



Kern County Sheriff's Office

Policies and Procedures

TITLE: Department Promotions		NO: A-0500	
APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner			
REFERENCE: Civil Service Rules, Government Code 3502.3 &, DPPM A-0600,			
EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2026	REVIEWED: June 1, 2026	REVISED: June 1, 2026	UPDATED: June 1, 2026

POLICY

The Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) adheres to all federal, state, and local laws and ordinance codes regarding the hiring and promotion of staff. This policy is established to ensure that promotional decisions are made without favoritism or unlawful discrimination, increase transparency and awareness about the promotional processes, and identify strategies to support applicant promotability and preparedness.

The voters of Kern County adopted a Civil Service Ordinance in 1956 under the authority granted by the Civil Service Enabling Law in the California Government Code. The Civil Service System provides for employment on a merit basis and equitable and uniform procedures for dealing with personnel matters through a Civil Service Commission.

To administer its Civil Service System, the Board of Supervisors appoints five citizens to serve as Commissioners. The Civil Service Commission maintains the integrity of Kern County's Civil Service System. It is an independent ruling body that conducts appeal hearings on disciplinary matters and administers the Rules of the Civil Service System for the benefit of County departments and employees.

The County has established Civil Service Rules (CSR) to provide guidelines for employment, including processes for hiring and promotion. The Kern County Human Resources (KCHR) Division is responsible for the policy and procedures for recruitment, examination, and establishment of eligible applicant lists.

The Sheriff's Office is committed to promoting qualified, experienced, well-rounded applicants who have a history of exceptional job performance. Ideal applicants embody the traits of the KCSO Ideal Candidate Profile, as well as the tenets of 21st Century Policing and Community Policing. The KCSO makes every effort to reflect a broad cross-section of the community while providing constitutional and effective law enforcement services.

PROCEDURE A – ESTABLISHMENT OF LISTS

KCSO will work with KCHR to establish and maintain a current list of eligible or qualified applicants to meet department promotional needs. At least annually, KCSO will coordinate with the KCHR Division to announce any promotional process that will be used to establish an eligible list of applicants for any known or projected vacancies. In the event of unanticipated vacancies or other unforeseen circumstances, KCSO advises KCHR of the vacancies, prompting KCHR to

initiate recruitment. Examples of such instances include, but are not limited to:

- A new position has been created.
- The active list is exhausted, and additional names are needed.
- An active list is not available.

To the extent possible, the time frame from the date of posting to the written examination will include time for applicants to acquire source material for study. KCHR will post source material at the earliest time available. KCSO HR will maintain a library of materials to be used for testing. Personnel can check out the books from the Training Section office if available. Books will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. For further details, see Attachment A under “Frequency of Promotional Activities” and “Promotional Preparation.”

PROCEDURE B – EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Promotions are governed by the Civil Service Rule 900 et seq. Upon KCSO HR request, KCHR will initiate a departmental promotional recruitment plan (CSR 902.10). KCHR will prepare an examination announcement (often referred to as a job bulletin) containing the following information related to the classification being recruited: title, class, salary range, period during applications will be received, final filing date, examination components, and respective weights, as well as functions of the job. KCHR will include related source material in the announcement. The examination announcement will be posted as described in CSR 404.00. Participation in the departmental promotional examination is limited to eligible employees within the department where the promotional position exists. Promotional examinations are administered by KCHR during the scheduled date, time, and location, without exception.

All promotions shall be based on competitive examinations, which, at a minimum, shall include a formal appraisal of qualifications, education, and experience as shown by their applications and performance evaluation reports. The most common examination components utilized for departmental promotional recruitment are application review, written examination, and oral examination. The Chief Human Resources Officer (KCHR), or designee, will determine the elements present in a promotional examination.

KCHR will develop and administer promotional examinations for each classification. Examinations are designed to be practical and contain relatable subject matter that fairly tests the applicant’s ability to perform the essential functions of the position. Examinations are intended to reveal the general background and related knowledge of the applicant. KCHR will periodically review examination statistics, grievances, and applicant feedback to ensure all examinations are fair. In addition to Civil Service Rules, KCSO HR may also request KCHR to conduct examination reviews to ensure that topics remain relevant, identify trends where additional training may benefit applicants, and develop new questions or tests to ensure that promotional decisions are made without favoritism or unlawful discrimination.

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EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2026	REVIEWED: June 1, 2026	REVISED: June 1, 2026	UPDATED: June 1, 2026
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Written and oral examination preparation is the responsibility of KCHR. The County may employ or request persons of recognized expertise, such as subject matter experts (SMEs), to assist in the preparation, development, and grading of examinations. KCSO will work with KCHR to ensure that the subject matter is relatable to the classification being tested.

Candidates who attain the required standard in a promotional examination shall have their names placed on an eligible list.

PROCEDURE C – REQUISITION TO FILL A VACANT POSITION

Upon identifying a need to fill a pending or existing vacancy, KCSO may submit a position requisition or official request for a list of names from the corresponding eligible list. Where a departmental promotion would result in a vacancy in the classification from which an applicant is promoted, the department may requisition additional certified lists for backfill purposes.

- For example, the department may identify a Lieutenant vacancy to be filled. In addition to requesting names from the Lieutenant eligible list, the department may also requisition names from the Sergeant and Senior Deputy eligible lists to backfill vacated positions.

KCHR maintains an “Eligible List Report,” which is posted on CountyNet (the County’s intranet portal). The report contains a list (by classification) of active eligibility lists, the number of active applicants on each list, and the expiration date of the eligible lists. This report does not include the names of eligible applicants. The KCSO HR Section will monitor the Eligible List report and track the number of active eligible applicants for each classification. If an eligible list is not available, if the department anticipates exhausting a list, or identifies a list is near expiration, the department may request KCHR initiate department promotional recruitment and examination as outlined in Procedure B.

PROCEDURE D – CERTIFICATION OF NAMES FOR DEPARTMENT INTERVIEW

KCHR maintains all county-eligible lists and is responsible for providing applicant names to County departments for hiring and promotional purposes. Whenever KCSO learns that a vacancy has occurred or is about to happen in the department, KCSO may requisition names from the corresponding eligible list. Upon receipt of a requisition, KCHR will provide the KCSO with a certified list of names from the eligible list.

The order and number of names referred to KCSO will be based on CSR 600.00. The three (3) applicants ranked highest on the department promotional list shall be certified for one vacancy. If more than one vacancy is to be filled in any classification at the same time, the number of names certified to the KCSO for appointment shall be equal to three (3) for the first vacancy plus two (2) for each additional vacancy, or more if tie scores are involved.

The three (3) applicants ranked highest on a promotional eligible list and are presently employed in the KCSO will have their names certified for a hiring interview. The name of the next highest

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EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2026	REVIEWED: June 1, 2026	REVISED: June 1, 2026	UPDATED: June 1, 2026
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eligible applicant may be referred to if an applicant waives the interview or fails to respond to the interview notice.

PROCEDURE E – DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT

Referred applicants will be instructed to contact the designated KCSO HR personnel within three (3) business days to schedule an in-house interview. KCSO HR will coordinate an in-house interview date and convene a panel of internal raters. The panel shall consist of a minimum of three (3) raters all of whom should be at or above the rank that is being filled. For further details, see Attachment A under “Promotional Process Awareness.”

A representative from KCSO HR will also be present during the In-House Interview process. The KCSO HR representative will act as a neutral party observer and will not participate in the interview of the applicant. The neutral party observer will ensure that no policy violations occur, and that consistency is maintained in the interview process. The in-house interview shall not be audio-recorded by any party.

In addition to the County examination process, the following dimensions will be assessed through a review of the applicant’s personnel file and in-house interview:

- Communication/Interpersonal Skills.
- Experience/Work Performance.
- Job-Related Skills.
- Education/Training.
- Collaboration/Teamwork.
- Adaptability/Flexibility.
- Commitment to COPS Values.
- Commitment to Integrity Measures.

The KCSO panel will assess the above criteria through the following considerations:

- Interview Questions – KCSO HR will establish a databank of relative questions that can be modified for the appropriate rank. Questions will be rotated and revised for each promotional group. For sworn classifications, the in-house interview questions will evaluate officer knowledge and implementation of various topics:
 - Mediation/Problem-Solving Skills.
 - Community and Problem-Oriented Policing Strategies.
 - Ethics.
 - Accountability and Support for Departmental Integrity Measures.
 - Leadership and Emotional Intelligence Skills.
 - Communication and Interpersonal Skills.
- Personnel File Review –

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EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2026	REVIEWED: June 1, 2026	REVISED: June 1, 2026	UPDATED: June 1, 2026
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- Commendations received, letters of discipline, awards, and performance evaluations.
- Evaluators will review the documented demonstration of Ideal Candidate Profile qualities (see Attachments B & C).
- Disciplinary Record –
 - File review for previous sustained complaints and pending investigation by Internal Affairs (IA) or IA check.
 - Results of the IA check will be submitted to the department head, along with the interview panel’s recommendations for promotion.
- Training Records –
 - Review of training above and beyond minimum requirements.
- Use of Force Audit –
 - Blue Team Audit Report. Number and circumstances of uses of force.
 - Consideration will be given to context, such as area of assignment and years of experience.
- Effective Use of Community and Problem-Oriented Policing Strategies –
 - Nature and quality of COPS Log entries
 - Participation in community engagement opportunities, such as Sheriff’s Activity League, Recruitment Team, Crime Prevention events, etc.
- Service and Performance as Field Training Officer (FTO) or Specialized and Collateral Assignments –
 - It is recognized that FTO and other collateral assignments are limited in availability. Interested personnel should demonstrate initiative and commitment to expanding knowledge of specialized assignments in pursuit of self-development and preparation for future opportunities.
- Sworn Applicants for Supervisory Positions (Sergeant and Above) –
 - These applicants will be tested and rated on skills sufficient to ensure compliance with departmental policies.
 - In addition to the above measures, special attention will be given to the performance evaluation categories under “Employees Who Supervise.”

After each interview, the panel will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate’s interview. The form is to contain constructive criticism and positive feedback to assist the candidate in preparing for future interviews. The KCSO HR representative facilitating the interview will record the collective observations of the panel on a Promotional Assessment Form. There will be one Promotional Assessment Form per applicant, per interview, and will be retained as outlined in Procedure F.

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EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2026	REVIEWED: June 1, 2026	REVISED: June 1, 2026	UPDATED: June 1, 2026
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PROCEDURE F – POST IN-HOUSE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Interview recommendations will be submitted to the Sheriff (or designee) for approval on the list of certified names received from KCHR. This list, along with a blank second copy, is submitted to the Sheriff-Coroner, or designee, who may request any additional personnel records if needed. The final selection of personnel for promotion shall rest exclusively with the Sheriff-Coroner, or designee, which will be indicated on the second form. Both forms are returned to KCSO HR for processing and electronic archiving. KCSO HR will ensure all candidates are notified of the results.

For any applicant who wishes to receive feedback regarding their interview and recommendations for future promotional opportunities, the following procedure will be followed:

- The applicant shall email a request to speak with interview panel members to SheriffHR@kernsheriff.org.
- A request must be sent within two weeks of the date applicants are notified of their interview results.
- The department promotional in-house coordinator (Background Sergeant) will coordinate with the interview panel members to schedule a meeting to facilitate the applicant's request for feedback.
- KCSO HR will retain the Promotional Assessment Form in the applicant's confidential background file. The applicant can review the Promotional Assessment Form upon request.
- The above-described certified lists are confidential and are not subject to review by the applicant.

PROCEDURE G – BIENNIAL PROMOTIONS ASSESSMENT

Every two (2) years, in conjunction with KCHR, KCSO HR shall evaluate this policy and Promotional Plan to assess KCSO's promotions processes for the ranks of Senior Deputy, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Commander, to ensure that its policies and practices comply with the law, are transparent, and are consistent with this policy.

Within 60 days of completing the promotions assessment, in conjunction with KCHR, KCSO HR will develop an implementation plan to address any recommendations identified in the evaluation, including any recommended modifications to the promotions processes and a timeline for implementation.

KCSO HR, in conjunction with KCHR, shall report annually to the Board of Supervisors and the public on their websites KCSO's promotional activities and outcomes, including the number of applicants, interviewees, and selectees, broken down by gender, race, ethnicity, and national origin. This shall be accomplished via the publication of the "KCSO Annual Report" produced by the Compliance and Standards Division of the Kern County Sheriff's Office. In addition,

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EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2026	REVIEWED: June 1, 2026	REVISED: June 1, 2026	UPDATED: June 1, 2026
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workforce demographics are reported in the KCSO HR Annual Reports. These reports shall accompany KCHR's annual presentation pursuant to Government Code § 3502.3.

DIRECTIVE:

The Sheriff's Administrative Services Division will:

- Requisition a certified list of eligible applicants for in-house interviews.
- As needed, coordinate calendar recruitment activities with KCHR to ensure active eligible lists are readily available.
- Coordinate in-house interview panels at the appropriate ranks for the vacancy to be filled.
- Coordinate the orientation of the in-house interview panel to establish objectives, facilitate file reviews, and establish interview questions.
- Compile the information listed in Procedure F needed to evaluate competencies, characteristics, and capabilities.
- Forward recommendations to the Sheriff for approval.
- Record and report the results to KCHR.
- Collect the Promotional Assessment Form and file it in the applicant's confidential background file.
- Work with KCHR to ensure the biennial promotions assessment is completed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

County rules and regulations for recruitment, examination, and certification can be found in the CSRs, which are posted on the County of Kern Human Resources web page. The Civil Service Commission is responsible for maintaining CSRs. Information regarding the civil service system can be found in the Kern County Ordinance Code, Chapter 3.04. Per CSR 401.00, it shall be the objective of the Commission to develop and administer examinations (selection processes) for each class of position, which conform as closely as possible to accepted test and measurement standards for validity and reliability. The Chief Human Resources Officer shall, as necessary, establish policies or procedures consistent with these Rules (CSR 300-600 and 900), which will contribute to this objective.

For further information regarding the KCSO promotional process, refer to the attached documents:

- Attachment A- Promotional Plan
- Attachment B- Ideal Candidate Profile (Training Bulletin 24-28)
- Attachment C- Promotional Assessment Form

These documents serve to identify and publish, both internally and externally, the duties, eligibility criteria, knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the ranks of Senior Deputy, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Commander. They are intended to select qualified candidates who are effective supervisors in compliance with County policy and this policy.

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EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2026	REVIEWED: June 1, 2026	REVISED: June 1, 2026	UPDATED: June 1, 2026
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DEFINITIONS¹:

Applicant – a person who has made a formal application to take a civil service examination.

Appointing Authority – the head of a department, supervising head of a department, or any person or group of persons authorized by statute, ordinance, or lawful delegation of authority to make appointments to employment positions.

Certification – the submission by the Division of Human Resources of names from an appropriate eligible list to an appointing authority.

Chief Human Resources Officer – the administrator of the Division of Human Resources as provided in Kern County Ordinance Code Chapter 3.02.

Commission – the Kern County Civil Service Commission.

Eligible – an applicant for any examination who receives a final passing rating and whose name appears on an eligible list.

Eligible List – an officially promulgated list of names of persons who have been examined in an open competition or promotional examination arranged in order of merit and who are eligible for certification for a specific class.

Employee – a person legally holding a position in the classified service of the County of Kern.

Employment List – is an eligible list, a promotional eligible list, and a re-employment list.

Human Resources – the Division of Human Resources referenced in Kern County Ordinance Code Chapter 3.02.

Oral Interview – an examination employing one or more interview panel members who have the responsibility to assess and subjectively rate an examinee's fitness and qualifications for employment.

Performance Examination – any examination requiring the examinee to demonstrate knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes. Such examinations may employ written, oral, or physical responses from the examinee, may be objectively or subjectively graded (or a combination of both), and may present the test material through various media.

Position – a specific office or employment provided by the Positions and Salary Schedule, whether occupied or vacant, limited-term or permanent, calling for the performance of certain duties and the carrying of certain responsibilities by an employee either on a part-time or full-time basis.

Promotion – a change in status of an employee, advancing them through certification from an eligible list to a vacant position in a higher class with higher duties, responsibilities, qualifications, and a higher range of compensation.

Promulgation – the formal act, by Human Resources, of authenticating and approving for use the eligible lists developed for the various classes of positions within the County.

¹ As defined in Kern County Civil Service Rule, Section 100.

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EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2026	REVIEWED: June 1, 2026	REVISED: June 1, 2026	UPDATED: June 1, 2026
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Written Examination – an examination which employs multiple choice completion or true/false responses (or a combination) to the questions presented and which is graded objectively.

ADDITIONAL TERMINOLOGY:

In-House Interview – the KCSO coordinated oral interview. Interview panel members will assess and subjectively rate the list of applicants, providing recommendations for promotion to the appointing authority.

Requisition – a request for additional positions created in NeoGov (a system that is used countywide to request new recruitment or a list of names already on an eligible list).

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EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2026	REVIEWED: June 1, 2026	REVISED: June 1, 2026	UPDATED: June 1, 2026
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