural and urban areas. To this end, our goals track the legislation that encompasses responsibilities and duties incumbent upon the Office of State Examiner, specifically Louisiana R.S. 33:2471 et seq., and R.S. 33:2531 et seq.:

1. To develop and maintain validated classification plans in cooperation with the Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board in each jurisdiction which describe the grouping of like positions within the respective fire and police departments into classes which may be treated the same for all personnel purposes, the arrangement of which is designated to show the principal and natural lines of promotion and demotion, and which provide qualification requirements necessary for eligibility for admission to the respective examinations. (Louisiana Revised Statutes, 33:2479(G)(1)(2)(5) and 33:2539(1)(2)(5).)
2. To prepare and administer valid tests of fitness, developed according to the professionally acceptable standards, for determining eligibility for initial appointment or promotion to classified positions in the respective fire and/or police departments of the municipalities and fire protection districts, score the tests and furnish the results to the local civil service boards for which the tests are given. (Louisiana Revised Statutes, 33:2479(G)(1)(3) and 33:2539(1)(3).)
3. To provide operational guidance in the legal requirements of the Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service system to the local civil service boards, governing and appointing authorities, department chiefs, employees of the classified fire and police services, and other local officials regarding the duties and obligations imposed upon them by civil service law and relevant State and Federal laws pertaining to the administration and management of personnel within the classified service. (Louisiana Revised Statutes, 33:2479(G)(1)(4)(5)(6) and 33:2539(1)(4)(5)(6).)

The Office of State Examiner was created and established by the Constitution of 1921, Art. XIV, §15.1, which as been continued in force and effect as statute by Art. X, §18 of the 1974 Constitution. The OSE provides mandatory employment testing and personnel management functions in the fire and police departments in 144 cities, parishes, and fire protection districts throughout the state of Louisiana. The agency is the sole provider of employment testing for the fire and police services in the covered jurisdictions. No person may be appointed to a vacancy in positions under the Louisiana Fire and Police Civil Service System unless he or she passes competitive or promotional exams administered and scored by the OSE.

In previous periods of economic downturn, it has been assumed that the function and operations of the Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service System and those of the Department of State Civil Service and the State Police Civil Service System are redundant, and there exists a duplication of services that could be eliminated for efficiency. However, it is important to note that the Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service System is fundamentally different from its counterparts on many levels. For example, while each of the other two systems are administered by a commission with rule making authority for all employees of the respective system, the fire and police system is comprised of 144 individual local boards, each with autonomous rule-making authority for the administration of the classified service at the local level. Personnel administration for the two state-level systems, which includes employment selection and promotion, is provided for under rules adopted by their respective commissions, whereas selection and promotion within the classified fire and police services is statutory. Each state-level commission is responsible for establishing compensation plans for its employees. The fire and police civil service boards have no authority to determine rates of pay for the various classes of positions. Most importantly, tests developed and administered under the authority of the two state-level commissions are largely standardized for use on a statewide basis, and are developed commercially. Alternatively, the majority of tests developed and administered by the Office of State Examiner are custom designed for each department according to the specific duties and responsibilities of the classes of positions for which tests are given. We do not feel that any powers, functions, or duties currently performed by the Office of State Examiner are being duplicated by another statutory entity or political subdivision.

Due to its intimate connection with continuity of public safety services, the OSE is funded through a dedicated tax on insurance premiums paid into the state. The amount collected to fund the OSE is set at 2.5/100ths of 1% of the gross direct insurance premiums paid into the state, less returned premiums. The Fund, which is provided solely for the operations of the Office of State Examiner, assures that employment and promotions in the fire and police departments may continue despite declines in general state revenues.

Prior to the enactment of Acts 1992 No. 497, reliance on the General Fund meant severe delays in testing for public safety positions, and a lack of response to hiring needs in local fire and police departments. There was neglect of vehicle maintenance that increased the risk of accident or injury for traveling personnel. Once, a shift lever of one of our vehicles actually came completely off in the hand of a staff member who was about to leave for an overnight trip to North Louisiana! Lean times and declining revenues during the mid-80's taught us to be excellent stewards of the public fisc. Notwithstanding consistent positive annual revenues resulting from the assessment, the OSE operates always in an austere manner. This is evidenced by the fact that the OSE has reverted approximately \$3M to the state general fund since the OSE operating fund was established. Fifty-three thousand dollars was available to meet the Legislative mandate for a mid-year cut because we spend our appropriation on what is necessary for our mission, when it is necessary, and nothing more. Every agency employee is involved in assuring that expenditures are aligned with appropriations.

With only 19 employees, in FY 2015-2016 the OSE:

- Processed 8,198 personnel action forms for compliance with civil service law;
- Answered 12,532 advisory telephone calls;
- Mailed 950 letters providing information or advice;
- Administered 564 examinations;
- **Constructed 221 new customized examinations;**
- Received a 98% overall rating of jurisdictions indicating satisfaction with services;

**To illustrate the efficiencies of the OSE, an accurate estimate for constructing one commercial employment examination is \$35,000. At \$35,000 per test, the total amount necessary to construct those 221 new exams is \$7,735,000. By comparison, OSE's FY 16/17 EOB stands at \$2,214,578.**

We are one program for which all of our services are mandated by the Constitution Ancillaries and Revised Statutes. It is therefore impossible to determine which service under the law must be given priority over another. Work performed by employees in our functional division of Resource Services, for example, involves providing advice and guidance to in the duties and responsibilities of local officials imposed upon them by civil service law. This division also performs extensive analyses of every fire and police position to determine applicability to the classified service. Through job analyses, the essential requirement to establish the line of classes according to promotion and demotion is accomplished. The data extracted from the analyses provides the foundation for developing tests of fitness for employment in the public safety positions. The Testing Division is primarily responsible for constructing, administering and scoring exams that must be validated in accordance with the federal EEO *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures*.

#### **Program Activity: Testing Services**

Employment tests in both the private and public sectors are widely viewed to be one of the most cost-effective means of identifying candidates for hiring or promotion who possess the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) to be successful in their prospective jobs. According to the American Management Association, 41% of employers test job applicants in basic literacy and/or math skills, 68% engage in various forms of employment testing, and 34% of job applicants tested lacked sufficient skills for the jobs they sought. For seventy-five years, the Office of State Examiner (OSE) has been charged by the constitution and statutes with the responsibility for developing and administering employment tests for the purpose of identifying applicants who are qualified and have the skills necessary for jobs in the fire and police services within the state of Louisiana. In order for a test to be used for selection, it must be validated and supported by adequate documentation, and administered fairly and impartially. The validation of exams is done at all times with a goal of selecting qualified applicants while minimizing adverse impact on protected groups; therefore, the OSE adheres to the professional

standards and principles established for employment selection, including the EEOC Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures.

Each test prepared and administered by the OSE is based on a thorough and extensive job analysis. Entrance tests often measure competencies associated with applicants' trainability, such as reading comprehension, math, mechanical aptitudes, and listening skills. Promotional tests generally evaluate job knowledge or expertise that candidates must possess immediately upon promotion, and some upper-level and specialty classes involve assessment center testing where candidates are given a job simulation exercise that allows a pool of trained raters to evaluate management and interpersonal communications skills. On average, the agency administers over 500 examinations each year and tests approximately 6,000 candidates per year, which can rise to 8,000 candidates per year during economic downturns, such as after 9/11 or the economic crisis of 2008. Of these, approximately 20% are screened out of the selection process. Our process of designing the test around the local job analysis information insures that it will measure knowledge and skills required on the job. While this process is extensive and time-consuming, we believe the outcome is worth the effort. There has never been a successful legal challenge to an OSE test.

#### **Program Activity: Resource Services**

The OSE's constitutional and statutory mandate to serve in an advisory capacity is provided by this activity, which includes advice related to the duties and responsibilities of local officials imposed upon them by the provisions of the Fire and Police Civil Service Law. The Resource Services Division provides support to civil service boards in establishing and maintaining board rules (rules have the force and effect of law), the classification plan, which establishes the line of promotion and demotion in the fire and police services, and seniority rosters and other records required for proper personnel management. Resource Services maintains records of board membership and oaths of office, and serves as the point of contact for jurisdictions that have met the eligibility requirements for inclusion in the classified service.

Through the OSE's services, the MFPCS system operates in accordance with the law, assuring that classified employees may perform their jobs in good behavior, free from political patronage, with equitable opportunities for employment and promotions. Management and administrative personnel, on the other hand, are supplied with the management tools necessary to insure compliance with federal and state law in the effective management of fire and police personnel.

2.6 million Louisiana citizens benefit from the protective services of public safety personnel whose positions comprise the Fire and Police Civil Service System. Their eligibility to serve and to be promoted to positions of responsibility, to make immediate and correct decisions in life and death situations, begins and is maintained due, in part, to the role played by the Office of State Examiner.

**Agency Civil Service Procedures and Procurement**

Small agencies are faced with unique challenges when accomplishing management and finance functions in that we do not have adequate personnel to assign someone these functions on a full-time basis, nor do we need to. To accomplish these tasks, agency personnel who have primary duties in other areas are specifically trained for the management and finance tasks. This allows us the separation necessary for good money management and audit purposes, such as is necessary for purchasing, receiving, and payments.

- One person, an Administrative Program Specialist B performs accounting and personnel management under the supervision of the Deputy State Examiner with verification of actions completed by the Department of State Civil Service.
- One person performs most purchasing and procurement duties, a Human Resources Supervisor in our Testing Division. She has attended special training to perform this function in addition to her regular duties. We also have several LaCarte cards with a very tight control policy with verification of actions completed by the Department of State Civil Service.
- The Department of State Civil Service performs an array of administration functions for our agency including budget preparation.

**USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

The Office of State Examiner utilizes custom software in the development and grading of our examinations, and standardize our testing procedures, including some taped portions. The following chart describes the current contracts between the Office of State Examiner and vendors. Due to the nature of these contracts, they are expensed under the category of Operating Services. While our agency does not have in-house expertise to develop software several members of our staff have found ways to perform small routine maintenance to cut back on the number of hours paid out to our technology vendors.

<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>Technology Engineers</b>	2015 - 2016 - Provide upgrades & routine maintenance, as needed, for agency proprietary test development & scoring software program (TestGen), & all associated software applications utilized by the contractor for the design, development and end use of test development and scoring; respond in timely manner during contract period to provide technical support; make recommendations as necessary to modify & improve software & equipment functionality as it relates to the TestGen program & the agency's computer network; (7/1/15-6/30/16, \$100/per hour)
<b>Immense Networks</b>	2015 - 2016 - provide routine monitoring of server & maint./upgrade of all server software, including Windows 2008 Server Software; assure that all software updates are implemented; Offsite Backup; Host a virtualized instance of web server; perform & troubleshoot network

	operations (backups, network security, antivirus) & supportive equipment (uninterrupted power supplies, network switches, firewall, etc.); provide ongoing support, both remote & on-site (7/1/15-6/30/16, \$100/per hour)
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### EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY

The following chart illustrates routine expenditures of the Office of State Examiner for each budget category.

Category	Summary
Salaries, Other Compensation, Related Benefits	Self Explanatory
Travel	Administrative Travel (Travel for SE and DSE to attend meetings and hearings) Field Travel (Travel for TS and RS divisions to administer tests; attend meetings and hearings) In-State Conferences and Conventions (ORM conferences) Out of State Conferences and Conventions (IPAC and IPMA - training)
Operating Services	Rentals (Building, Equipment) Advertising (annual advertising per statutes) Printing (scantrons, stationary, envelopes, business cards) Property and Equipment Maintenance (vehicle inspections, maintenance) Property and Equipment Maintenance Data Processing (Technology Engineers, Immense Networks, Trend Micro, Soft Mart) Dues and Subscriptions (see list below) Postage (Pitney Bowes) Telephone (Preferred) Other Comm. Services (Cox Communications) Facility Security and Monitoring (Custom Security)
Supplies	Office Supplies Computer Supplies Automobile Supplies (Operating, Repair and Maintenance) Software
Professional	Legal
Capital Outlay	Office Equipment
I. A. T.	OTM (phone) Commodities and Services (CS, CPTP, OSUP, and Legis Aud) Insurance (Office of Risk Management)

While these expenditures are routine for our agency, we constantly seek ways to be more efficient and our ability to revert money back to the state general fund every year is a testament to that fact. As a part of our strategic planning process last year our agency conducted a detailed review of various processes of the agency and found several ways we could be more efficient. Over the next year we plan to:

- Provide support to those involved in the operation of the system (current and potential jurisdictions) at the local level utilizing webinars to reduce travel expenses.
- We are adding more resources to our website and sending more correspondence via email to reduce mail-out expenses.
- Update agency manuals for ease of reading as well as content and format. The current manuals have to be mailed in binders and we are going to attempt to cut back on the size to reduce costs.
- Research companies to update our test generation and grading programs that are still MS-DOS based. While this will prove costly at the onset, one technology contract is centered on maintenance of these outdated programs.

We understand the difficult budgetary predicament that is gripping the state, and we are doing everything possible to reduce operating costs, and to be austere in our use of appropriated funds. If you have any questions or require additional information in order to approve this request, please feel free to contact our agency.