New York State
Department of Civil Service

Committed to Innovation, Quality, and Excellence

A Guide to the Written Test

for the

Health Program Administrator 3 and 4 Series

Opportunities at work.

Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

INTRODUCTION

The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this test guide to familiarize you with the written test for the Health Program Administrator 3 and 4 Series. This test guide provides a general description of the subject areas that will be tested and the different types of questions you may see on the test. The Examination Announcement will specify the exact subject areas to be included on the particular examination you will be taking.

The written test for the Health Program Administrator 3 and 4 Series has an overall time allowance of 8 hours. The test questions will cover the following six subject areas:

1. **ANALYZING INFORMATION IN TEXT, DATA, IMAGES, OR SYMBOLS** – These questions will test for the ability to analyze, interpret, and draw reasonable conclusions from information presented in text, data, images, or symbols. Analysis may involve identifying a significant problem or issue; focusing on relevant data and text; identifying trends, relationships, and significant features; assessing relevant alternatives; and suggesting or evaluating possible conclusions.
2. **EDUCATING AND INTERACTING WITH THE PUBLIC** – These questions test for knowledge of techniques used to interact effectively with individual citizens and/or community groups, to educate or inform them about topics of concern, to publicize or clarify agency programs or policies, to negotiate conflicts or resolve complaints, and to represent one's agency or program in a manner in keeping with good public relations practices. Questions may also cover interacting with others in cooperative efforts of public outreach or service.
3. **LOGICAL REASONING –** These questions will test for the ability to reason logically by interpreting statements in an accurate and reasonable manner; identifying the logical relationships between related statements; determining the conclusions that can correctly be drawn as a result of information presented; distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information; and applying principles of logic to information provided.
4. **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION –** These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices involved in directing the activities of a large subordinate staff, including subordinate supervisors. Questions relate to the personal interactions between an upper level supervisor and his/her subordinate supervisors in the accomplishment of objectives. These questions cover such areas as assigning work to and coordinating the activities of several units, establishing and guiding staff development programs, evaluating the performance of subordinate supervisors, and maintaining relationships with other organizational sections.
5. **WRITTEN EXPRESSION: CREATING AND REVIEWING WRITTEN MATERIAL –** These questions test for the writing skills that managers use in composing their own reports and correspondence as well as in reviewing documents produced by others. Both sentence skills and paragraph skills are addressed. The specific points tested include grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence structure, appropriate and correct content, editing, and organizing sentences into well-constructed paragraphs.
6. **MANAGING A DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROGRAM –** These questions test for a working knowledge of the principles, policies, and strategies used in managing, administering, and evaluating a health program within the framework of the Department of Health organization. You will be presented with situations that might arise which would require you to effectively analyze resources and information; identify and resolve problems; work to achieve goals within given deadlines; assess program effectiveness; present and solicit information at all levels within and outside the agency; make recommendations to upper level management; and demonstrate an understanding of current Department of Health policies regarding administration, human resource management, supervision, contracts, fiscal management, and public affairs.

INTRODUCTION (continued)

The remainder of this test guide explains how you will be tested in each of the subject areas listed earlier. A **TEST TASK** is provided for each subject area. This is an explanation of how the question will be presented and how to correctly answer it. Read each explanation carefully. This test guide also provides at least one **SAMPLE QUESTION** for each subject area. The sample question is similar to the type of questions that will be presented on the actual test. This test guide provides the **SOLUTION** and correct answer to each sample question. You should study each sample question and solution in order to understand how the correct answer was determined.

NOTE: When you take your examination, you will be given Candidate Directions, which you should read very carefully so that you correctly identify the blocks of questions you need to answer for the examination you are taking.

SUBJECT AREA 1

ANALYZING INFORMATION IN TEXT, DATA, IMAGES, OR SYMBOLS – These questions will test for the ability to analyze, interpret, and draw reasonable conclusions from information presented in text, data, images, or symbols. Analysis may involve identifying a significant problem or issue; focusing on relevant data and text; identifying trends, relationships, and significant features; assessing relevant alternatives; and suggesting or evaluating possible conclusions.

TEST TASK: The questions in this subject area are contained in a number of sets, and candidates are provided with information in a variety of formats. Candidates must analyze and/or evaluate the information provided and then answer questions based on the results of their analysis and/or evaluation.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

Instructions: Base your answer to the next question on the following *Excerpt from an annual evaluation of the Belmont Mental Health Outreach Program,* a fictitious State funded program.

> *Excerpt from evaluation of the Belmont Mental Health Outreach Program*
>
> The Belmont Mental Health Outreach Program serves residents of the city of Belmont who need help obtaining mental health services. The purpose of the program is to assist individuals who might not know which services are available, how to obtain services, or how to successfully utilize services. To evaluate the success of the Outreach Program, staff surveyed some of the program's clients, using a questionnaire containing 20 questions. The questionnaire was given to all clients who came to the Outreach Program's main office reception area during the week of December 10th, from 8:00 a.m. until 12 Noon. Ninety percent of those clients completed the questionnaire. In response to the two questions regarding program satisfaction, 71% of the survey participants indicated that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied."

Given the information provided above, which one of the following descriptions provides the best assessment of the survey?

A. The survey achieved a 90% response rate, which would lead to high confidence in the results.
B. The survey indicates that the majority of the outreach program's clients are satisfied with its service.
C. The survey needs more questions to provide a reliable measure of the program's success.
D. The survey respondents probably make up a biased sample of the program's clients.

The correct answer to the sample question is D.

SOLUTION: *To answer this question correctly, you must note that the method for gathering the data is flawed. Not only was data collection limited to those clients who visit the office, but it was conducted only during the morning hours of a single week. Limiting the selection of respondents to the clients who can or are willing to visit the office during the morning could easily bias the sample such that it is made up of the more active and able clients. In a similar vein, limiting the collection of data to one week in December also has the potential of excluding many clients. Because of this limitation, both choice A and choice B are incorrect. There is not enough information to support choice C, but with a well-crafted questionnaire, 20 questions could provide enough data to obtain a measure of the program's success. Choice D is the only reasonable and correct answer to the question.*

SUBJECT AREA 2

EDUCATING AND INTERACTING WITH THE PUBLIC – These questions test for knowledge of techniques used to interact effectively with individual citizens and/or community groups, to educate or inform them about topics of concern, to publicize or clarify agency programs or policies, to negotiate conflicts or resolve complaints, and to represent one's agency or program in a manner in keeping with good public relations practices. Questions may also cover interacting with others in cooperative efforts of public outreach or service.

TEST TASK: Candidates will be presented with a variety of situations in which they must apply knowledge of how best to interact with other people.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

A person approaches you expressing anger about a recent action by your department. Which one of the following should be your first response to this person?

A. Interrupt to say you cannot discuss the situation until he calms down.
B. Say you are sorry that he has been negatively affected by your department's action.
C. Listen and express understanding that he has been upset by your department's action.
D. Give him an explanation of the reasons for your department's action.

The correct answer to this sample question is choice C.

SOLUTION: *Choice A is not correct. It would be inappropriate to interrupt. In addition, saying that you cannot discuss the situation until the person calms down will likely aggravate him further.*

Choice B is not correct. Apologizing for your department's action implies that the action was improper.

Choice C is the correct answer to this question. By listening and expressing understanding that your department's action has upset him, you demonstrate that you have heard and understand his feelings and point of view.

Choice D is not correct. While an explanation of the reasons for the action may be appropriate at a later time, at this moment the person is angry and would not be receptive to such an explanation.

SUBJECT AREA 3

LOGICAL REASONING – These questions will test for the ability to reason logically by interpreting statements in an accurate and reasonable manner; identifying the logical relationships between related statements; determining the conclusions that can correctly be drawn as a result of information presented; distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information; and applying principles of logic to information provided.

TEST TASK: Candidates are presented with one or more pieces of information in the question stem and a number of related statements in the answer choices. They must use logic to determine the validity of the statements as they relate to the pieces of information presented.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

A program was created to educate citizens on the dangers of lead paint in older residential buildings. One of the program goals was to provide participants with information on how to safely contain or remove lead paint from their homes. If the program obtains funding from the Special Programs Fund for 2011, it will be able to continue for another year. If the program is terminated, program staff will be reassigned. The program currently has fifteen staff members, including the Director.

From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that

A. If the program is unable to continue for another year, the program did not obtain funding from the Special Programs Fund for 2011.
B. If the program will be able to continue for another year, the program obtained funding from the Special Programs Fund for 2011.
C. If program staff are reassigned, the program was not terminated.
D. If program staff are not reassigned, the program was terminated.

The correct answer to this sample question is A.

SOLUTION: *To answer this question correctly, you must recognize that the statement "If the program obtains funding from the Special Programs Fund for 2011, it will be able to continue for another year." has several logical implications. One implication is that obtaining funds inevitably leads to the program being able to continue for another year. There may be many ways in which the program can be continued for another year. However, if the program cannot continue for another year, then no method of continuing it was obtained, including obtaining funding from the Special Programs Fund. Therefore choice A is correct.*

Choice B is incorrect because there may be several ways of ensuring that the program continues for another year. Choices C and D are direct contradictions of the statement "If the program is terminated, program staff will be reassigned." Therefore, choices C and D must be false.

SUBJECT AREA 4

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION: These questions test for knowledge of the principles and practices involved in directing the activities of a large subordinate staff, including subordinate supervisors. Questions relate to the personal interactions between an upper level supervisor and his/her subordinate supervisors in the accomplishment of objectives. These questions cover such areas as assigning work to and coordinating the activities of several units, establishing and guiding staff development programs, evaluating the performance of subordinate supervisors, and maintaining relationships with other organizational sections.

TEST TASK: This subject area will consist of 15 questions. You will be presented with situations in which you must apply knowledge of the principles and practices of administrative supervision to answer the questions correctly. You will be placed in the role of a supervisor of a section, which is made up of several units. Each unit has a supervisor and several employees. All unit supervisors report directly to you.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

In a hallway, you observe two employees strongly arguing about which one of them is responsible for a set of tasks in a collaborative work project that you have delegated to two unit supervisors in your section. The arguing employees work for different units. Which one of the following actions is most appropriate for you to take in this situation?

A. Intercede in the employees' argument and settle it.
B. Meet with the unit supervisors of the two employees and inform them of the situation you observed.
C. Inform one unit supervisor of the situation and ask this supervisor to take care of it.
D. Set up a meeting that includes both unit supervisors and both employees to resolve the situation.

SOLUTION: *Choice A is not correct. It is not reasonable that you would be able to settle the employees' dispute. Earlier you delegated the work project to two unit supervisors, who would normally be responsible for assigning tasks related to the project. The two unit supervisors must be consulted.*

Choice B is the correct answer to this question. The two unit supervisors are collaborating on the work project and therefore giving the assignments. You should meet with them and tell them about the employees' argument and the work tasks they discussed. Along with learning the point of contention, it is useful for the unit supervisors to learn that two employees had a heated argument. The unit supervisors can work out a way to handle the situation.

Choice C is not correct. Speaking to only one supervisor about the situation leaves the second supervisor uninformed of the situation. You cannot be assured that the first supervisor will even include the second supervisor in finding a way to settle the issue. In taking this action, you are favoring one supervisor and slighting the other.

Choice D is not correct. The unit supervisors need to come up with a way of handling the situation that you observed. To do this, they must be informed without the employees present. Also, by including the employees in the meeting, you may get a replay of the hallway argument, which is not helpful.

The correct answer to this sample question is B.

SUBJECT AREA 5

WRITTEN EXPRESSION: CREATING AND REVIEWING WRITTEN MATERIAL – These questions test for the writing skills that managers use in composing their own reports and correspondence as well as in reviewing documents produced by others. Both sentence skills and paragraph skills are addressed. The specific points tested include grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence structure, appropriate and correct content, editing, and organizing sentences into well-constructed paragraphs.

TEST TASKS:

Each of the first 15 questions consists of two choices, A and B; they are almost alike, except for the particular point being tested, such as grammar, usage, punctuation, or clarity of presentation. You are to compare the two choices and decide which one better answers the question posed.

Each of the rest of the questions consists of four choices, A, B, C, and D. You will be asked to recognize correct sentence structure, to determine the best way to edit a given passage, to judge the accuracy or appropriateness of the material presented, and to organize sentences into well-constructed paragraphs.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

GRAMMAR SAMPLE QUESTION 1: Recognizing a grammatically correct sentence

Which one of the following is grammatically correct?

A. The testimony of two eyewitnesses is scheduled to be heard tomorrow.
B. The testimony of two eyewitnesses are scheduled to be heard tomorrow.

SOLUTION: *A singular subject requires a singular verb; a plural subject requires a plural verb.*

Choice A recognizes that the subject of the sentence is "testimony," a singular noun, and follows it with the singular verb form, "is."

Choice B has the incorrect plural form of the verb, "are." It is not the eyewitnesses who are scheduled, but their testimony, which is.

The correct answer to this sample question is Choice A.

GRAMMAR SAMPLE QUESTION 2: Applying a specific rule or principle

Which one of the following states that something that started in the past continues to the present?

A. Allowing semi-annual payment of school taxes was common practice for over ten years.
B. Allowing semi-annual payment of school taxes has been common practice for over ten years.

SOLUTION: *Choice A uses the simple past tense ("was"). That verb tense is used to indicate an action performed and completed in the past.*

Choice B uses the present perfect tense ("has been"). That verb tense is used to indicate that an action that started in the past continues to the present.

The correct answer to this sample question is Choice B.

SUBJECT AREA 5 (cont.)

PUNCTUATION SAMPLE QUESTION 1: Recognizing a correctly punctuated sentence

Which one of the following is punctuated correctly?

A. The curfew was imposed following the storm and, once public safety services were restored, was rescinded two days later.
B. The curfew was imposed following the storm, and once public safety services were restored, was rescinded two days later.

SOLUTION: *Commas should be placed around additional information in a way that retains the integrity of the rest of the sentence.*

Choice A has the commas placed in such a way that the remainder of the sentence still makes sense. ("The curfew was imposed following the storm and was rescinded two days later.")

Choice B has the commas placed in such a way that what remains is no longer a meaningful sentence. ("The curfew was imposed following the storm was rescinded two days later.")

The correct answer to this sample question is Choice A.

PUNCTUATION SAMPLE QUESTION 2: Analyzing punctuation and meaning

Which one of the following clearly conveys that <u>two</u> people will discuss the reorganization?

A. Bob Manero, the program director, and I will discuss the reorganization today.
B. Bob Manero (the program director) and I will discuss the reorganization today.

SOLUTION: *Choice A, by the use of commas, leaves the reader wondering if Manero and the program director refer to one person or two, making a possible total of three people.*

Choice B, by the use of parentheses, makes it clear that Manero is the program director, making a total of two people.

The correct answer to this sample question is Choice B.

USAGE SAMPLE QUESTION:

Which one of the following contains the correct word choice?

A. We have been able to adopt to the new layout.
B. We have been able to adapt to the new layout.

SOLUTION: *The business writer should use words with precision. Context determines which word choice fits the sentence.*

Choice A uses the word "adopt," which means to take or choose as one's own, but it requires a direct object. You can adopt someone or something, but not adopt <u>to</u> someone or something.

Choice B uses the word "adapt," which means "to make suitable (for) or to conform (to)" some purpose or condition.

The correct answer to this sample question is Choice B.

SUBJECT AREA 5 (cont.)

SENTENCE STRUCTURE SAMPLE QUESTION:

Which one of the following is an example of correct sentence structure?

A. The regulation is amended to increase the maximum fee you may charge for assistance in attaining a certificate is now $75.00.
B. If really committed to reaching agreement, success is all but assured.
C. In only the top 25 percent of the adjudicated incidents in the last five years.
D. Of all the annual statistics, the teen driver mortality rates prompted the most discussion.

SOLUTION: *Choice A is not a correctly constructed sentence. It consists of two overlapping sentences that, when joined as one, do not convey a coherent message. When a large amount of detail is placed in one sentence, the relationship among the parts can suffer.*

Choice B is not a correctly constructed sentence. There is no subject (or agent or doer) in the first part of the sentence.

Choice C is not a correctly constructed sentence. It is only a fragment, consisting of a phrase looking for a main message to complete it.

Choice D is a correctly constructed sentence. It has an introductory phrase followed by a meaningful message about the annual statistics.

The correct answer to this sample question is Choice D.

EDITING SAMPLE QUESTION:

The passage below is followed by four edited versions. Choose the one that shows the best editing.

Work on this proposal took much longer than we originally anticipated due to the limited staffing resources we had, as a result of our role in the implementation of the InSource-It program.

A. Due to the limited staffing resources, which we had as a result of our role in the InSource-It program, we could not anticipate originally that work on the proposal would take as long as it did in the end.
B. We had limited staffing resources than we had originally anticipated as a result of our role in implementing the InSource-It program; it made work on this proposal take much longer.
C. The staffing resources we had to work with on the proposal were limited by the fact that we had a role in the implementation of the InSource-It program, and it took much longer than had been anticipated originally.
D. Work on this proposal took longer than we had anticipated; we had limited staffing resources resulting from our role in implementing the InSource-It program.

SOLUTION: *Choice A is not the best editing of the passage. It begins with "Due to," which should never start a sentence. The phrasing is uneven, and the sentence contains unnecessary words ("…in the end").*

Choice B is not the best editing of the passage. The use of "than' implies a comparison. Had the sentence read, "We had more limited … resources…," "than" would have been appropriate. Also, it was not the staffing resources that had originally been anticipated, but the time it would take.

Choice C is not the best editing of the passage. Unnecessary verbiage ("by the fact that we had a" could be reduced to "our") adds to the reader's burden. Also, as constructed, the sentence could be interpreted as saying that the program took longer than anticipated. The original says that it was the work on the proposal that took longer than anticipated.

Choice D retains all the meaningful elements of the original and presents them in the proper relationships with proper sentence structure.

The correct answer to this sample question is Choice D.

CLEAR, COMPLETE, ACCURATE RESTATEMENT SAMPLE QUESTION:

Warren Valle failed to take proper precautions. His failure to take proper precautions caused several personal injury accidents.

Which one of the following is the most clear, complete, and accurate restatement of the information above?

A. Warren Valle failed to take proper precautions that caused several personal injury accidents.
B. Warren Valle failed to take proper precautions, and he also caused several personal injury accidents.
C. Warren Valle's failure to take proper precautions caused several personal injury accidents.
D. Warren Valle, who failed to take proper precautions, was in several personal injury accidents.

SOLUTION: *Choice A conveys the incorrect impression that proper precautions caused several personal injury accidents.*

Choice B states two things that Warren Valle did, but it does not say that his failure to take proper precautions caused the personal injury accidents.

Choice C best presents the original information: Warren Valle failed to take proper precautions, and it was this failure that caused several personal injury accidents.

Choice D states that Warren Valle was in several personal injury accidents. The original information states that Warren Valle caused several personal injury accidents, but it does not state that he was in several personal injury accidents.

The best answer to this sample question is Choice C.

SUBJECT AREA 5 (cont.)

PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION SAMPLE QUESTION:

The following question is based upon a group of sentences. The sentences are shown out of sequence, but when correctly arranged, they form a connected, well-organized paragraph. Read the sentences, and then answer the question about the best arrangement of these sentences.

1. Eventually, they piece all of this information together and make a choice.
2. Before actually deciding upon a human services job, people usually think about several possibilities.
3. They imagine themselves in different situations, and in so doing, they probably think about their interests, goals, and abilities.
4. Choosing among the many occupations in the field of human services is an important decision to make.

Which one of the following is the best arrangement of these sentences?

A. 2-4-1-3
B. 2-3-4-1
C. 4-2-1-3
D. 4-2-3-1

SOLUTION: *Choices A and C present the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. In both A and C, sentence 1 comes before sentence 3. The key element in the organization of this paragraph is that sentence 3 contains the information to which sentence 1 refers; therefore, in logical sequence, sentence 3 should come before sentence 1.*

Choice B also presents the information in the paragraph out of logical sequence. Choice B places sentence 2, which concerns deciding on a particular job, before sentence 4, which introduces the topic of the paragraph, that is, choosing among the many occupations in the field.

Choice D presents the information in the paragraph in the most logical sequence. Sentence 4 introduces the main idea of the paragraph: "choosing an occupation in the field of human services." Sentences 2-3-1 then follow up on this idea by describing, in order, the steps involved in making such a choice. Choice D is the best answer to this sample question.

The best answer to this sample question is Choice D.

SUBJECT AREA 6

MANAGING A DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROGRAM – These questions test for a working knowledge of the principles, policies, and strategies used in managing, administering, and evaluating a health program within the framework of the Department of Health organization. You will be presented with situations that might arise which would require you to effectively analyze resources and information; identify and resolve problems; work to achieve goals within given deadlines; assess program effectiveness; present and solicit information at all levels within and outside the agency; make recommendations to upper level management; and demonstrate an understanding of current Department of Health policies regarding administration, human resource management, supervision, contracts, fiscal management, and public affairs.

TEST TASK: You will be presented with situations that might arise in the management of a Health Department program. You may be asked to apply Department of Health procedures, show understanding of how to implement goals within given deadlines, assess program effectiveness, present and solicit information, how to make recommendations to upper level management, and demonstrate understanding of policies regarding administration, human resource management, supervision, contracts, fiscal management, and public affairs. Each question will be followed by four choices. You must use your knowledge of Department of Health policies to select the best choice.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

One Monday morning, you receive a phone call from a colleague. She informs you that James Cross, a Health Program Administrator, was arrested over the weekend, but released on his own recognizance. The arrest was based on evidence that Mr. Cross diverted company funds to personal use while he worked for a private healthcare provider prior to being hired by the Department of Health. Your colleague says that the story will most likely show up on the afternoon or evening news today. You thank her for the information, and your colleague hangs up.

You should now take which one of the following actions?

A. E-mail the person who supervises Mr. Cross and summarize what you have just learned.
B. Call Mr. Cross into your office and question him on this situation.
C. Inform Human Resources and ask for guidance on this situation.
D. Arrange for Mr. Cross to be closely monitored on the job until the allegations are proven or disproven.

SOLUTION: *Choice A is not correct. It would place unfounded allegations into a permanent record and would not be appropriate.*

Choice B is not correct. It would be premature and could complicate the investigation.

Choice C is correct and would ensure agency procedures and personnel laws are upheld.

Choice D is not correct. It could be construed as harassment by the employee and as there is only an allegation at this point may not be supported by personnel laws.

The correct answer to this sample question is Choice C.

TEST SECURITY

The test you will be taking is the property of the New York State Department of Civil Service. Candidates may not remove test material from the test site and may not reproduce, reconstruct, or discuss the test content with others. Unauthorized possession or disclosure of the test material is prohibited by law and punishable by imprisonment and/or a fine. Additionally, candidates may be disqualified from appointment to the positions for which the examination is being held and from being a candidate for any civil service examination for five years. After you take the test, other individuals may want to talk with you about the test. You should not discuss the questions and answers, even in general terms. You should be careful that you do not inadvertently violate test security and put yourself at risk.

CONCLUSION

Your attitude and approach to the test will influence how well you perform. A positive attitude will help you do your best.

Before the test ...

- Study and review this guide to familiarize yourself with what the test will cover.
- Study and review the subject areas to be covered on the test.

On the day of the test ...

- Arrive at the test site on time.
- Bring your Admission Notice, two No. 2 pencils, a photo ID containing your signature, a quiet lunch or snack, and any other **allowed** materials.
- Do **NOT** bring this test guide to the test site.

At the test site …

- Do **NOT** bring cell phones, beepers, headphones, or any electronic or other communication devices to the test site.
- The use of such devices anywhere on the grounds of the test site (this includes the test room, hallways, restrooms, building, grounds, and parking lots) could result in your disqualification.

During the test ...

- Read and follow all directions on your Admission Notice, test booklets, answer sheets, and Candidate Directions.
- Follow the Monitor's instructions.
- Keep track of the time.

After the test ...

- Do **NOT** remove any test materials from the test room.
- Do **NOT** paraphrase, reconstruct, or reproduce the test material in any way.
- Do **NOT** discuss the test material with others.

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