

**SECTION 55-A**

**EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

**FOR PEOPLE**

**WITH DISABILITIES**



Individuals often seek information about service employment opportunities for persons with mental or physical disabilities frequently contact the Civil Service Department. This booklet was prepared to answer the basic questions, which arise regarding the New York State Civil Service Law, Section 55-A Employment Program.

## **WHAT IS THE 55-A EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM?**

New York State Civil Service Law, Section 55-a and the Greene County Civil Service Rules allow for appointing authorities in Greene County Government, as well as the various towns, villages, school districts and special districts within the county to bypass the competitive examination process when considering the employment of individuals with disabilities in competitive civil service jobs. Candidates can be appointed on a non-competitive basis in certain entry-level competitive class positions. Interested candidates must be certified as being disabled and able to perform the duties of the positions for which they are seeking appointment under 55-A. This program is not for positions that are in the non-competitive or labor classification.

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE 55-A PROGRAM?**

You may be eligible if:

- a) The appointing/requesting authority sends a letter to the Greene County Civil Service Commission nominating the candidate for a 55-A appointment;
- b) You have been determined to have a disability under the meaning of the law, which is a substantial barrier for employment. This determination is made by either 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 (CBHV);

## **WHAT IS THE PROCESS**

- a) As with all titles, you must first file an exam/employment application and meet either the minimum qualifications and/ or work experience qualifications required for the title you are interested in as outlined on the Greene County Civil Service Job Description;
- b) Greene County Civil Service will complete the employer section of NYS Education Department Verification of Employment Eligibility Form and submit it to ACCES-VR for their review and determination;

## **WHO DECIDES MY ELIGIBILITY?**

- a) ACCES-V or CBHV certifies your disability based on recent information which you provide, or, if the information is insufficient you may be required to undergo a medical examination paid for by ACCESS-VR or CBHV.
- b) ACCESS-VR/CBVH evaluates your skills and abilities against the essential functions (Typical Work Activities listed on the job description) of the job and either approves your 55a status and suggests appropriate reasonable accommodations, or disapproves the candidate as not being able to perform the essential functions of the job. The 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 something else.

## **WHO DECIDES MY ELIGIBILITY?**

- c) ACCESS-VR/CBHV then returns the completed form to the Greene County Civil Service Commission. We then send a letter to the candidate and requesting agency approving the appointment.

## **WHAT JOB OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?**

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

## **HOW ARE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES LOCATED?**

An eligible individual can contact the Greene County Department of Civil Service for assistance in identifying appropriate job titles and obtaining the appropriate job description. However, it is the individual's responsibility to locate a suitable opening.

## **ARE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS GUARANTEED A JOB?**

No. The program is voluntary and appointing authorities are not required to hire each 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 ensure that you do not miss any employment opportunities, you should take all examinations for which you qualify.

Special arrangements and accommodations are provided for disabled individuals upon request to enable them to participate in the civil service examination process.

## **PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR 55-A EMPLOYEES**

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

## **JOB PROTECTION**

New York State Civil Service Law provides job protection under Section 75 after five (5) years of continuous employment. Labor contract provisions, if any, would apply and may grant similar protections within a shorter period.

**GREENE COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR, SUITE 340**  
**411 Main Street**  
**Catskill, NY 12414**  
**PH: 518-719-3253 ----- FAX: 518-719-3772**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT  
THE  
ALBANY DISTRICT OFFICE:**

**Adult Career and Continuing Education  
Services --Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)**

**ACCES-VR • Albany District Office • 80 Wolf Road • Suite 200 • Second Floor •  
Albany, NY 12205-2644**

**(518) 473-8097 (voice) • (518) 457-4562 (fax) • (518) 457-2318 (TTY) • (800) 272-5448**

**MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:30 am -- 5:00 pm**

**NEW YORK STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND  
AND VISUALLY HANDICAPPED (CBVH)**

**Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany Inc.  
301 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12206  
(518) 463-1211 -- [www.naba-vision.org](http://www.naba-vision.org)**