

NYS Forum for Information Resource Management  
ICEDP Committee Presentation  
"Career Development for NYS IT Professionals"  
Jan. 27, 5005, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

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9:30 – 9:45    OPENING REMARKS  
                  Larry Tompkins  
                  Chairman, ICEDP

Mr. Tompkins opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and speaking briefly about the changes that ICEDP has undergone in the past year, from an independent organization to a committee as part of the Forum. Also new this year is the switch from an annual conference to periodic half-day sessions focusing on a particular topic – this session is the first of what we hope will become a regular series. Mr. Tompkins introduced the Program Committee, the volunteer group that developed today's session, and the Chair of the Program Committee, Mario Chiarello.

He also mentioned the monthly ICEDP Directors' meeting, which includes updates from OGS, OFT and the Department of Civil Service, and urged participants to take advantage of the opportunities for learning and networking that ICEDP offered. Potential volunteers were encouraged to approach officers and committee members to become involved with the group.

Mario Chiarello then introduced Anina Ritter.

9:45 – 10:45    OVERVIEW THE NEW YORK STATE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM  
                  Anina Ritter, Division of Staffing Services

- How the system works: “merit and fitness,” eligible lists, “rule of three,” appointment from eligible lists, transfers, mobility
- QUESTIONS

Anina noted that Bob Gardner, whose name had been listed as a presenter on the agenda, had transferred to another position within Civil Service, and introduced Bob's replacement, Craig Wright, Assistant Section Head. Mr. Wright made some brief remarks and returned the program to Anina.

The purpose of the session was to discuss career development for people in IT titles in NYS government. To open, Anina asked for shows of hands at various grade levels to gauge her audience. The majority of attendees appeared to be at the 18 and 23 grade levels.

The NYS Civil Service system was established to ensure that NYS public sector hiring and promotion is done in such a way to establish the merit and fitness of candidates. The vast majority of State employees enter the civil service system via an examination leading to appointment to a position with a State agency or authority. The basics of merit system employment are: employment status, position, and the position's jurisdictional classification. Civil Service Law divides the civil service into the Classified Service and the Unclassified Service. Civil Service merit and fitness checks do not apply to jobs in the Unclassified service.

### **Classified Service**

The Classified Service covers the Executive Branch, State agencies, and some of the Military positions in NYS.

### **Unclassified Service**

The unclassified service comprises the Judiciary, the Legislature and most of the Military positions in NYS. Many agencies, such as the State Police, public authorities, SUNY, and most municipal jobs are split between classified and unclassified service.

### **Distinctions Between Jobs and People**

Anina explained the difference between jobs and people within the civil service and the types of status that applied to each.

#### **People**

An **incumbent** are the current employee in a position. An **encumbent** is a permanent employee who has rights to the position (i.e., has what's known as a "hold" on the position), but is actually working in another position.

Anina explained that once you transfer or are promoted to another job in the classified service, you are immediately placed on probation for a variable length of time. During this time, you have a **"hold"** or right to return to your previous permanent job if something goes wrong.

#### **Positions**

"Positions" are individual jobs classified by the Dept. of Civil Service's Division of Classification and Compensation based on duties and location within the organization as described by the requesting agency. In the classification process, the position is assigned to a **negotiating unit**, a **jurisdictional class**, and a **title class**.

#### **Jurisdictional Class**

Positions for which it's not practical to examine competitively are designated in the **non-competitive class**. Deputies to commissioners and other designated positions are in the **exempt class**. Unskilled positions are in the **labor class**.

#### **Competitive Class**

Unless it's otherwise specified, a position is more than likely in the competitive class – 85% are.

### **Title Classes**

Individual positions performing the same function at the same level are grouped together into a **title class**. Different levels within a title class performing progressively more difficult or complex functions are a **title series** (e.g., Senior -> Associate -> Principal, etc.). Minor variations in a title's function may result in a parenthetical designation (e.g., Information Technology Specialist 2 [Programming]). Typically, parenthetics are used to identify a specialty within a field.

### **Position's Status v. Person's Status**

There is a distinction between a permanent job and the incumbent's status with respect to that job. For example, there may be a vacant permanent position to which a previous incumbent has a hold. It could be possible for the agency to appoint someone to that job on a contingent permanent basis until the previous employee's probation has been passed at his/her new job. Anina's presentation has a list of the different situations that can apply to a position and a person.

### **Conditions for Permanent Appointment**

The position must be classified competitive or noncompetitive, established for more than six months, vacant (or temporarily vacant), and approved for filling by the Division of the Budget.

The appointee must be eligible from a list, eligible for transfer from other permanent appointment or for a noncompetitive position, must meet minimum qualifications or the appointee must be eligible for reinstatement.

### **Negotiating Units**

Individual positions are assigned to a negotiating unit. This will affect salary, benefits and the ability to join an employee organization. Most IT professionals will probably only work in titles assigned to the Administrative Services Unit (ASU, NU/BU Code 02) – represented by CSEA, the Operational Services Unit (OSU, NU/BU Code 03) – represented by CSEA, the Institutional Services Unit (ISU, NU/BU Code 04) – represented by CSEA, the Professional, Scientific and Technical Unit (PS&T, NU/BU Code 04) – represented by PEF, and the Management/Confidential Unit (M/C, NU/BU Code 06).

### **Leaves**

Two kinds of leaves from a position: Mandatory – required by law, rule, or contract (e.g. Family Medical Leave Act leave); and Discretionary – leaves at the discretion of the appointing authority (e.g., a sabbatical leave).

## **EXAMINATIONS, TESTS, AND ELIGIBLE LISTS**

### **The Selection Process**

As an IT professional, you need to take some steps to place yourself into consideration for an agency's selection process. First, analyze the examination announcement and if qualified, file an application for the examination. Next, take the examination. Civil

Service uses your examination results to compile an eligible list. Agencies use the eligible list to identify potential candidates, and will schedule an interview with the highest-ranking candidates on the eligible list. If you pass all those steps, you may receive an appointment to a vacant position. Depending on your status and the position you've been appointed to, you'll have a probationary period of variable length. Once you've passed that probationary period, you'll be appointed permanently. These steps are all part of the "testing" process most State employees undergo. The examination itself is just one part of it.

### **Examination Development**

The Department of Civil Service involves many stakeholders in the examination development and selection process: staffing representatives, testing staff, Classification and Compensation staff, Diversity Planning and Management Staff, and agency representatives who function as subject matter experts.

### **Types of Examinations**

**Promotion** exams are open only to permanent State employees meeting minimum qualifications (usually time in title). There are two kinds of promotional exams: **departmental**, open to qualified employees of an agency, and **interdepartmental (IDP)**, open to qualified employees of all agencies.

**Open competitive** exams are open to all qualified individuals both in and outside of State service. Candidates do not need to be a resident of New York or even a U.S. citizen.

**Transitional** (hybrid) exams provide opportunities not normally available through promotional examination for employees to move into other occupational fields at the entry level or across organizational levels (an example of this is the Public Administration Trainee exam).

### **Exam Scheduling**

Exams are periodically scheduled, announced as needed, with a specific application filing period and examination date. **Continuous recruitment** exam applications are accepted continuously and the test itself is administered periodically. For **decentralized** exams, all or part of the exam process is the responsibility of the agency that will make use of the resulting eligible list.

### **Minimum Qualifications**

Minimum qualifications are usually provided for examinations and can be found prominently posted on the examination announcement. For open competitive exams, minimum qualifications are usually defined by previous experience and or educational requirements, or by certifications or licenses required. For promotional or transitional exams, minimum qualifications are usually defined by the candidate's current title and position and any required position-specific experience and/or education.

## **Tests**

Tests are specific selection devices used as part of an examination, methods used to evaluate a candidate's knowledge, skills, abilities and/or personal characteristics. Types of tests include written, an evaluation of training and experience, oral, simulation, performance tests, performance assessments, and writing samples.

## **Examination Announcements**

After Civil Service determines the selection mechanism, an examination announcement is issued, setting out the conditions of the selection process. The announcement will be posted on the Civil Service web site and your local agency's bulletin boards. It will include: the exam number and title, the filing date (if there is one), minimum qualifications, and a general idea of what will be on the test.

## **Application Process**

For most exams open to the public, candidates currently must apply by mail. The exceptions are the four Information Technology Specialist exams, which are online only. Transitional and promotional candidates can apply by mail, online, or in most cases by telephone.

## **Testing and List Establishment**

After the close of the application period, applications are reviewed and approved candidates are tested. Passing candidates are placed on eligible lists in order (ranked by score). The eligible list will contain the names of ALL candidates achieving a passing mark in an examination.

## **Order of Certification**

- 1) Departmental promotion eligibles
- 2) Interdepartment promotion eligibles (if applicable)
- 3) Agency choice between Transition and Open Competitive

## **Using the Eligible List – The Rule of 3**

Appointments from an eligible list must be made from among one of the three acceptors from a canvass of eligibles in descending score order. Agencies start at the top and count down to the third person. Everyone with the same score as that third person must be included in consideration. (See the PowerPoint slide show for specific examples.)

## **Ranking**

Defined as a candidate's relative standing on an eligible list as compared to other candidates. Candidates at the same score have the same rank.

## **Band Scoring**

Beginning in 1996, lists are scored in five-point increments. Because of this, some candidates can have a score of greater than 100 based on Veteran's Credits. Rule of three still applies, and no one in any band is reachable until there are less than three acceptors in the band above.

### **Restrictions Prohibiting Appointment**

Restrictions can block a candidate's eligibility for a number of reasons: pending a physical/medical exam; pending a background investigation; pending completion of time in title requirements; demonstrating proficiency in a language; or completing part 2 of an exam, (oral, performance test, etc.).

### **Canvassing Eligible Lists**

The canvass is conducted by mail and a response is required within 10 business days. For a canvass conducted by telephone, response is required within 2 business days.

10:45 – 11:00 BREAK

11:00 – 11:30 THE IT TESTING PROGRAM FOR G-14 AND G-18 AND  
ADVANCEMENT THROUGH THE SYSTEM

- Demonstration of on-line exam application process
- Career advancement: promotional opportunities, promotional examinations, keeping skills current
- QUESTIONS

## **TRANSFERS**

### **Voluntary Transfers**

As the name implies, a voluntary transfer is one initiated by the employee without further examination. Voluntary transfers can be made from one title to a different title, or from a position in one agency to a position in another agency. They are an alternative to using eligible lists, and are encouraged to promote career mobility.

### **Requirements for Voluntary Transfers**

A transfer, although initiated by the employee, must be nominated by the appointing authority and must have the consent of the employee. In addition, transfers must be approved by the Department of Civil Service. The appointing authority can specify (unless waived) a probationary period of 8-26 weeks for positions below grade 13, or 12-52 weeks if the position is above grade 13.

### **Conditions Affecting Transfers**

Transfers are not permitted in the face of redeployment, agency reduction transfer or preferred lists. Transfers between agencies are not permitted if a reemployment list exists.

### **Other Conditions**

Titles must be at a similar grade level, within two grades or one M-grade. The nominee must have served permanently for a year or be reachable on the eligible list to transfer. Consecutive transfers (i.e., without intervening list placement) cannot result in more than 2 grades or 1 M-grade advancement. The nominee must have special credentials if they

are required by the position. The agency from which the employee is transferring does not have to approve the transfer.

### **Types of Transfers**

There are three types of transfers:

**Section 70.1 Transfers** are transfers of permanent employees between "similar positions," as determined by Civil Service. Once a determination about the similarity of two titles is established, future transfers are routinely approved.

### **Section 52.6 (Administrative) Transfers**

This transfer mechanism is used for competitive class titles in law, personnel, budgeting, methods and procedures, management, records analysis (including IT titles) and administrative research. All M-grade titles are designated administrative. Once a title is designated as a 52.6 title, transfers to other 52.6 titles are routinely approved.

### **Section 70.4 Transfers**

Section 70.1 and 52.6 transfers are title-based. Section 70.4 allows voluntary transfer of an individual permanent competitive employee to a different title, with the following conditions: The receiving title must be normally filled by open-competitive exam and any departmental promotion list must have been exhausted; and the nominated individual must meet the open-competitive exam requirements and must not have failed the last open-competitive exam; and the individual must pass the open competitive exam. This type of transfer is not considered to be a transfer for "consecutive transfer" rule.

### **Reassignment**

Reassignment is the movement, without further examination, of a permanent employee from one position to another in the same title within the same appointing authority. These are not initiated by the employee and are management prerogative.

### **Reinstatement**

NYS agencies can rehire former permanent competitive state employees without further examination. Reinstatement is discretionary and is NOT an entitlement. Individuals can request that a hiring agency accept them through reinstatement, so long as the separation was not the result of a disciplinary action. If the former employee has been separated from service for longer than 13 months, the hiring agency needs to petition the Civil Service Commission. In order for reinstatement to be approved, there must be no applicable reemployment list.

### **Reclassification**

In order to fill a function, an agency may reclassify an existing position to the needed title. If that position is encumbered, the reclassification affects the permanent incumbent. Civil Service Law section 121.4 states that a reemployment list shall not force the layoff or reassignment of permanent employees placed into provisional status by reclassification. Neither a promotion list or an open competitive list shall force the layoff or reassignment of permanent employees placed into provisional status by reclassification. Civil Service Rule 4.2 provides for a reasonable opportunity to attain permanent status (usually two opportunities).

### **Career Mobility Options**

**Examinations** – Take all that you are eligible for to increase your opportunities.

**Transfers** – Consider upward, lateral, and interagency transfers to increase your opportunities.

**Additional Education and Job Skill Training** – Take any opportunity to increase your education and qualify for additional exams and/or to enhance transfer options.

### **Mobility Resources**

Networking opportunities like ICEDP functions promote the exchange of information on opportunities and resources. Agency personnel offices and supervisors are also good information sources. Civil Service's Career Mobility Office offers individual assistance. Office bulletin boards are often good places to find job postings and news about training opportunities. The Civil Service web site (<http://www.cs.state.ny.us>), StateJobsNY (<http://www.statejobsny.com>) and CSEAP (accessible from the Civil Service web site) are all good sources of information and opportunities.

### **Demonstration of Online Examination**

Anina provided a tour of Civil Service's online examination for IT Specialist titles. She told attendees to pay particular attention to the examination announcement and the examination overview to avoid problems.

More information about upcoming exams and changes in the IT titles was not provided as we ran short of time. Anina did take a few minutes to entertain questions. Among the questions were:

#### **Applying for the grade-18 IT Specialist 2 – where to note non-credit certifications?**

Anina responded that they should be noted as experience in the competencies section, rather than education.

#### **Can I apply for both the IT Specialist 2 and the IT Specialist 2 (Programming)?**

Yes, if you have the specialized skills required by the parenthesis.

#### **What happened to the earlier proposal for the 9 grade-23 titles? Where did they go?**

Anina said that based on the feedback she'd gotten from agencies, the titles were being reworked, with input from the CIO Council.

#### **For the grade-23 exam, which Battery test score will be used?**

Anina said that your score on the written exam will be combined with your best battery score for purposes of ranking.

As time for questions ran out, Anina provided her telephone number, 457-8000, and an e-mail address: [infotech@cs.state.ny.us](mailto:infotech@cs.state.ny.us) for attendees to ask further questions.

11:30 – 12:30 CIO COUNCIL - HR Committee Update

David Gardam, CIO, Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services

Mr. Gardam opened with a brief overview of the CIO's role in coordinating IT in State government, and provided background on the composition and mission of the CIO Council, an advisory group to the CIO on policy and strategic directions. Members of the CIO Council also serve on various subcommittees that focus on different aspects of the way IT is implemented in NYS.

Mr. Gardam explained that he was a representative from one of those subcommittees, the HR Committee. The Committee's goal is to get the right person in the right job, with the right skills, at the right time. Their agenda covers the entire employment cycle, including workforce planning, recruitment, retention and career development. The Committee is composed of representatives from agency IT and HR offices, Civil Service and GOER.

The HR Committee sees their challenge as multi-faceted.

- The aging of the State workforce places emphasis on the need for succession planning initiatives to ensure the continuation of skills and program knowledge.
- The speed of technology change forces a continuous need for workforce skills development.
- The mismatch between agency staffing needs and Civil Service title structures makes selection and retention of talented IT staff very difficult.
- Agencies' use of outsourcing and contractors creates conflicts with the development of internal staff resources.

Unfortunately, although there is widespread agreement with the list of pressing issues facing agency IT shops, there is little consensus on how to solve the problems, what future technology should be pursued, what skills development activities (and for which tools) should be undertaken, best practices for the use of outside contractors, or even what Civil Service title series and testing requirements should be.

The HR Committee has identified a few baseline tasks that need to be tackled. First, New York needs to recognize that all organizations are faced with virtually all of the same problems we face. Agencies also need to come to consensus on a unified set of goals and the best courses of action to achieve those goals. Workforce needs and workforce development need to be integrated with strategic and technology goals.

Preliminary steps to be taken are:

- To establish the HR Committee as the IT leadership's HR representative.
- Create relationships with Civil Service and the other control agencies to advocate on behalf of the entire IT community.
- Work with other groups – the Forum, ICEDP and others to seek input and advice on goals.

The HR Committee's strategic planning priorities include:

**Succession Planning** – skills analysis, workforce development and title structure review. Work with the appropriate control agencies to enable agencies to provide succession plans for critical technology staff resources.

**Skills Analysis** – Survey existing employees IT skills to identify gaps between current state and future needs.

**Workforce Development** – Identify sources for enhancing technical and managerial skills, align skill development efforts with approved enterprise architecture goals, and collaborate with New York's institutions of higher learning to graduate students with the skills needed by encouraging appropriate curricula and recruiting strategies to capitalize on those changes.

**Title Structure** – Develop and implement a long-term workforce plan that evaluates IT title structures, compensation models and recruitment and retention requirements.

Mr. Gardam closed by envisioning what the potential ramifications of failure to act might be:

- Demand for IT services will continue to increase.
- The shortage of skilled IT professionals will continue.
- The technical skills gap in new technology will expand.
- There will be a shortage of government IT project and management skills.
- Outsourcing and extensive use of contractors will increase.
- There will be critical system failures due to the lack of skilled IT staff.

For more information on this topic, Mr. Gardam referred individuals to the CIO Council's strategic plan on CIO's web site (<http://www.oft.state.ny.us/policy/p04-004/stratplan.htm>).