TOMPKINS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

Inclusion Through Diversity

PROMOTIONAL

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: Administrative Assistant - Level 2 (Promotional)

EXAM NO: 31600

SALARY: Depends Upon Location, $23.15/hr - 2026 Hire Rate for County Departments

ISSUE DATE: 03/24/26

THE FINAL DATE TO FILE APPLICATIONS: 12/31/26

DATE THAT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM POSTING: 01/01/27

RESIDENCY: Candidates must have been legal residents of Tompkins County or one of the six adjoining counties (Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga) for at least one month immediately preceding the date of application and maintain residency. For Examinations: The eligible list resulting from the examination will be established in accordance with the final earned numerical ratings of passing candidates regardless of residence. A municipality or district may exercise its right under section 23-4-a. of Civil Service Law to request a certification of eligible candidates who have been residents of that municipality or district for at least one month prior to appointment. After the names of residents have been exhausted, Tompkins County must then certify the names of non-residents on the list.

The title of Administrative Assistant - Level 2 and Level 3 are currently approved under the NYS HELPS program and no exam is required at this time. Once the HELPS program ends in NYS, this exam will be required in the future.

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

LOCATION OF POSITIONS/VACANCIES:

The eligible list resulting from this continuous recruitment examination may be used to fill any full-time and part-time vacancies (and may be used to fill temporary vacancies) in the title of Administrative Assistant – Level 2 in any of the various County departments, TC-3, the Tompkins County Public Library, and the Towns, Villages, School Districts, and Special Districts within Tompkins County's jurisdiction during the candidates' life on the eligible list. This intergovernmental promotion examination is announced with preference in appointment to eligible promotion candidates who are employees of the department or civil division to which appointment is to be made in accordance with Section 52-4 of Civil Service Law. An open-competitive examination is being held as a backup to this intergovernmental promotion examination.

PROMOTIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Employees who currently hold, and have continuously held, at least two years of competitive class status in the title of Administrative Assistant – Level 1, Keyboard Specialist, Clerk, Receptionist, Mail Clerk, Account Clerk Typist, Data Entry Machine Operator, Data Processing Clerk, or any other clerical title as determined by the Commissioner of Personnel, will be eligible to participate in a promotional examination to the Administrative Assistant – Level 2 title. Depending on the size of the agency, municipality or department, this may be a non-competitive promotion situation, in accordance with Section 52-7 of the New York State Civil Service law. Otherwise, the examination and resulting eligible list will be "Intergovernmental promotion with preference to the employee of the department or agency to which appointment is being made" in accordance with Section 52-4 of the law.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: If required to operate a motor vehicle in the course of his/her duties, it is the responsibility of the appointing authority to ensure possession of a valid New York State drivers license at the time of appointment. The incumbent would need to maintain such license for the duration of employment.

Tompkins County is Committed to Equity and Inclusion. We encourage those with similar values to apply.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

The work involves the performance of a broad range of moderately difficult clerical tasks, which may require an understanding of specific laws, organizational rules, policies or procedures. Specific duties will, however, vary with the needs of the appointing authority. The routine operation of an alphanumeric keyboard and other office technology is usually required in this role. Ability to accurately manipulate specific software is valued over speed when performing the keyboarding function. Procedures are usually fixed, but are of a more difficult nature than those of an Administrative Assistant – Level 1. The psychological demands of this job are moderate in that the incumbent may experience frequent interruptions, changes in work priority and occasional rush orders or conflicting deadlines. Basic interpersonal skills are needed to verify or explain information about agency regulations, policies or programs. Internal contacts are typically with employees in the work unit and across sections or divisions of the organization. Cooperation is required to fulfill basic work objectives. External contact will consist of basic communication and routine exchanges of information. The incumbent works under the direct supervision of a higher-level staff member but enjoys moderate autonomy in carrying out the every-day activities. Supervision of others is not a responsibility of employees in this class, although the employee may be called upon to help orient or cross-train other similarly classified staff. The incumbent will perform any and all administrative duties that may be assigned.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

The typical work activities below are illustrative only. Work activities may vary from location to location and no attempt has been made to compile a comprehensive listing of all clerical duties that may be required of an employee in this class. Assignment of appropriate routine clerical duties will be at the discretion of the appointing authority.

- At all times, the employee will provide the highest quality of customer service;
- Provides office support including the use of a computer, and other office machines and equipment in order to accurately prepare and maintain a wide variety of agency documents such as routine correspondence, inventory, budgets, operating expenses, timecards, payroll, scheduling, state reporting, files and other departmental activities;
- Reviews documents for accuracy, completeness and to ensure that they conform with established processes and procedures;
- Answers telephone calls and/or email correspondence providing routine information on various procedural requirements or program transactions;
- Collects information from paper and electronic files and compiles such information into a final source document;
- May instruct new employees in the specialized work of a unit, assign duties, perform day-to-day supervision and review performance;
- Receives internal and external customers, ascertains their business, and refers them as appropriate;
- May receive, sort, distribute and process incoming mail;
- May be required to type basic correspondence, perform data entry and/or generate form letters;
- May be required to proofread and produce accurate, clean and complete documents;
- May be required to stuff envelopes, add labels/postage and deliver outgoing mail as appropriate;
- May order office supplies and maintain and inventory of supplies and equipment;
- May be required to make photocopies, send faxes or scan documents;
- May be required to perform routine office equipment maintenance tasks (adding paper, toner, staples, etc);
- May be required to maintain electronic files, or alphabetic, numeric and/or chronological paper files;
- May be required to periodically purge obsolete material in accordance with a records retention schedule;
- May be required to manage a calendar by scheduling meetings and appointments;
- May collect fees and account for monies received;

- May operate a metered mail machine to prepare outgoing mail and maintain a record of postage used;
- May be required to prepare packages for shipping by USPS, or a commercial delivery service;
- May prepare and maintain time records, payroll data or other task that might require basic mathematical calculations;
- The incumbent will be required to perform all routine clerical work determined essential to the efficient and economical functioning of the office to which assigned.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Good knowledge of basic office terminology, procedures and equipment;
- Good knowledge of the English language; including the ability to alphabetize, spell correctly, and use appropriate grammar and proper punctuation;
- Good knowledge of business arithmetic;
- Skill, ability and desire to provide excellent customer service;
- Ability to deal courteously and effectively with the public - in person, by telephone and through email or by other electronic means;
- Ability to accurately operate an alphanumeric keyboard and utilize various types of software (speed is not a significant factor in the keyboarding activity);
- Ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions;
- Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing;
- Ability to maintain accurate, neat and legible records;
- Ability to perform close, detailed work that may involve considerable visual effort and strain;
- Initiative, resourcefulness, accuracy, tact, neatness, courtesy and good judgment are required;
- The employee's physical condition shall be commensurate with the demands of the position.

Originally created 06/2012

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This examination is being prepared and rated in accordance with Section 23(2) of the Civil Service Law. The provisions of the New York State Civil Service Law, Rules, and Regulations dealing with the preparation and rating of examinations, as well as establishment and certification of eligible lists for positions in the classified service will apply to this examination.

COMPLETE SCOPE OF THE EXAMINATION AND EXPANDED SUBTEST DESCRIPTIONS:

SPELLING:

These questions test your ability to spell words that are used in written business communications.

GRAMMAR, USAGE, PUNCTUATION:

The grammar and usage questions test for the ability to apply the basic rules of grammar and usage. The punctuation questions test for a knowledge of the correct placement of punctuation marks in sentences.

KEYBOARDING PRACTICES:

These questions test for a knowledge of preferred practices in such area as letter format, capitalization, hyphenation, plurals, possessives, word division, word and figure style for numbers, and common proofreading marks. In addition, you will be given a passage to proofread and asked questions about how to correct the errors in the passage.

OFFICE PRACTICES:

These questions test for a knowledge of generally agreed-upon practices governing the handling of situations which stenographers, typists, and secretaries encounter in their work, as well as a knowledge of efficient and effective methods used to accomplish office tasks. The questions will cover such topics as planning work flow; setting priorities; dealing effectively with staff, visitors, and callers; filing and retrieving information; safeguarding confidentiality; using office equipment; and making procedural decisions and recommendations which contribute to a well-managed office.

THE ELIGIBLE LIST:

Candidates who are successful on the written examination will be on the Administrative Assistant – Level 2 eligible list. Candidate names are inter-filed on the continuous recruitment eligible list for one year. Eligible candidates will be ranked according to their written test score relative to the other candidates on the list first and (in the case of tie scores) by date of test and alphabetical order.

TESTING FORMAT: This continuously recruited announced date decentralized examination will be given in written form. The Tompkins County Department of Human Resources has the right to select the testing format and candidates will be notified by letter or e-mail no later than 7-10 days before the examination. Examinations will be administered on Saturdays. Alternate test dates are available upon request and with supporting documentation. Tompkins County reserves the right to terminate this continuous recruitment program and re-establish the periodic announced date type of examination.

SENIORITY: One point will be added to each passing score for every five years of permanent classified service according to the following schedule:

Less than one year. . . . . 0 points

1 year up to 6 years. . . . . 1 point

6 years up to 11 years. . . . . 2 points

11 years up to 16 years . . . . . 3 points

etc. . .

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