

Role of Civil Service

The Civil Service Division of the City of Albany Department of Human Resources reviews approximately 1,600 applications every year. Each year there are around 15 different examination dates; that's an average of 107 applications to review for each exam date. Sometimes, depending on the popularity of the examination, such as a Police Officer or a Firefighter examination, that figure might jump to over 600. And, there is usually only about two weeks in which to review these applications. This is quite a number of applications and supporting material to review within such a short time frame. Submitting a well-prepared application speeds up the application review process and allows Civil Service staff to make all the arrangements that are necessary to test several hundred candidates.

Importance of the Application

Whether your application is approved or not for a particular examination may depend on how well it is completed. In completing your application, think of it as an advertisement of yourself. It is important to think about your application in this way because it will be used to review your qualifications and training against the minimum qualifications for the examination or for a position that needs to be filled in a City department. Decisions will be based on the application that you submit. Remember this application represents you!

Few applicants make really effective use of the application when documenting how they meet the minimum qualifications or selling themselves. Most applicants could substantially improve the way they describe themselves and their training and experience, their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and other assets as prospective employees.

Completing the Application: Dos and Don'ts

Please review the following suggestions before you complete your next application. Taking the time to submit a complete and accurate application the first time will save you effort later.

Be sure to complete ALL items on the application. (Unanswered questions make it appear that you are avoiding the question, that you are unable to answer, or that you are careless.) Do whatever research is necessary to give exactly the information that is asked for.

Provide all the information asked about your education and training, especially that which relates to the examination or position for which you are applying. Include on-the-job, informal and self-acquired training, as well as training in formal courses or programs. Include, where relevant, all registrations, certification and licenses held (vehicle and professional) and whether they are temporary or permanent. If temporary, remember to record the term.

One of the most important sections on the application is the work experience section. Provide the most complete and specific descriptions of duties that you can in the space provided. Work extra hard in writing the descriptions of those jobs that were similar to the one for which you are applying.

The application asks for the month/day/year of employment and hours worked per week. In most cases, the month/year may be adequate. If there is any doubt whether you have enough time performing the job duties, record the month/day/and year. In addition, you must enter the actual or average number of hours worked per week for each position held.

Be truthful on your application. Deliberately misleading or outright falsehoods are likely to be discovered, and could lead to your disqualification for testing or an appointment.

You may not substitute a resume for any part of your application. A resume is not formatted to address the specific questions on the application form; for example: salary, supervisor's name or hours per week worked. A resume does not expedite application review.

Indicate volunteer jobs, organizational participation and other outside activities that relate, even indirectly, to the job for which you are applying. This type of experience may be important to the interviewer.

Remember to provide a phone number where you can be reached, or where a message can be taken for you. If you don't have a phone, ask a friend, neighbor or relative if they will take a message and relay it to you. Many employers prefer to make interview appointments by phone.

Avoid errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. If you're not sure about the spelling of a word, or the use of a term or punctuation mark, check it out in a dictionary, English grammar book, or consult someone.

Submit your application with any required fee on or before the closing date for filing to the location specified.

A copy is saved on your account for future submissions. If you're going to be interviewed for a job, review your application before the interview to refresh your memory. You will probably be discussing the things you reported on the application form.

Summary

The principal tool used in the screening, evaluation and selection of applicants is the application. You may disadvantage yourself because of the haste and carelessness with which you complete the application. Remember, your application says a lot about you!

Commonly Held Misconceptions

A Rejection Letter From Civil Service For A Civil Service Job or Examination Is The End Of The Line!

When you get a letter from Civil Service saying 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 rejection letter closely, and then submit a letter providing the missing or unclear information. Civil Service will then be able to take a second look at your application and determine if you qualify.

Deadlines Don't Matter, Exceptions Can Always Be Made!

This is not true! When you apply to take an examination, take note of the closing date for filing. An application must be postmarked or in the possession of a Civil Service on the closing date for filing on the exam announcement.

How Specific Must I Be On Date Of Employment?

Be as specific as you can, you must state the month and year of your start and end dates. If you are currently employed, then state that in the space provided for the end date.

Are Hours Worked Per Week Really Important?

Yes, you must enter the actual or average number of hours worked per week for each position held.

Good luck in the process!