Civil Service Jobs

What is Civil Service?

Civil Service provides a system of developing lists of people who are eligible to be interviewed and hired for public service positions. They also monitor that rules are followed, which protect public service employee rights. The actual public service agency receives the list of eligible persons, and does the interviewing and hiring, but must follow Civil Service regulations.

There are many kinds of public service:
- **New York State Agencies**
- **New York State Authorities**
- **New York State University system (SUNY)**
- **Counties**
- **Cities, towns**
- **Police Departments, Fire Departments**

1. **Government: You can quick-link to many government websites through:**

   http://nyjobsource.com. Beware, because they also have other commercial links, which may charge fees.

   - **New York State Civil Service**: www.cs.state.ny.us. Unless the classification that you want will be posted for testing soon, you will be better off\+- entering through a Continuous Recruitment Civil Service posting. For example, Keyboard Specialist I is an entry-level position at Grade 6 level (+$22,000 per year with full benefits). You can then advance to better paying positions through promotional exams, such as Keyboard Specialist II or III, or Secretary I or II. Rarely are these positions open to the public, though they offer a test, to the public, for Secretary I every 4 or 5 years.

     Get registered to have an e-mail sent to you whenever NYS Civil Service posts a new position examination. (Go to www.cs.state.ny.us; click on "Jobs"; then click on "New Announcements-Email Notice"). The advice from Civil Service is to take a test whenever you can. You can download an application from this website. Check the bottom of the application to see if you qualify for a fee waiver. The other advice is to read each exam announcement carefully, because qualifications change on announcements for the same type of position. For example, currently, no high school degree or GED is required for Keyboard Specialist I, though it was required previously.

     Most of the openings are on the state jobs site (www.statejobsny.com). Although most of the vacancies that are posted on the State Job web site are only open to current State employees,

from time to time there are vacancies that are open to the general public. There are links from this web site that you can use to access additional job postings, some of which may not require an examination. For example, there is a link from this site to the Department of Health, which individuals can use to access Health Research Inc. (HRI).   The www.statejobsny.com site also has links to SUNY and the SUNY Research Foundation, the Unified Court System, and various NYS Authorities.

The Governor's Office of Employee Relations runs the statejobsny website and states that it is offered for the purpose of listing hard-to-fill jobs. Therefore, you can assume that the job listings are not complete, but some of the jobs give access to non-state employees because they are "hard-to-fill". This office gives a slightly different web address for statejobsny: www.statejobsny.goer.state.ny.us.

Fees: When you apply for examinations that require a fee, make sure that you read page 4 of the OC-APP, which specifies when the fee is waived. A lot of people are eligible for the fee waiver. If individuals have questions concerning fees, they can call the Department of Civil Service at 518-457-2487 and ask for the Fee Unit.   If they have questions concerning examinations, they can ask for Examination Information or call directly at 457-6216.

Practice for Exams: You can practice to sharpen skills once you know the areas covered in the Civil Service exam. These areas will be described on the Civil Service exam announcement. Check the library or bookstore for any exam practice books, to find the parts that are similar to what you need to practice. The Mohawk Valley and Southern Adirondack Library Systems (including Schenectady County) library has a terrific online exam practice site. To access it you need a library card, and you go online to: www.sals.edu/learningexpress. On that site, there are several career exams (e.g., Federal Clerical), as well as exams covering basic skills, and academic skills. You can practice skills similar to what you need. Another exceptionally good resource for exam preparation is: www.csea659.org/books.htm. If you have trouble taking exams, get some books from the library or bookstore on the subject of study and test-taking techniques. There are good techniques out for this, that were not available when you were in school. Also view www.columbiagreeneworks.org/find_job.htm.

What Jobs "Fit" Me? Read all Civil Service Exam postings. They list job qualifications, which tells you something about the jobs. Access the **Glossary of Titles Inquiry Tool (GOT-IT)** off of the NYS Civil Service website. This will give individuals the ability to access information regarding various State titles on their own. Make a list of jobs that look right for you. Then you know what to ask about at various state agencies, and what exam postings to look for. When you call the agency personnel office, ask what promotion track leads to the job title that interests you, and at what job do they advise you to enter, so that you can eventually reach that job. All this research will tell you what exam postings to look for.

- **County, city, police and fire services, school districts**. Check with your own county, city, and town for current civil service listings. Find out if there are temp positions available also. Again, read each job announcement carefully for qualifications. Often, experience can be substituted for education, or vice-versa.

- **New York State Legislature**: there are no exams. Websites are: www.Senate.state.ny.us, and www.Assembly.state.ny.us. You have to go in to apply. The Legislative Personnel offices are located in the Legislative Office Building in Albany. While employees are eligible for the benefits shared by State employees (health insurance, retirement program, etc.), their jobs are not subject to the protections or restrictions of the State Civil Service Department. A successful applicant is not required to take any examinations prior to appointment and he or she is strictly an "**at will**" employee without tenure.

- **New York State Judicial branch**: They have their own exams and vacancy postings. Go to: www.statejobsny.com, or directly to: www.nycourts.gov/careers.

- **Non-profits run by state agencies**. For example, Health Research, Inc., which operates on grants. Check at: www.hrinet.org. There are no exams for these jobs. Another example would be the SUNY Research Foundation, at: http://hr.albany.edu/content/rfvac.asp.

- **Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES): www.capregboces.org.** You can apply for their jobs via this website, but some of the clerical positions require that you be on a NYS Civil Service exams list.

- **New York State Department of Health: www.health.state.ny.us.** The New York State Department of Health directly employs over 6,000 people and many more through Health Research Incorporated (HRI), a corporation established to coordinate grant money obtained by the Department. While most positions are located in Albany, many are located in regional and district offices throughout the state. The section on job announcements lists positions for which the Department is recruiting that are available to the general public as well as those for promotion only.

  Questions on employment opportunities may be e-mailed to resume@health.state.ny.us or you may contact the Bureau of Personnel Management at (518) 473-3329, or by fax at (518) 486-7374.

  Health Research Inc. jobs listings can be found on www.hrinet.org. These positions do not require Civil Service exams.

- **Federal jobs**: All applications are done through www.usajobs.opm.gov. Be patient with the website. It takes getting used to, and you need to check frequently. The job titles are misleading, so read the job descriptions. You can look up jobs in any particular federal facility, including locally. U. S. citizens only. They do a thorough background check and fingerprints. They do drug screening. If you have something to worry about in your background, the best idea is to be honest and tell, and explain in the interview.

2. **Other large local (non-government) employers:**

- **Albany Medical Center:** 47 New Scotland Ave., Albany, NY. (518) 262-8414. More than 6500 employees. They hire for the hospital, Medical College, their Child's Hospital site, and physician's groups in Latham, on Hackett Boulevard, and Pinnacle Place (near Stuyvescent Plaza) in Albany, and in Valatie. For general information go to www.amc.edu. You can print their application from the website, and fax your resume to: (518) 262-4487, **BUT** the best way to get a response to your application is to go to their application center at 411 Myrtle Avenue in Albany, because that is where they have all of the jobs listings with job numbers. You can put 3 job listing numbers on each application, so you can be considered even if one is filled. They hold applications only for three months. They have 6500 employees and always have

many job openings, both medical and non-medical office. It's advisable to keep checking and applying, even after applying the first time, due to the constant changes in job openings. They do not reimburse for medical office training, but actively look for people with non-medical clerical backgrounds.

- **St. Peter's Hospital:** So. Manning Blvd. & New Scotland Avenue in Albany. (518) 525-2300. Close to 5000 employees. They have job openings in Albany, Guilderland, Slingerlands, Rensselaer, Colonie, etc. You will need to apply on-line and interview at the hospital offices in Albany. They only accept online applications for clerical positions. (This is a test of computer competency). The web address is: www.stpetershealthcare.org. You click on "apply online," and then click on "view jobs" in the next window. You should check their website every few days because job listings change frequently. When you apply, in the text box, put in **bold type** what other types of positions interest you ("I am also interested in a _____ position."). They are more interested in a good job history and in your office or Microsoft Office skills, than in medical office skills, according to Nancy Shreve in HR. She said that they could train in other skills. If you were interested in eventually learning Medical Coding, for example, you would indicate that in the online application textbox, and apply for related positions, such as in Medical Records. Call to be sure that all parts of the application (online) were received. Keep applying for other jobs, until you get an interview. In the interview, you can get advice on the type of positions you should be applying for.

- **Northeast Health (Albany Memorial Hospital, Samaritan Hospital, Eddy Residences):** This main organization recruits for their two hospitals and Eddy Residences. Altogether they have 4300 employees. To check jobs and apply, go to: www.nehealth.com. Note that this is "**.com**" **-** the ".org" site is another group of hospitals in another state. If you really want your application/resume to be reviewed, you must do this online. The main recruiter gets it and forwards it directly to the department where there is the job opening. If you fax or drop off your resume, it may wait a week until someone has time to do what you should have done, which is send it to the recruiter online! That is their system for getting the resumes directly to the department where there is a job opening. The recruiter does not screen out applications. This is done by managers at the job location.

Most of their office jobs require Microsoft Office knowledge, especially Word and Excel. The level of knowledge depends on the job. Entry-level jobs are: Receptionist and Unit Secretary. For the Unit Secretary position, you need medical terminology. Many of their office jobs do not require medical office knowledge.

3. **Educational Settings:** Schools often have employment links on their websites. Remember, large portions of their employees are clerical. All schools' web addresses end with ".edu", not ".com". These are some local schools worth checking out:

- **Union College: www.union.edu.**
- **Schenectady County Community College: www.sunysccc.edu.**
- **SUNY Albany: www.albany.edu.**
- **Excelsior College (formerly, SUNY Regents College): www.excelsior.edu.**
- **Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC): www.hvcc.edu.**
- **Empire State College: www.esc.edu.**
- **Siena: www.siena.edu.**
- **Russell Sage: www.sage.edu/employment.**
- **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI): www.rpi.edu/dept/hr/.**
- **Maria College: www.mariacollege.edu.**
- **St. Rose College: www.strose.edu.**
- **Schenectady City Schools: www.schenectady.k12.ny.us.**
- **Local school districts:** Look under schools in the Yellow Pages. Call to see if you need to live in the district and to find out how to apply and whether testing is required.
- BOCES – see above, under Civil Service.

4. **You need to be prepared:** It is often a long wait before your name gets pulled off of a civil service list for a job interview. You can help yourself by checking periodically where you are on the list, by calling the government agencies, where you want to work, and talking to the Personnel Department to find out what is happening, and by preparing yourself for the interview as assertively as you would for any other job that you really want.

- Find out about what the job is like **before** you interview. Find out what they work on, read whatever you can find about that agency and it's functions, growth, problems, etc.
- Create a "customized" resume, designed to emphasize your transferable skills that relate to the job you will be interviewing for.

MORE TIPS & RESOURCES FOR GOVERNMENT JOBS

1 - If you do not utilize e-mail, you should. You can sign up for automatic test notification via e-mail through the Civil Service Web site (http://www.cs.state.ny.us/announ/mainpages/announcements.htm)

2 - There is a full State Vacancy List through the Governor's office of Employee Relations (GOER) that you can bookmark this site and check it regularly (http://statejobsny.goer.state.ny.us/)

This is also where the "JOBS IN DEMAND" list is located…no tests needed for these jobs.

3 - not all agencies are on the GOER vacancy list, so you should regularly check individual sites such as SUNY, Unified Court System, etc. The above site has links to each of these.

4 - Regularly check America's Job Exchange…a lot of counties list their jobs there.

Career in Civil Service

Summary

New York State law requires that all Civil Service jobs be classified as competitive, unless the Civil Service Commission specifically classifies a position as exemption-competitive or labor.

In the Competitive class, appointments are generally made from Civil Service lists based on the results of examinations which evaluate knowledge and skills required for the job. The examinations are either open-competitive (open to all qualified persons) or promotional (open only to qualified New York State employees). The Department of Civil Service scores the tests and prepares a list of ranked candidates, which is forwarded to the appointing authority or agency. From that group of candidates, the agency interviews and selects the appropriate person, using the "rule of three," which means that appointments must be made from among the three highest ranking eligibles willing to accept the position. If there are candidates with tied ratings, selection may be made from those willing to accept the position with a rating equal to or higher than the rating of the third highest ranked eligible. Additional information on the examination and hiring process can be obtained from the "Frequently Asked Questions" section on our web site at http://www.cs.state.ny.us .

Non-competitive class positions are filled by individuals who meet the required minimum training and/or experience requirements when the position does not warrant a competitive examination. Agencies appoint someone after a review of the applicant's qualifications. There is no direct line of promotion in the non-competitive class. Some examples of non-competitive class positions include: the skilled trades (such as welder, carpenter, plumber) or technical positions (such as research scientist). There are also some non-competitive positions designated specifically to be filled by qualified individuals with disabilities or Vietnam-era veterans.

Exempt class positions usually involve policy making or confidential duties. Exempt class positions do not have the same civil service protections as competitive class positions. Labor class positions have little or no minimum qualifications. In labor class positions there is no official line of promotion, nor are labor class employees eligible for transfer. Flag people on road crews, grounds keepers, and cleaners are examples of positions in the labor class. Attached you will find general information on reinstatements and information on how New York State jobs are filled. Many agencies post their vacancies on the State Job web site at http://www.statejobsny.com . Although most of the vacancies that are usually posted on the State Job web site are only open to current State employees, from time to time there are vacancies that are open to the general public. For positions that are open to the general public there would have to be an actual vacancy posting in order to apply. There are links from that web site that you can use to access additional vacancy postings, some of which may not require an examination, such as: HRI. There is a link from this site to the Department of Health which individuals can use to access Health Research Inc. or HRI. The statejobsny site also has links to SUNY, the Unified Court System, and various Authorities that individuals should also check for other possible employment opportunities. When individuals apply for examinations that require a fee, make sure that they read page 4 of the OC-APP which specifies when the fee is waived. If individuals have questions concerning fees, they can call the Department of Civil Service at 518-457-2487 and ask for the Fee Unit. If they have questions concerning examinations, they can ask for Examination Information or call directly at 457-6216.