

SCHEENECTADY COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION



Schenectady County Is An Equal Opportunity Employer

Open Competitive Examination

Exam Title: Senior Legal Assistant
County Departments
The resulting eligible list will be used to fill vacancies as needed.

Exam Number: 88889-010

Salary Range: \$55,002 - \$65,028 (2024)

Last Date for Filing: July 29, 2024

Date of Examination: September 14, 2024

Residency Requirement: Immediately preceding the date of the written test and appointment, candidates must have been legal residents of New York State for at least one (1) year.

Duties: This position involves performing paralegal work of a complex nature with responsibility for performing a wide variety of legal duties, including but not limited to research, review and preparation of legal documents, processing of petitions and court orders, as well as clerical processing duties. Work is performed under general supervision in accordance with specific policies and objectives. May supervise the work of Paralegals or other clerical staff. Incumbent does related work as required.

Minimum Qualifications: (on the date of the written test)

- A. *Possession of a Bachelor's Degree and two (2) years of experience in legal work; OR
- B. *Possession of an Associate's Degree and four (4) years of experience in legal work.

*Note: Your degree must have been awarded by a college or university accredited by a regional, national, or specialized agency recognized as an accrediting agency by the U.S. Department of Education/U.S. Secretary of Education. If your degree was awarded by an educational institution outside the United States and its territories, you must provide independent verification of equivalency. A list of acceptable companies who provide this service can be found on the Internet at <http://www.cs.ny.gov/jobseeker/degrees.cfm>. You must pay the required evaluation fee.

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When college education is required to meet the minimum qualifications, a college transcript (may be an unofficial copy that clearly shows college name, degree/credits, etc...) must accompany the application for examination or application will be disapproved.

Note: Appropriate part-time and/or volunteer experience, which can be verified, will be accepted on a prorated basis.

Special Note: Permanent appointment is contingent upon successful completion of a criminal background check.

You are urged to compare your qualifications carefully with the requirements for admission stated in the “minimum qualifications” section of the examination announcement, and file only for those examinations for which you are clearly qualified. The education and experience (including the percentage of time spent personally performing the duties of each employment) you indicate on the application will be verified and compared to the “minimum qualifications” for the position. Omissions or vagueness will not be interpreted in your favor.

Tolerance Policy:

Candidates who do not possess the minimum post-secondary educational qualifications as of the date of the examination, but who are currently enrolled in their last semester leading to possession of such qualifications, may be admitted to the exam conditionally, with final approval for their qualifications being granted only upon submission of their college transcript **within sixty (60) days of the date of the examination.**

The tolerance will extend only to the issue of completing the minimum post-secondary educational qualifications. All other minimum qualifications must be met on or before the date of the exam.

To be approved on a conditional basis, the candidate must provide the Schenectady County Civil Service Commission, **at the time of application**, a college transcript showing their current status and pending courses needed to complete the education qualifications. **Failure to do so will result in application disapproval.**

Failure of the candidate to submit the final college transcript showing completion of the minimum post-secondary educational qualifications within said sixty (60) day period **shall disqualify** the candidate. For this examination, the sixty (60) day period is **on/or before November 13, 2024.**

Note: An unofficial transcript will be accepted when filing for an examination, but an official transcript may be required at time of interview or appointment.

Subjects of Examination: A written test designed to evaluate knowledge, skills, and/or abilities in the following areas:

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 written material

These questions test for the ability to understand and interpret written material. You will be presented with brief reading passages and will be asked questions about the passages. You should base your answers to the questions **only** on what is presented in the passages and **not** on what you may happen to know about the topic.

Legal terminology, documents and forms

These questions test for the ability to recognize definitions of specific common legal terms or the term which fits a certain description. The questions are presented in various forms such as simple definitions, examples of terminology, and the use of this terminology within documents and forms related to the legal field.

Interviewing

These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices employed in obtaining information from individuals through structured conversations. These questions require you to apply the principles, practices, and techniques of effective interviewing to hypothetical interviewing situations. Included are questions that present a problem arising from an interviewing situation, and you must choose the most appropriate course of action to take.

Test guide:

A Guide for the Written Test for **Legal Services** is available at the New York State website: <https://www.cs.ny.gov/testing/testguides.cfm>. Candidates not having access to a computer or the internet may request copy of the test guide from the municipal civil service office conducting this examination using the contact information found elsewhere on this announcement.

Use of Calculators: Unless otherwise notified, candidates are permitted to use quiet, hand-held 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.

Applying For Civil Service Examinations In Multiple Jurisdictions When Examinations Are Scheduled On Same Date

If you have applied for any other civil service examinations to be given on the same test date for employment with New York State or any other Local Government Jurisdiction excluding New York City, you must make arrangements to take all the examinations at one test site.

If you have applied for both **State** and **Local** government examinations, you must notify our agency, **Schenectady County Civil Service**, of your intent to take both a state and a local government examination. When taking both a **state** and a **local** government examination you will be required to take all your examinations **at a state examination center**. You must complete a **cross-filer form** indicating what exams you have applied for and we will notify New York State Civil Service of your intent. You will be advised when and where to report for your examinations.

If you have applied for more than one **Local Government Examination** with more than one **Local Civil Service Agency**, you must notify each civil service agency to make arrangements. Schenectady County has a **cross-filer form** which you must complete. You must make your request for these arrangements no later than **two weeks** before the date of the examinations. On the cross-filer form you will indicate all exams you have signed up to take and the location you wish to be tested at. If you have questions regarding this examination call **(518) 388-4233** or write to **Schenectady County Civil Service Commission, 620 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12305.**

Employment within a Schenectady County Department may be subject to pre-employment drug testing.

You are encouraged to read the General Conditions and Instructions Attachment

Date released: July 2, 2024

Schenectady County Civil Service Examinations**General Conditions and Instructions**

1. **Application Forms.** Applications may be obtained at the Schenectady County Civil Service Office or on the Civil Service Department website at www.schenectadycounty.com. Candidates will be notified of the time and place of the examination.
2. **Application Deadline.** Applications postmarked after midnight of the last filing date will not be considered eligible for this examination.
3. **Change of Address.** You must notify the Civil Service Office of any change of address.
4. **Special Rights for Military Personnel.**
 - **Application Filing Period Extension.** Individuals serving on active duty in the armed forces during the filing period for a civil service examination, or individuals who have been discharged with other than a dishonorable discharge after the filing period has commenced will be permitted to file an application for examination no later than ten business days before the scheduled examination date, or the last date to file, whichever is later.
 - **Make Up Examination.** Any member of the armed forces who properly filed, within the announced filing period, an application for a competitive examination but was unable to participate in the examination due to active military service, will be provided with a special make-up examination under the terms and conditions deemed appropriate by the New York State Department of Civil Service and/or the Schenectady County Civil Service Commission.
5. **Examination Fee.** Beginning with the exam date of 01/14/2023, no examination fee will be collected for all examinations held in 2023 and 2024. You are urged to compare your qualifications carefully with the requirements for admission and file only for those examinations for which you are clearly qualified.
6. **2024 Examination Fee Waiver Form.** Even though examination fees will be waived for 2024, those applicants who are unemployed and primarily responsible for the support of a household, those applicants who are receiving SSI or public assistance (TANF, Family Assistance or Safety Net Assistance), or those applicants certified as JTPA / WIA eligible must complete the **Fee Waiver Form** and attach it to your application. This form can be obtained at the Civil Service Office or on the Civil Service Department website at www.schenectadycounty.com.
7. **Special Testing Arrangements.** If you need a special arrangement or accommodation to take the examination for one of the reasons outlined below, please check the appropriate box on the Examination Application and contact the Civil Service Office at (518) 388-4233.
 - **Religious Accommodations.** Most written exams are held on Saturdays. If you cannot take the exam on the announced date due to a conflict with a religious observation or practice, arrangements will be made so that you can take the examination on an alternate date.
 - **Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with a Disability.** A reasonable accommodation will be made for individuals with a disability during the application and examination process. You must provide documentation as to the accommodation you need to apply for and/or take the examination.

- **Other Reasons.** An alternate exam date may be requested for one of the following reasons. Documentation supporting the request will be required.
 1. A death in the immediate family or household within the week preceding the exam date.
 2. Medical emergencies involving the candidate or member(s) of the candidate's immediate family.
 3. Military Orders (a copy of the orders is required).
 4. Wedding – must be a member of the wedding party or an immediate family member of the bride or groom.
 5. Vacation for which a non-refundable down payment was made before the exam announcement was issued.
 6. If an employee of the Unified Communications Center and mandated to work during the exam or mandated to work the shift immediately prior to the exam. Sufficiency of proof is at the discretion of the Civil Service Office. Employees must agree to take the exam prior to returning back to work after the exam has been given and have no exposure to exam material, other candidates who have taken the exam, and have no other members of their household also taking the exam.
- 8. **Notice to Appear for Examination.** Accepted candidates will be notified when and where to appear for the examination. If an application is disapproved, due notice will be sent.
- 9. **Failure to Appear for Exam.** Candidates who fail to appear for the exam as scheduled will be eliminated from further consideration for this competitive examination.
- 10. **Use of Calculators.** Unless otherwise notified, candidates are permitted to use quiet, hand-held, 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 material to the test site.
- 11. **Examination Preparation and Rating.** This written examination is being prepared and rated by the New York State Department of Civil Service in accordance with Section 23-2 of the Civil Service Law. The provisions of the New York State Civil Service Rules and Regulations dealing with the rating of examinations will apply to this written examination.
- 12. **Eligible List.** The minimum qualifications listed in this announcement have been approved by the Schenectady County Civil Service Commission for the purpose of evaluating a candidate's education, training and experience to determine admission to this examination. This examination is being conducted to establish a Civil Service Eligible List which will be certified to appointing authorities to fill available vacancies. Candidates whose names are certified for appointment have only met the minimum qualifications to take the examination. All candidates who pass the examination will be placed on an eligible list. Unless otherwise specified, the final rank order of the eligible list will be determined on the basis of the scores received on the written test, plus Veterans Credits and Seniority Credits where appropriate. The eligible list established as a result of this examination will be established for four years, but may expire after one year if superseded by a new list.
- 13. **Application Verification and Background Checks** – Statements made on the Examination Application are subject to verification. A clearance from the Commissioner of Education will be required for employment within a school district for those positions that are designated by the school district as having direct contact with students.
- 14. Persons holding a permanent position in this title, in this department are not eligible for admittance to this examination.

15. **Veterans Credits.** The following information and instructions pertain to those candidates who are claiming Veterans Credits. **Please note that Veterans Credits will not be granted after the establishment of the eligible list.**
- If you are claiming Veterans Credits as either a disabled or non-disabled veteran, you must check the appropriate box on the ***Application for Examination*** form and answer all questions accurately and completely. You must also complete the ***Application for Veterans Credits*** (obtained in the Schenectady County Civil Service Office or on the Civil Service Department website at www.schenectadycounty.com), and submit the DD-214 Discharge Papers showing that you have an honorable discharge. Failure to do so may result in a denial of your claim for Veterans Credits.
 - If you are claiming credits as a disabled veteran, you must in addition to meeting the requirements as indicated on the Examination Application, be certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being disabled in the actual performance of duty in any war; that the disability is rated at ten percent or more, and that the disability exists at the time of application for appointment or promotion.
 - All claims for Veterans Credits are tentative and must be verified through inspection of discharge papers and related documents prior to the establishment of the eligible list. All statements you make in support of your claim for Veterans Credits are subject to investigation and substantiation by the Schenectady County Civil Service Commission. In the event of subsequent disclosure of any material misstatement or fraud in your claim, your appointment may be rescinded and you may be disqualified from further appointment on which you have been granted additional credits as a result of such material misstatement or fraud.
 - Any candidate who is currently serving in the armed forces of the United States on a full-time active duty basis, other than active duty for training, may file for Veterans Credits on an examination **prior to the list being established.**
 - **Conditional Veterans Credits.** A qualified candidate receiving Conditional Veterans Credits will be restricted from certification using the credits until the appropriate documentary proof indicating that the service was in time of war and that the individual received an honorable discharge or was released under honorable circumstances has been presented. It is the candidate's responsibility to provide such proof to the Schenectady County Civil Service Office in order to have the restriction removed and be certified at a score including the Veterans Credits. Until such documentation is submitted, a candidate may only be certified with the examination score, not including the Veterans Credits.
 - **Additional Veterans Credits.** Effective January 1, 2014, additional Veterans Credits may be granted to veterans who:
 1. Used Non-Disabled Veterans Credits to obtain a civil service appointment or promotion with New York State or a local government; and
 2. Subsequent to such appointment, are certified by the US Department of Veterans Affairs as having a service connected disability rated at 10% or more.

16. **Seniority Credits (Promotional Exams Only).** Seniority Credits will be added to an eligible score based on continuous permanent competitive class service in the jurisdiction holding the examination. Service would be credited up to and including the date of examination as follows:

| No. of Years | Credits | No. of Years | Credits | No. of Years | Credits |
|------------------|---------|----------------|---------|----------------|---------|
| Less than 1 year | 0 | 6 to 10 years | 2 | 16 to 20 years | 4 |
| 1 to 5 years | 1 | 11 to 15 years | 3 | 21 to 25 years | 5 |

Each additional 5 years will be credited 1 point in accordance with the above schedule.

17. **Additional Credits for Eligible Children or Siblings of Firefighters and Police Officers Killed in the Line of Duty.** If you are either a child or sibling of Firefighter or Police Officer killed in the line of duty as defined in Civil Service Law Sections 85-a or b (see below), you may be entitled to receive an additional ten points in a competitive examination for original appointment in the same municipality in which the deceased firefighter or police officer had served. 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. **You must contact this office regarding these credits upon submission or your application for examination.**

- **Civil Service Law Section 85-a.** Children of firefighters and police officers killed in the line of duty are eligible for these additional credits.
- **Civil Service Law Section 85-b.** Siblings of Firefighters and Police Officers killed in line of duty (World Trade Center, September 11, 2001) are eligible for these additional credits. Pursuant to CSL §85-b, "killed in the line of duty" shall mean having died in the performance of duty as the natural and proximate results of participation in the rescue effort that was conducted in response to such attack.

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