



# An Introduction to City of Albany Civil Service Examinations

Created by City of Albany Human Resources  
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# Questions Answered Herein



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# What is a civil service examination?

- Civil service examinations assess candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for performing the job.
- Civil service exams eliminate nepotism and political favors in the hiring process.
- New York State Law establishes a civil service system according to the principles of "merit and fitness," as mandated by the State Constitution.

# New York State Constitution Article V, Section 6

- “Appointments and promotions in the civil service of the state and all civil divisions thereof [...] shall be made according to merit and fitness to be ascertained, as far as practicable, by examination which, as far as practicable, shall be competitive [...].”

# Objectives of Civil Service Exams

- ➔ **Job Selection Based on Merit**
- ➔ **Fair & Open Competition**
- ➔ **Career System**

# Why do I have to take and pass a civil service examination to get a City job?



- In many situations, the City can only hire from a list of candidates who have taken and passed the civil service exam for a given position.

# How do I know which positions require a civil service examination?

- Positions that are classified as competitive, require a civil service examination.
- Position classifications are listed on all City of Albany job descriptions, exam announcements, and job postings.



## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:** Under general supervision by the department head or higher level manager, the incumbent makes independent decisions on problems encountered within a delegated scope of activity. The incumbent assists in the development, planning and coordination of departmental activities. Supervision of others is not typical of this position.

# How will I know when to apply for a civil service examination?

- The City advertises its upcoming civil service exams for 21 calendar days on the City's [employment portal](#). A few exams are available for longer periods.
- The examinations that are offered all the time (due to the constant need to fill those positions) are listed under “Continuous Recruitment Exams.”
- You can sign-up to receive email notifications when new exams are posted in the employment categories you are interested in [here](#).



# How do I sign up to take a civil service exam?

- You must apply online to take an exam and demonstrate you meet the minimum qualifications of the position. Human Resources will review your application and they will send you a notification indicating whether you were approved to take the exam.
- An admittance notice will be emailed prior to the test date with directions and information specific to the exam you are taking ( time, location, allowed items, etc.)

# How do I prepare to take a civil service exam?



- The NYS Department of Civil Service has created some test guides for civil service exams. They are typically available for entry-level titles and are not provided for every civil service examination. General test guides are available as well.
- Study guides for exams are made available 60 days prior to the exam at:  
<https://www.cs.ny.gov/testing/testguides.cfm>
- Candidates should also review the "Subjects of Examination" portion of the examination announcement for information on test type and exam content.

A General Guide to  
Written Tests

# What do I need to know for the day of the exam?

- You will be emailed an admittance letter prior to your exam date.
- This letter will include:
  - Maximum time allowed to take the exam
  - Exam location
  - What you are allowed to bring with you to the exam location
  - Additional information needed for the exam



# What happens after I take the exam?



- For most exams, your exam results will be emailed to you once the City receives the exam scores back from NYS Civil Service, which scores the exams. (This typically takes between 8-12 weeks.)
- Results of *continuous recruitment exams* will be emailed within 24 business hours of taking the exam.
- Candidates who successfully pass an exam are added to a list of eligible candidates that is used by the hiring agency/City of Albany Department to fill any vacancies until the exam is offered again.

# What happens after I take the exam? (continued)

- When the department is ready to hire, the City will email canvass letters to individuals on the eligible list asking if they are interested in being considered in the hiring process.
- You must return the canvass letter or you will not be considered in the current round of hiring.

# Who can I ask if I have questions?



- If you have questions, concerns, or need help applying, please reach out to the City of Albany Office of Human Resources via:
  - Phone: 518-434-5049
  - Email: [HR@AlbanyNY.gov](mailto:HR@AlbanyNY.gov)
  - In Person: City Hall  
24 Eagle Street, Room 301  
Albany, NY 12207

# Links

- City of Albany Employment Portal: <https://jobs.albanyny.gov/>
- Apply for jobs: <https://jobs.albanyny.gov/>
- Apply for civil service exams: <https://jobs.albanyny.gov/exams>
- Sign up for email alerts of exams and job openings:  
<https://jobs.albanyny.gov/emailnotification>
- NYS Civil Service Test Guides:  
<https://www.cs.ny.gov/testing/testguides.cfm>

