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55-A EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FACT SHEET

WHAT IS THE 55-A EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM?

55-a refers to the section of New York State Civil Service Law which allows local governments to bypass the examination process when employing qualified individuals with disabilities in entry-level competitive civil service jobs. A 55-a appointment is a non-competitive appointment to what would otherwise be a competitive position. The purpose of the program is to help individuals with disabilities overcome barriers and gain access to entry level civil service employment opportunities.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE 55-A PROGRAM?

Eligibility is determined on a job-by-job basis. You may be eligible if:

- A) You are certified as having a mental or physical disability which is a substantial barrier to employment; and
- B) You are qualified to perform satisfactorily the duties of a particular job.

WHO DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY?

- A) The New York State office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) or the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) certifies your disability based on recent information that you provide. If the information is insufficient to make a determination, you may be required to undergo a medical examination paid for by ACCES-VR or CBVH.
- B) Civil Service determines if you meet the minimum educational and/or experience qualifications for the particular job.

HOW DO I CONTACT THE LOCAL ACCES-VR OFFICE?

The Albany ACCES-VR office is located at 80 Wolf Road, Suite 200, 2nd Floor, Albany, NY 12205 and can be contacted at 518-473-8097 or 800-272-5448.

WHAT JOB OPPURTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

Entry-level positions exist in technical, professional, administrative and clerical areas.

ARE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS GUARANTEED A JOB?

No. The program is voluntary and appointing authorities are not required to hire a 55-a eligible person. When an appointing authority is interested in hiring you, the job description will be reviewed by ACCES-VR or CBVH to assist you in determining your ability to perform the essential duties of the job.

SHOULD 55-A ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TAKE CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS?

Yes. The 55-a Employment Program is voluntary and some departments and local jurisdictions may not participate. To make sure that you do not miss any employment opportunities, you should take all the examinations for positions that you qualify for and are interested in. Reasonable accommodations are provided for exam takers with disabilities to enable them to participate in the civil service examination process.

PROMOTIONAL OPPURTUNITIES FOR 55-A EMPLOYEES

Section 52 of New York Civil Service Law permits 55-a employees to complete in promotional examinations for which they qualify.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

1. You must meet the minimum qualifications and file an application for the position(s) that you are interested in. You must have an open case file with ACCES-VR or CBVH and have been determined by one of these agencies to have a disability under the meaning of the law.
2. Contact the Office of Human Resources at (518) 434-5049 or civilservice@albany.ny.gov to discuss the 55-a program and initiate your paperwork. HR will complete the Employer section of the 55-a application form and attach the job description. Provide the application form to your ACCES-VR or CBVH counselor.
3. ACCES-VR or CBVH evaluates your skills and abilities against the essential functions (typical work activities) of the job and determines if you are approved or denied. The agency may suggest appropriate reasonable accommodations necessary to perform the essential functions of the job. The approval decision is made on a job-by-job basis so if you are not determined to be physically or mentally able to perform the essential functions of one job, you may still be eligible for another position.
4. ACCES-VR or CBVH returns the completed application form to the Office of Human Resources. If approved, your 55-a application is "tagged" by HR as being eligible. Each time a vacancy occurs all approved applications are made available to the hiring manager for consideration. 55-a status gives the candidate the same standing for eligibility as anyone who is among the top 3 on an eligible list. Your 55-a eligibility is shared with the hiring manager and they are encouraged to include you in the interview process.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND:

- When you apply as a 55-a eligible candidate, you are authorizing the Office of Human Resources to make contact with hiring managers in an attempt to facilitate interviews and placement - You acknowledge that the hiring manager knows you have a disability and that you may need accommodations. You are under no obligation to disclose the nature of your disability.
 - **If you do not wish for the potential employers to be aware that you have a disability, simply do not file the 55-a paperwork. You may retract your application for 55-a eligibility at any time.**
- Hiring managers are under no obligation to interview or hire you. You must be able to interview well and move through the selection process on your own merits. The hiring manager is looking for candidates who have the qualifications, knowledge, skills, abilities and personal characteristics necessary to perform the essential functions of the job at the highest level possible. You need to demonstrate, through the interview process, that you are the best candidate for this position. Once you have been offered the job, you can negotiate reasonable accommodations.

55-A TITLES

- Account Clerk
- Accounting Assistant
- Adjudication Clerk I
- Administrative Assistant
- Animal Control Officer
- Assessment Aide
- Clerk Typist
- Community Engagement Clerk
- Constituent Services Assistant
- Custodian

- Customer Contact Specialist
- Data Entry Operator
- Dispatcher
- Human Resources Generalist I
- Information Clerk
- Information Clerk II
- Information Technology Specialist I
- Junior Engineer
- Keyboard Specialist
- Laboratory Technician
- Library Clerk
- Mapping Technologist Assistant
- Paralegal
- Parking Garage Attendant
- Permit Technician
- Planner
- Program Aide
- Public Service Officer
- Receptionist
- Supply Clerk
- Traffic Safety Aide
- Vital Statistics Specialist
- Water Treatment Plant Assistant Operator Trainee
- Youth Aide
- Youth Outreach Coordinator