

# TOMPKINS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

Inclusion Through Diversity



## OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Office  
125 E. Court Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 274-5526

Tompkins County is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply

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**TITLE:** Employee Benefits Administrator

**EXAM NO:** 61537

**SALARY:** \$26.27 per hour - 2017 Hire Rate

**EXAM DATE:** 04/21/18

**ISSUE DATE:** 01/29/18

**THE FINAL DATE TO FILE APPLICATIONS:** 02/13/18

**DATE THAT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM POSTING:** 04/22/18

**RESIDENCY WAIVED**

**THE USE OF A QUIET HAND-HELD CALCULATOR WILL BE ALLOWED FOR THIS EXAMINATION.**

**LOCATION OF POSITION/VACANCIES:**

There is currently one vacancy in the title of Employee Benefits Administrator located at the Tompkins County Department of Human Resources. The eligible list resulting from this open competitive examination may be used to fill any full-time, part-time or temporary vacancies that may occur during the life of the list.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

- (a) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered four year college or university with a Bachelors Degree or higher **AND** two years of full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time) experience administering an employee benefits program; **OR**
- (b) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered two year college **AND** four years of full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time) experience administering an employee benefits program; **OR**
- (c) Graduation from a high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma **AND** six years of full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time) experience administering an employee benefits program; **OR**
- (d) Any combination of education, training and/or experience equal to or greater than that specified in (a), (b), or (c) above as determined by the Commissioner of Human Resources.

**NOTES:** Verifiable part-time experience will be pro-rated toward meeting full-time experience requirements. In your application for employment, please specify the number of hours per week performing the benefits coordination function.

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:**

This position involves responsibility for coordinating, administering or performing various phases of public employee benefits administration for a county. An employee in this class is responsible for analyzing, planning, developing, publicizing and administering all health insurance, dental insurance, retirement and other employee benefits programs as appropriate. The Employee Benefits Administrator will perform these duties on behalf of the County (which may include specific duties on behalf of TC-3 and the Tompkins County Public Library), current employees and retirees who are eligible to participate in health, dental, vision, flexible spending accounts, health reimbursement accounts, and disability benefits. The Employee Benefits Administrator, with assistance from providers, will advise management and employees on best practices for obtaining maximum utilization and benefit from programs with the least cost to the taxpayer and consumer. Once acclimated to the department and work, the employee will work under only the most general direction of the Commissioner of Human Resources and is expected to exercise a high level of autonomy and good independent judgment when carrying out the duties of the position. Internal contacts are with management and staff across departments within the jurisdiction and require professional collaboration to ensure that the benefits programs are compliant and appropriately utilized. External contacts are with professional associates and third-party vendors and involve the development and administration of various benefit programs and services. Supervision of subordinate staff is not generally a function of this position. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required.

#### **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

- Provides excellent customer service while serving as an ombudsman for employees and retirees as they navigate the complexities of the various benefit programs administered by the County's third-party providers;
- Coordinates with a third-party vendor to administer the various health insurance plans for County employees and retirees;
- Performs data entry to the third-party vendor website to maintain subscriber information as related to the various health insurance plans;
- Coordinates and administers the various prescription drug programs on behalf of County employees and retirees;
- Oversees and interact with third-party providers who administer the County's Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRAs);
- Performs data entry to add participants and data maintenance to remove participants or deactivate accounts when necessary;
- Oversees and coordinates with third-party providers who administer the County's Disability program, COBRA administration, and Workers Compensation programs;
- Performs data entry to the third-party vendor website to maintain accounts;
- Administers the health, dental and vision insurance plans;
- Manages Worker's Compensation claims, NYS and other retirement programs, the deferred compensation plan, an employee wellness program, a flexible benefit plan, an Employee Assistance Program, and other specific benefits;
- Advises dependents and survivors of continuation rights in benefit areas as necessary;
- Answers benefit questions for management, employees, dependents, survivors, retirees, hospitals, doctors, lawyers or various providers;
- Collaborates with other personnel on changes which may affect monthly bills from health insurance carriers, follows up with carrier and/or provider on enrollment problems;
- Formulates, implements and monitors procedural policies related to health insurance, safety, claims and loss settlement;
- Analyzes health/dental benefit programs and costs/exposure and recommends programs to contain costs and reduce liability;
- Conducts investigation of claims for 207-c, disability and workers compensation incident reports and develops supportive documentation for claims processing;
- Performs Civil Service law Section 71 or Section 72 analysis to determine cumulative or continuous absence based on disability and notifies the Commissioner when a situation meets the criteria that would warrant termination under Section 73 of the Civil Service law;
- May support the County in negotiations by designing and costing out benefit proposals and recommending changes to existing programs;
- Acts as a consultant for a wide variety of employee-employer problems;
- Maintains records to provide for health insurance premium payments;
- Notifies retirees of changes relative to coverage premiums, etc.;
- Assists with claim filing or research when questions arise on payments, changes, benefits program provisions, etc.;
- Oversees all aspects of the County Worker's Compensation risk management program;
- Coordinates COBRA program with contract agency when necessary;
- Works with all benefit carriers to monitor costs which effect experience ratings, premiums and/or contract charges, employees' claims and/or payments;
- Completes various periodic reports and forms required by benefit carriers;
- Assists employees with establishing correct service time and wage computation and other technical advice when filing for retirement benefits, explains options when required;

- May Develop and conduct weekly or bi-weekly orientation sessions for all new employees, updating material as necessary to provide technical information relative to benefit areas and negotiated or legally mandated benefits and reviews appropriate policies;
- Develops Wellness programs in consultation with other members of Wellness Committee, assists with communication of such programs;
- Maintains reference materials and updates, relative to benefits areas;
- Schedules and assists providers with informational sessions, enrollment meetings;
- Works with all departments to secure timely and correct filing of workers' compensation claims;
- Performs follow-up with employees, medical providers and carriers, including filing supplemental forms to assure that employees receive timely and correct benefits and reimbursement for out-of-pocket expense;
- Requests wage reimbursements as appropriate, and computes reinstatement of fringe time if applicable;
- Participates in periodic salary and benefits surveys by selection of sources, analysis of data, preparation of tabulations and recommendation of pay rates;
- Conducts studies and analyzes a variety of reports and makes recommendations to the appropriate management staff.

#### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Thorough knowledge of policies, procedures, negotiated provisions and legal requirements in all benefit areas;
- Thorough knowledge of personnel procedures to allow correct interpretation and application of benefit areas of negotiated union contracts;
- Thorough knowledge of laws, rules and regulations pertaining to employee benefit programs;
- Thorough knowledge of office technology, procedures and equipment;
- Good knowledge of principles, practices and techniques of personnel administration;
- Working knowledge of public administration as it applies to local government;
- Working knowledge of English and statistical techniques;
- Ability to communicate effectively and accurately, both orally and in writing;
- Ability to understand, and interpret complex written material, including Federal and State laws, contract language, collective bargaining agreements, etc.;
- Ability to prepare, maintain and follow up on independent correspondence, necessary forms, reports and records as required to enable correct and timely administration of benefit areas;
- Ability to relate well with employees, staff, management, consultants, etc. ;
- Ability to operate a personal computer as required, either with or without reasonable accommodations;
- The employee's physical and mental condition shall be commensurate with the demands of the position, either with or without reasonable accommodations.

#### **PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS:**

In respect to the physical demands of this position, there may considerable visual effort and repetitive hand/finger movements associated with the execution of the tasks delegated with this role. The incumbent must be able to accurately manage and manipulate information, using computer software and hardware systems, with or without reasonable accommodations. Otherwise, the position requires only minimal physical effort which, for the most part, is performed while seated or standing at a desk, but can include some walking and/or handling light boxes or supplies. The employee's ability to communicate (verbally and in writing) must be such that they are able to understand and carry out complex detailed instructions and/or share information to ensure adequate delivery of services.

The employee often experiences tight deadlines, rush orders and frequent exposure to distressing human situations. As a result, considerable interpersonal skills are needed to advise and guide program participants on the best use of their benefits and/or to plan and coordinate inter-group cooperation when it comes to coordinating with third-party providers.

The employee must possess the knowledge and ability needed to utilize office equipment, including computer systems, inclusive of necessary software and operating systems, with or without reasonable accommodations. Operation of such machinery requires considerable precision, manual dexterity, knowledge and skill.

There are minimal hazards or risks associated with the performance of this work. The work is performed indoors, in an office setting, in a temperature controlled environment and the incumbent is not generally exposed to disagreeable working conditions.

**Complete Scope of the examination and Expanded subtest descriptions:**

1. Administering a negotiated labor agreement

These questions test for a knowledge of labor/management issues relating to the administration of a negotiated labor agreement and the ability to interpret and apply the terms and conditions of the agreement. Questions may cover such areas as dealing with representatives of employee unions, employee grievances, disciplinary actions, arbitration, employee leave policy, performance evaluations, training, employee assistance programs, health and safety matters, layoff procedures, health insurance benefits, and salary adjustments.

2. Preparing written material

These questions test for the ability to present information clearly and accurately, and to organize paragraphs logically and comprehensibly. For some questions, you will be given information in two or three sentences followed by four restatements of the information. You must then choose the best version. For other questions, you will be given paragraphs with their sentences out of order. You must then choose, from four suggestions, the best order for the sentences.

3. Public personnel administration

These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices used in applying New York State, federal, and local laws, rules, and policies to situations encountered in planning and executing the personnel functions in a government agency. Questions may cover such areas as recruitment, selection, and placement; position classification; performance evaluation; and employee relations.

4. Public contact principles and practices

These questions test for knowledge of techniques used to interact with other people, to gather and present information, and to provide assistance, advice, and effective customer service in a courteous and professional manner. Questions will cover such topics as understanding and responding to people with diverse needs, perspectives, personalities, and levels of familiarity with agency operations, as well as acting in a way that both serves the public and reflects well on your agency.

5. Understanding and interpreting written material based on laws, policies, and procedures relating to health insurance, retirement and other benefits

These questions test for the ability to read, interpret, and apply relevant laws, policies, and procedures. You will be provided with brief reading selections based on or taken from legal text, each followed by one or more questions. All information needed to answer the questions is contained in the reading selections. No prior knowledge of the subject is required.

The New York State Department of Civil Service has not prepared a test guide for this examination. However, candidates may find information in the publication "How to take a written test" helpful in preparing for this test. This publication is available online at: [www.cs.ny.gov/testing/localtestguides.cfm](http://www.cs.ny.gov/testing/localtestguides.cfm)

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Falsification of any part of the "Application for Employment" will result in disqualification.

Accepted candidates will be notified when and where to appear for the examination. If you do not receive your notice to appear at least three days before the date of the written examination, call Tompkins County Department of Human Resources at 274-5526. If an application is disapproved, due notice will be sent. This department does not make formal acknowledgment of the receipt of an application or take responsibility for non-delivery or postal delay.

Applicants must answer every question on the application form and make sure that the application is complete in all respects. Incomplete applications will be disapproved.

**ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL, VETERANS OR DISABLED VETERANS** desiring to claim additional credit will request the Veterans Credits application form, at any time between the date of application for examination(s) and the date of the establishment of the resulting eligible list. You must meet the requirements set by NYS for these credits and they may be used only once. **YOU MAY NOT CLAIM ADDITIONAL CREDITS AFTER THE ELIGIBLE LIST HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. IT IS THE CANDIDATE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REQUEST THE VETERANS CREDIT APPLICATION FORMS AND TO SUBMIT THESE FORMS AND ANY SUPPORTING PAPERWORK BEFORE THE ELIGIBLE LIST IS ESTABLISHED.**

Tompkins County's written examinations are prepared and rated by the New York State Department of Civil Service in accordance with Section 23-2 of Civil Service Law. The provisions of the New York State Civil Service Rules and Regulations, which deal with the rating and review of the examinations apply.

The duration of the eligible lists may be fixed for a minimum of one and a maximum of four years and may be extended beyond four years if there has been a restriction against the filling of vacancies in that title.

The candidates must complete a separate "Application for Employment" for each open-competitive and/or promotional examination that the candidate is eligible to take.

All experience required meeting the acceptable training and experience is full-time experience. (Part-time experience will be credited on a prorated basis).

Appointment from an eligible list must be made from the top three candidates willing to accept the appointment.

Tompkins County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. As part of its efforts to provide employment opportunities to the physically handicapped, Tompkins County Civil Service has adopted a rule permitting the employment of qualified physically handicapped persons without competitive examination (pursuant to Section 55 of Civil Service Law). If you meet the minimum qualifications for this position and wish to know more about this rule, please contact the Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Office.

Unless otherwise notified, candidates are permitted to use quiet, hand-held, and solar or battery powered calculators. Devices with Typewriter Keyboards, Spell Checkers, Personal Digital Assistants, Address Books, Language Translators, Dictionaries or any similar devices are prohibited. You may not bring books or other reference materials.

**CROSS-FILING - APPLYING FOR CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS IN MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS WHEN EXAMINATIONS ARE SCHEDULED ON THE SAME DATE:** When applying for examinations across multiple jurisdictions - all of which are scheduled on the same day - you must submit a Tompkins County Cross-Filing Form. This form must be submitted no later than 4:30 PM on the final filing date of the examination. On this form, list each examination that you are taking and then tell us where you would like to sit. The purpose is to ensure that all of the test materials for the various examinations that you are taking will be available in one location. If you do not provide the cross-filing form to us by the final filing date, we cannot ensure that we can accommodate your desire to cross-file. If any of the examinations are State level examinations, you must sit at the State test center. You will still need to complete the Tompkins County cross-filing form. If sitting at the State site, the State will notify you of when and where to report for your examination(s) and you should bring all admittance letters to the State site. If you are not taking a State examination, bring all admittance letters to your chosen testing site. If you have any question please call Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Department (607) 274-5526. The Cross File form is located at <http://www.tompkins-co.org/personnel/CivilSrvForms/index.html>

**FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION AND HANDICAPPED PERSONS:** If special arrangements for testing are required, please indicate this on your application.

**ALL CANDIDATES FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR POSITIONS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND BOCES GOVERNED BY TOMPKINS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE MAY HAVE THE FOLLOWING SPECIAL REQUIREMENT. PER CHAPTER 180 OF THE LAWS OF 2000, AND BY REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, TO BE EMPLOYED IN A POSITION DESIGNATED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR BOCES AS INVOLVING DIRECT CONTACT WITH STUDENTS, A CLEARANCE FOR EMPLOYMENT FROM THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS REQUIRED.**

In conformance with Section 85-a of the Civil Service Law, children of firefighters and police officers killed in the line of duties shall be entitled to receive an additional ten points in a competitive examination for original appointment in the same municipality in which his or her parent has served. If you are qualified to participate in this examination and are a child of firefighter or police officer killed in the line of duties in this municipality, please inform this office of this matter when you submit your application for examination. A candidate claiming such credit has a minimum of two months from the application deadline to provide the necessary documentation to verify additional credit eligibility. However, no credit may be added after the eligible list has been established.â

**BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION:** Applicants may be required to undergo a State and national criminal history background investigation, which will include a fingerprint check, to determine suitability for appointment. Failure to meet the standards for the background investigation may result in disqualification.

TOMPKINS COUNTY PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT, 125 EAST COURT STREET, ITHACA, NY 14850