

**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:** BENEFITS SPECIALIST (GTCMHIC)

**EXAM NO:** 64648

**SALARY:** \$28.00 /hour

**LOCATION:** Town of Ithaca

**TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT:** Full Time

**EXAM DATE:** 10/01/22

**ISSUE DATE:** 08/03/22

**THE FINAL DATE TO FILE APPLICATIONS:** 08/18/22

**DATE THAT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM POSTING:** 10/02/22

**RESIDENCY WAIVED**

**THE USE OF A QUIET HAND HELD CALCULATOR IS RECOMMENDED FOR THIS EXAMINATION.**

**LOCATION OF POSITIONS/VACANCIES:**

There is currently one vacancy in the title of Benefits Specialist (GTCMHIC) at the Town of Ithaca. The eligible list resulting from this open competitive examination may be used to fill any full-time, part-time, and/or temporary vacancies that may occur during the life of the eligible list.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered four-year college or university with a Bachelor's Degree AND two (2) years of full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time) experience in employee fringe benefits; OR
2. Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered two-year college AND four (4) years of full time paid (or the equivalent part-time) experience in employee fringe benefits; OR
3. Graduation from a high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma AND six (6) years of full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time) experience in employee fringe benefits; OR
4. Any combination of training and experience equal to or greater than that specified in (a), (b) and (c) above.

**The GTCMHI Consortium is Committed to Equity and Inclusion. We encourage those with similar values to apply.**

## **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:**

This position involves responsibility for performing various health insurance and wellness activities for the Consortium. An employee in this position is responsible for analyzing, planning, developing, publicizing, problem solving and administering health insurance and wellness programs for the members of the Consortium. The work requires maintaining a relationship with the member municipalities, medical and prescription benefits providers, and finance staff. The Benefits Specialist, with assistance from providers, will be the expert on benefits and advise the Board, member management and their employees on best practices for obtaining maximum utilization and benefit from programs with the least cost to the taxpayer and consumer. The employee will work under general direction of the Executive Director and is expected to exercise a high level of autonomy and good independent judgment when carrying out the duties of the position. Supervision of subordinate staff is not generally a function of this position but may provide guidance to support staff. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required.

## **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

- Provides excellent customer service while serving as a liaison for members as they navigate the complexities of the various benefit programs administered by the Consortium;
- Coordinates with a third-party vendor to administer the various health insurance plans;
- Coordinates and administers the various prescription drug programs on behalf of the Consortium;
- Performs data entry to the third-party vendor website to maintain subscriber information as related to the various health insurance plans for member municipalities;
- Performs data entry to add participants and data maintenance to remove participants or deactivate accounts for member municipalities during new member orientation, open enrollment and whenever necessary;
- Assists with the appeal process of the health insurance plans;
- Answers benefit questions for member 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;
- Analyzes health/dental benefit programs and costs/exposure and recommends programs to contain costs and reduce liability;
- May support member municipalities in negotiations by designing and costing out benefit proposals and recommending changes to existing programs;
- May support new member municipalities with plan comparisons and evaluating Consortium membership;
- May support new member municipality marketing by coordinating new member marketing meetings and the creation of supporting material;
- Acts as a consultant or resident expert for a wide variety of employee-employer health insurance problems;
- Maintains records to provide for health insurance premium payments;
- Assists with claim filing or research when questions arise on payments, changes, benefits program provisions, etc.;
- Provides information on Summary Plan Descriptions and COBRA when necessary;
- Works with all benefit carriers to monitor costs which effect experience ratings, premiums and/or contract charges, employees' claims and/or payments;
- Assists with the development of the Newsletter and or may act as Newsletter Editor;
- Completes various periodic reports and forms as requested;
- Develops Wellness programs in consultation with others and assists with communication of such programs;
- Maintains reference materials and updates, relative to benefits areas;
- Schedules and assists providers with informational sessions, enrollment meetings as requested;
- 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;
- Conducts studies and analyzes a variety of reports and makes recommendations to the appropriate management staff;
- Researches and summarizes reports for the Executive Director or Consortium;
- Participates in meetings concerning insurance plans which have an impact on consortium finances;
- Assures the achievement of applicable organizational goals and objectives;
- Supervises the assembly of all documents in connection with Consortium meetings;
- Responsible for compliance with records retention program;
- Works with other consortium staff and consultants in development and implementation of programs requiring collaboration and cooperation;
- May train, direct, review, lead and supervise other personnel and activities as it relates to benefits administration and enrollment;
- Follows and ensures compliance with safety rules and general work regulations and policies;
- Perform other duties as required.

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

- Working knowledge of policies, procedures, negotiated provisions and legal requirements in all benefit areas;
- Working knowledge of laws, rules and regulations pertaining to employee benefit programs;
- Working knowledge of personnel procedures to allow correct interpretation and application of benefit areas of negotiated union contracts;
- Working knowledge of office technology, procedures and equipment;
- Working knowledge of Microsoft office including Excel, Word and Publisher at an intermediate level.
- Working knowledge of public administration as it applies to local government;
- Working knowledge of English and statistical techniques;
- Good knowledge of principles, practices and techniques of personnel administration;
- 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 a variety of municipal representatives, employees, staff, management, providers, 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.

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## **COMPLETE SCOPE OF THE EXAMINATION AND EXPANDED SUBTEST DESCRIPTIONS:**

### **Advising and interacting with others**

These questions test for the ability to interact with other people in order to gather and present information and to provide assistance and advice in a courteous and professional manner.

### **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.

### **Understanding and interpreting tabular material**

These questions test your ability to understand, analyze, and use the internal logic of data presented in tabular form. You may be asked to perform tasks such as completing tables, drawing conclusions from them, analyzing data trends or interrelationships, and revising or combining data sets. The concepts of rate, ratio, and proportion are tested. Mathematical operations are simple, and computational speed is not a major factor in the test. **You should bring with you a hand-held battery- or solar-powered calculator for use on this test.** You will **not** be permitted to use the **calculator** function of your **cell phone**.

### **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.

**Test guide:**

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 'General Guide to Written Tests' helpful in preparing for this test. This publication is available on line at:<https://www.cs.ny.gov/testing/testguides.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.

**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