



THE BRIDGE: Connecting Civil Service and You

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The DSCS Mission:
To provide human resource services and programs that enable state government to attract, develop and retain a productive and diverse workforce that excels in delivering quality services to the citizens of Louisiana.

Question of the Quarter

Have a question about Civil Service? Let us know! This publication is intended to provide for increased communication between the Department of State Civil Service and all stakeholders within our system. E-mail your questions to us, and we'll do our best to respond promptly. Some questions will be chosen for publication as part of this feature! Participants will remain anonymous if requested. Please note that not all questions will be published and that only fact-based questions will receive a response.

[Ask your question](#)

STAYING CONNECTED

From the Desk of Shannon S. Templet, DSCS Director



I am very excited that this issue of the Bridge features an article on Mr. Charles E. Dunbar, Jr., who spearheaded the effort to establish the Louisiana "Civil Service" and its classified workforce upon merit system principles. This article comes at a perfect time as the Louisiana Civil Service League is currently accepting nominations for the annual Charles E. Dunbar Award that recognizes classified

employees for their tremendous contributions to the state of Louisiana. The Dunbar Award is the highest honor bestowed on classified employees for their service to the citizens of Louisiana and recognizes professional, personal, and community service accomplishments.

There are thousands and thousands of dedicated, hard working state employees who give unselfishly day in and day out to ensure that the citizens of Louisiana receive the services they need. I hope that as you read this article, you will consider nominating a classified employee for this prestigious award. For more information on the Dunbar Award and how to nominate classified employees, please see General Circular [#1805](#).

Outstanding State Agencies

The Accountability Division at DSCS has completed its most recent cycle of Human Resources Program Evaluations. The following state agencies have received outstanding ratings:

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| LA Secretary of State | Elayn Hunt Correctional Center |
| Greater Baton Rouge Port Commission | LA School for the Deaf |
| Department of Natural Resources | Dept of Wildlife and Fisheries |
| Bossier Parish Community College | Department of Revenue |
| Huey P. Long Medical Center | LA Tech University |
| Dept of Corrections—Div of Probation and Parole | Northwest LA War Veterans Home |

Charles Dunbar and Civil Service Reform

By Becky Cresap
Compensation Consultant

“De-ducts,” “deadheads,” and “double-dippers” are funny words when you first glance at them, but these definitions are all too familiar when looking back on Louisiana’s political history and its infamous “spoils” system. The spoils system was one in which a politician or political party awarded government jobs to specific individuals as a reward for voting for the winning party. These appointments often required a “de-duct,” or a percentage of your pay check given to support the incumbent’s candidacy and party. During the years of the spoils system, certain methods were used to keep individuals voting for the same political party. “Deadheads” were persons who collected government checks for doing little or no productive labor for the state, and “double dippers” were individuals on two or more state payrolls.

The history of Civil Service is the story of the struggle between the supporters of the spoils system and the advocates of an employment system based on merit. From the early 1800’s through the administration of Huey Long, the spoils system was the customary way of government employment. Only in the late 1930’s, during the governorship of Richard Leche, did change begin to occur because some state employees objected to “de-ducts” and went public with claims of corruption. More change came as a result of the 1940 Governor’s race when Sam Jones, on a reformist platform, defeated spoils system supporter Earl K. Long. Governor Jones promised a complete reorganization of state government and formed a civil service reform committee to that end. At the head of the civil service reform committee was Charles E. Dunbar, Jr., considered today to be the “father” of civil service in Louisiana. A prominent lawyer and civic leader from New Orleans, he led the committee in studying leading civil service laws of both the United States and foreign countries.

The statute drafted by Dunbar and enacted into law created a comprehensive Civil Service system for state government. The Civil Service law established a statewide “Office of Director of Personnel” (known today as the Director of Civil Service) that was not appointed by any governor. It also provided for the creation of a classification plan by which state jobs are placed into various classes, called for competitive qualifying examinations, and declared who would be a classified or unclassified employee. The Civil Service law established the Civil Service Commission and charged it with certain responsibilities, such as approving pay plans and hearing employee appeals. Employees could be subjected to disciplinary action, including dismissal, but “cause” had to be shown by their appointing authority if such actions were taken. Political or religious reasons were not “cause” for disciplinary action. Finally, the Civil Service law forbade any person from using political pressure in connection with any appointment or promotion for the purpose of influencing the vote or political action of any employee. In return, an employee in the classified system was forbidden from contributing to a political organization or purpose, becoming a member of a national, state, or local committee of a political party, or making public speeches or statements as part of a political campaign.

Throughout the 1940’s, supporters of the spoils system continued to attack the new statute and eventually repealed the prohibition of political activity by classified employees. Department heads used coercion and threats to influence voting and encourage partisan political activities of employees. Although the threat of politically-based disciplinary action was gone, the risk of denied pay raises, promotions, and transfers to less favorable locations still influenced employees’ political behavior. In 1948, a special session in the Legislature repealed the state civil service law.

The Louisiana [Civil Service League](#), created in 1940 and led by Dunbar to promote the merit system concept, recognized that the challenges to the civil service system could only be overcome by having a constitutional amendment to establish and protect it. Dunbar drafted the constitutional amendment and it was adopted in 1952. Now, established by the State Constitution, the civil service system cannot be repealed or amended except by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature and subsequent ratification by a majority of voters.



*The “Father” of Civil Service,
Charles E. Dunbar, Jr.*

The Louisiana Civil Service system has seen many changes since the early reform days of the forties. However, pioneering the initial reform through much opposition was a man who believed in a fair and just system, Charles E. Dunbar Jr. Today, his honorable name lives on through the Dunbar career service awards given out each year by the Louisiana Civil Service League to classified civil service employees who distinguish themselves through unselfish service to the citizens of Louisiana.

DSCS Offers Agency Hiring Managers Access to LA Careers Online Hiring Center

By Aeli Poydras
Staffing Consultant

Since the February 2009 implementation of LA Careers, most state human resources officers have become familiar with the system for online applications, applicant tracking, and maintaining accurate applicant flow. In order to more fully utilize LA Careers system capabilities, the Department of State Civil Service (DSCS) is offering the new Online Hiring Center (OHC) feature to hiring managers in interested agencies.

Previously, only human resources personnel could access the OHC. Agencies may now elect to allow OHC access by supervisors, managers, and other administrative personnel. With OHC access, a hiring manager wanting to post and fill a position can create a requisition in the OHC for the agency's human resources department and enter information about the candidates as they are interviewed. Additionally, hiring managers with OHC access will no longer need to receive paper applications or e-mails with electronic applications, as they will be able to access the applications for their requisitions directly from their desks, from home, or from any PC that has an internet connection.

One of the agencies to grant OHC access to its hiring managers is the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Its hiring managers have been using the OHC successfully



Scott Longman, Biologist Director -- one of more than 30 managers at Wildlife and Fisheries using the new Online Hiring Center.

since February 2010 to create requisitions and view referral lists. The OHC feature provides the hiring managers the opportunity to perform some of the tasks involved in the hiring

process themselves, which increases efficiency for everyone. "We love it...we are anxious to see approvals in the system as well," says Biologist Director Scott Longman. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries currently has over 30 hiring managers or their assistants working with the OHC.

Any agency interested in allowing its hiring managers to have OHC access should have its human resources department contact its DSCS staffing consultant or the LA Careers system administrator, Rob Wood, at Robert.Wood@la.gov.

SCORE: New Staffing Tool Offers Additional Options for Evaluating Applicants Prior to Interviewing

By Aeli Poydras
Staffing Consultant

The Department of State Civil Service (DSCS) has created a new method of scoring applicants, appropriately named SCORE (Score Candidates On Relevant Experience). SCORE furthers the mission of DSCS by providing new practical methods for examining and certifying applicants' fitness for appointment, which ensures that the best candidates are available to be hired. With SCORE, human resources personnel and hiring managers at state agencies can score and rank applicants' relative abilities, knowledge, and skills before the interview process, but without the large administrative burden of traditional tests or experience and training evaluations.

This new procedure is designed specifically for use in the LA Careers system to create a ranked list of applicants for jobs that do not require a written exam. The SCORE feature can be developed for jobs in the classified service with minimum qualifications ranging from no experience to those that require professional licensure and multiple years of experience.

To develop SCORE procedures for a particular job, the agency first notifies a DSCS staffing consultant of a job vacancy that would be appropriate for SCORE procedures. The staffing consultant then confers with one or more subject matter experts, such as a hiring manager at the agency, in order to develop supplemental questions to be posted to LA Careers for the job. The staffing consultant also develops a scoring plan to award points for applicant responses to the agency supplemental questions. When a candidate applies to a SCORE job posting, the answers for the supplemental questions will be automatically scored in the system and will transfer to the eligible list with the candidate's name, resulting in a ranked eligible list.

The entire process of SCORE is designed to be efficient for agencies, generally requiring only the submission of basic human resources documents and a brief meeting. The majority of the work in developing a SCORE procedure is completed by a DSCS staffing consultant.

Although SCORE is a voluntary process at this time, DSCS encourages all state agencies to review funded vacant positions that do not require a written test in order to determine if SCORE could prove beneficial in hiring. For a small investment of time, an agency will be able to provide a hiring manager with a list of candidates which are ranked by the hiring manager's own estimation of the importance of certain experience, skills, and knowledge for the job.

Rights and Protections of Classified Employees

By Paul St. Dizier
Chief Referee

Article X of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 is known as the Civil Service Article because it establishes the classified service. The classified service includes persons serving in probationary, permanent, restricted, job, and special provisional appointments.

Louisiana's civil service system provides classified state employees with important rights and protections. These rights and protections exist to create a professional, competent workforce that discharges its duties for the benefit of the public, free from political partisanship and the "spoils" of old.

A key element in achieving these objectives is the requirement of "cause" for disciplinary actions against classified employees with permanent status. A classified employee with permanent status is one who has successfully completed his or her probationary period. Classified employees with permanent status cannot be terminated or disciplined except for valid legal reasons ("cause") expressed in writing, and the affected employees have a right of appeal to the Civil Service Commission. The Commission is empowered to affirm, reverse, or modify agency actions on appeal. Good employees are thereby protected from unjustified actions, while bad employees are effectively dealt with in an efficient manner in accordance with due process standards.

All classified employees, even those lacking permanent status, have a right of appeal to the Commission if they have been adversely affected by a violation of the Civil Service Article or Rules. The Civil Service Rules, which are enacted by the Commission and have the force of law, cover a broad range of topics, including appointments, promotions, pay, layoffs, leave, and disciplinary action. All classified employees also have a right of appeal to the Commission if they have been subjected to discrimination based on their political or religious beliefs, sex, or race. In this way, the underlying principles of civil service are upheld and maintained, and protection is afforded to employees from illegal discrimination.

Quick Tips

Hurricane season is here! Did you know that the state of Louisiana has a toll free number you can call to find out if your agency has an office closure? For the office closure advisory, dial (800)360-9660. Visit www.GetaGamePlan.org for more information on preparing your family for hurricane season this year.