

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q. What is Civil Service?

A. Every job in local government falls under the Civil Service System. A "Civil Service" employee can be anyone from a deputy sheriff, secretary, registered nurse, mechanic, a nurse's aide, attorney, accountant, labourer, food service worker, etc. Different jobs have different requirements. The Civil Service System is required by the New York State **Constitution** and is intended to ensure all positions are filled by merit and fitness. The County manages all civil service work for all positions in the Cayuga County government, as well as in the towns, villages, school districts, and some special districts, except for the City of Auburn and the Auburn City School Districts. It is the County's duty to ensure that all positions under its administration are in compliance with civil service law.

Q. When is the Human Resources/Civil Service Department open?

A. The department is open to the public between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, except on holidays observed by County Departments. Forms, study guides, important Civil Service information, exam and job announcements are available on this website 24/7.

Q. How do I know what jobs are available or exams are being given at any time?

A. You can find current job opportunities and exam announcements on this web page.

Q. How can I explore opportunities in specific types of positions (e.g., clerical, management, technical) if I don't know the specific job titles?

A. On the Human Resources/Civil Service web page, there is a link for email notices that allows you to input your email address and select the employment categories in which you are interested. When an exam or vacancy occurs in any of those categories, an email notice will be sent to you.

Q. Do I have to take a test?

A. Most positions require that you take a test to be considered for a permanent job. These are called competitive positions. For competitive positions when there is no list of tested applicants, a person may be appointed "provisionally" (temporarily) until the results of the next test are established. The provisional employee must score high enough to be permanently appointed or else be removed from that job.

Q. What positions do not require a test?

A. There are three types of positions which have no test requirements. Exempt positions are those where the employer decides the qualifications of applicants and chooses the person they want to hire. The process is similar to that found in private industry. Non-competitive positions have specific education and experience requirements which you must meet. Employers choose from among the qualified people who apply. Labor positions have no requirements. Employers may choose anyone for these jobs. However, they frequently select individuals with the best work record.

Q. Do I have to be a Cayuga County resident to take a civil service examination?

A. Most examinations do not require that you be a Cayuga County resident, however some do. Residence information is listed on each examination announcement. Some municipalities have residence requirements for employment, so even though you may not need to be a resident to take the exam, you may need to be a resident to be considered for appointment.

Q. How do I apply to take a Civil Service exam?

A. If you are interested in applying for employment with Cayuga County, please apply on-line or print and complete each page of the exam application.

- Q.** How do I apply for positions that do not require a Civil Service exam?
- A.** Applications and job descriptions for position that do not require an exam are listed on this we page. Most positions have minimum qualifications.
- Q.** Do I need to fill out a separate application for each position I apply for?
- A.** Yes. If you apply for more than one Civil Service exam, you must complete one application for each exam you wish to take. Most exams require that you pay a non-refundable application fee. Check the exam announcement to see if a fee is required.
- Q.** Is there an application fee or examination fee?
- A.** There is a non-refundable application processing fee (*NOT examination fee*) for each examination which must accompany your application. The amount of the fee depends on the type of examination and is listed on each examination announcement. This fee is non-refundable as it is used to defray the cost of processing applications. Therefore, please carefully review the minimum qualifications required for each exam you intend to take to ensure your experience and education meet them.
- Q.** Can an exception be made for an application deadline?
- A.** No. When applying for an exam, take note of the closing date for filing. Applications must be submitted online or filed in our office by 5:00 p.m. or postmarked by the closing date for the exam. No exceptions will be made.
- Q.** How specific do I need to be on employment dates on the application?
- A.** Please be as specific as you can. You must provide at least the month and year of your employment start and end dates. Vagueness on dates will not be resolved in your favor.
- Q.** Are hours worked per week actually important on the application?
- A.** Yes. You must enter the actual or average number of hours worked per week. This information is used when reviewing your application against the minimum qualifications to assess whether you have enough experience.
- Q.** What happens after I apply for the test(s)?
- A.** Applications for examinations are reviewed approximately two weeks after the application deadline. Applicants who do not meet the qualifications are notified by mail and are given one week to respond with additional information. Individuals who meet the minimum qualifications are notified by mail at least two weeks prior to the test date of the test location and other instructions.
- Q.** What can I do if I receive a disqualification letter from Civil Service?
- A.** The letter usually states that it *appears* that you do not meet the minimum qualifications for the examination. This means that you may not have provided enough information on the application to determine that you meet the qualifications. Read the disqualification letter closely, and then submit a letter providing the missing or unclear information. The Civil Service Commission will then be able to take a second look at your application and determine if you qualify.
- Q.** What will be on the test?
- A.** You can find out what areas each test will cover from the exam announcement under the heading "Scope of Examination". Announcements are posted approximately four weeks prior to the closing date for filing an application. Exam announcements are available in the Cayuga County Human Resources/Civil Service Department or on this web site.

Q. How can I prepare for the test?

A. New York State Civil Service publishes “How to take a written test” and several study guides are available for entry-level exam series. Cayuga County Human Resources/Civil Service does not endorse any commercially available exam study guides.

Q. Where are tests usually held?

A. The Cayuga County Human Resources/Civil Service Department uses several sites to hold examinations. The site for your particular examination will be printed on your admission notice.

Q. When will I know my score on the exam and my rank on the Civil Service List?

A. Test results are received from New York State Civil Service approximately three months after an exam is held. You will be notified by mail of your score and placement on the eligible list for that title. An eligible list is a ranked listing of all passing candidates from a Civil Service exam. An eligible list is established for a minimum of one year and can be extended to a maximum of four years.

Q. What if I have moved since taking the test?

A. If you have moved and have applied for a Civil Service Exam or have recently taken an exam and are awaiting results, please notify our office promptly so that your examination records can be accurately updated.