



Department of  
Civil Service

# CIVIL SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

THE NEXT GENERATION OF PUBLIC SERVANTS

SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

# AGENDA

Civil Service's Mandate

Adaptations to a Changing World

Civil Service Transformation

Transforming Open-Competitive  
Appointments

Transforming Promotional  
Appointments

Next Steps

# **CIVIL SERVICE'S MANDATE**

# THE MERIT SYSTEM IN 1895

On January 1, 1895, a new constitution became effective.  
Among its provisions was a **simple** declaration that:

“Appointments and promotions in the civil service of the state and all of the civil divisions thereof, including cities and villages, shall be made according to merit and fitness to be ascertained, so far as practicable, by examinations, which, so far as practicable, shall be competitive.”

# MISSION OF MERIT & FITNESS

Since then, the **mission** of the Department of Civil Service is to uphold the principles of merit and fitness for the State and municipalities by:

**BUILDING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE TODAY  
BY PROMOTING A DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE,  
AND TALENTED WORKFORCE.**

We lead and deliver world-class workforce management strategies by providing innovative solutions based on merit, fitness, and equality of opportunity.

**MUCH HAS CHANGED IN THE WORLD  
SINCE 1895, BUT OUR COMMITMENT  
TO MERIT AND FITNESS REMAINS.**

# TRADITIONAL EXAMINATION APPROACH



The Department's efforts to ensure equitable application of merit and fitness have revealed disparities.

While merit systems and civil service exams were created to identify the most qualified workers for government jobs, traditional cognitive based testing\* has been shown to present obstacles to building a workforce to meet the needs of the modern workplace.

Many traditional written exams have been criticized for being culturally biased and not predictive of job performance.

\*Refers to traditional written exams with a *cognitive component*, such as reading, writing, applying and interpreting written information and not *non-cognitive components* of exams, such as situational judgement-type exams.

# BARRIERS OF THE TRADITIONAL EXAMINATION APPROACH

- The timeline between testing and canvass means on average, exam candidates must wait over 26 weeks before applying to an actual job vs. the average unemployed job seeker finding employment in 19.5 weeks, with over half finding employment in 8.1 weeks.
- Exams and hiring process are lengthy, complex and viewed as inaccessible to jobseekers.
- Job postings are frequently not consistent or intuitive.
- The perception exists that exam scoring does not always match the right candidate to the right job.



- The onboarding experience for jobseekers and hiring managers is not always optimal.
- New York State has had a reputation of being an outdated, out-of-touch, slow employer.

# **ADAPTATIONS TO A CHANGING WORLD**

# THE MERIT SYSTEM TODAY

- Over the last 130 years, we have gone from **simple** to **so complex** that only a few understand all the nuances.
- Much has changed since inception, but processes and systems have not evolved.
- We have done the best we can to adapt:
  - Automation
  - Title Consolidation
  - T&Es (42% of post pandemic exams)
  - “Soft Skills” Testing
  - Reclassifications
  - Computer-Based Testing Pilots
  - Virtual Proctoring Pilots

**WE ARE STILL NOT MEETING  
THE NEEDS OF CANDIDATES,  
EMPLOYEES, STATE AGENCIES  
OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT.**

# NY HELPS

At critical time for our state, NY HELPS has resulted in over 32,500 NYS appointments and 10,300 local appointments.

MORE THAN  
**32,500**  
NYS APPOINTMENTS

MORE THAN  
**10,300**  
LOCAL APPOINTMENTS

However, NY HELPS is a band aid in response to the culmination of an outdated system, COVID and a significantly changing candidate pool, but it is not a long-term solution.

Despite its success, there are issues that need to be addressed, such as the burdensome administration and applicant frustration with lack of communication.

**WE NEED TO DO MORE TO GET BACK TO THE BASICS OF PROVIDING EQUITABLE AND EFFICIENT MERIT AND FITNESS EXAMINATIONS.**

# **CIVIL SERVICE TRANSFORMATION**

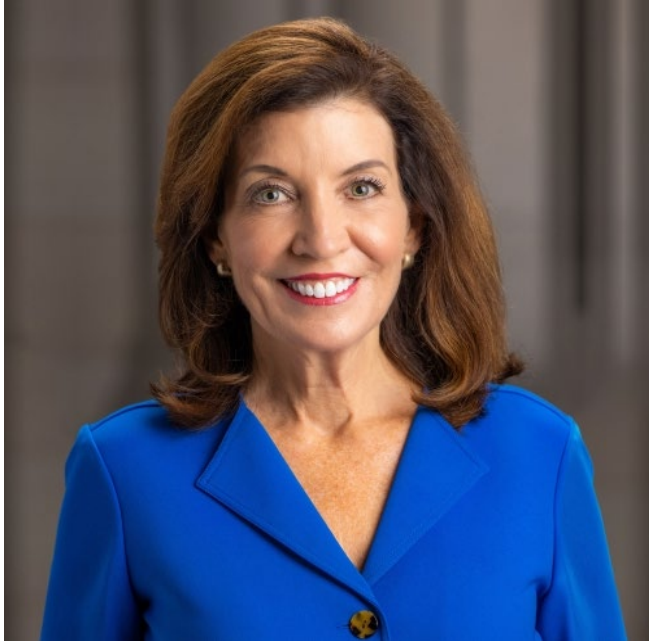
## The Transformation Approach

- Uphold all mandates of merit and fitness as required by the NYS Constitution
- Create efficiencies and a superior customer experience by streamlining, strengthening and automating Civil Service policies and practices AND systems
- Open to new Civil Service Rules, Regulations and possibly Laws that advance the Merit System goals of protecting employee rights, promotional opportunities and career advancement
- Not reduce or take away any current employee rights, protections or entitlements to create efficiencies
- Be practicable and sustainable to administer and maintain the future Merit System hiring model



**AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE STATE OF THE STATE AND THE NEW YORK STATE BUDGET, GOVERNOR HOCHUL HAS PROVIDED CRITICAL LEADERSHIP, RESOURCES, AND A COMMITMENT TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF MERIT SYSTEM HIRING.**

# MERIT SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION CHAMPIONS



Governor Kathy Hochul



Commissioner Timothy R. Hogue



Executive Deputy Commissioner  
Rebecca Corso

#TeamCivilService

**TRANSFORMING  
OPEN-COMPETITIVE  
APPOINTMENTS**

# PILLARS OF FUTURE OPEN-COMPETITIVE HIRING

Focus on **customer service**, **sustainability**, and **onboarding best practices** aimed at recruiting the next generation of public employees and leaders.

**Eliminate inefficiencies**, **simplify procedures**, and **automate processes** in all phases of the hiring process from application to the first day of employment.

**Improve the experiences** of jobseekers, HR professionals, and hiring managers to orient hiring practices towards matching the most qualified candidates with open positions quickly and equitably.

**Focus on People, Processes and Systems to Eliminate unnecessary work, Simplify what remains and leverage Automation to work smarter, not harder.**

# FUTURE OF OPEN-COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS: VACANCY-BASED T&E'S

All local and state open-competitive examinations will be held via vacancy-based training and experience examinations (T&E).

Only exceptions to this model are police and fire examinations which will be held as multiple-choice examinations.

## **What is a vacancy-based T&E?**

Submission of an application for a job vacancy, via an application management system, serves as the examination for that position.

The submitted application for a job vacancy will be scored and ranked automatically based on the candidate meeting the minimum or preferred qualifications for that position, with **veterans credits** applied when applicable.

**Examination begins when qualified candidates apply for a job vacancy, and ends with the selected candidate's completion of probation.**

# SYSTEMATIC, COMPETITIVE EVALUATION OF JOBSEEKERS

## Minimum Qualification Development to Enhanced Use of Probation

DCS will develop enterprise-wide guidance, standards, templates, and best practices to ensure **fairness, equity, and consistency** in the hiring process, regarding minimum/preferred qualifications, T&E, structured interviews, onboarding, and probation.

DCS will develop robust real time review and post-audit processes to ensure agency compliance with the new examination and hiring model.

**This model competitively assesses merit and fitness through a systematic evaluation of jobseekers matching the most qualified candidates with open positions quickly and equitably.**




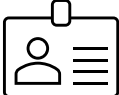
## WHY T&ES?

### **Significant reasons for utilizing T&Es exist:**

- Eliminate logistical barriers to the exam process.
- Allow jobseekers to apply to vacancies in real-time when they are actively looking for employment.
- Allow exams to be held more frequently to better meet the hiring needs of agencies.
- Demonstrate “face validity” with applicants and hiring managers, who expect resume type review to play a role in hiring.
- Address gender and racial disparities.

**Along with structured interviews, reference checks, and probation, the T&E is part of a systematic evaluation that can validly assess the qualifications and more accurately predict successful performance on the job.**

# TRANSFORMING THE JOBSEEKER EXPERIENCE: VACANCY-BASED EXAMS

	Typical Process Duration	Minimum Job Search Length	Maximum Job Search Length
 Create online profile	1 day	1 day	1 day
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; padding: 2px 10px; display: inline-block; margin-right: 10px;">Apply</div> Apply to a <b>current exam/vacant position</b> with a click of a button	As soon as profile completed	1 day	1 day
 Resume, employment application, assessment of training and experience (T&E) against min/preferred qualifications sent to hiring agencies	As soon as deadline passes	1 day	2 weeks
 Interview and receive offer	30-60 days	1 month	2.5 months
 Day 1	30-60 days	<b>2 months</b>	<b>4.5 months</b>

# TRANSFORMED OPEN-COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION A WIN ACROSS THE BOARD

## Why this Approach:

Timeframe	Efficient for jobseekers	Increased pool of interested applicants	Efficient for hiring agencies
Before NY HELPS	X	X	X
NY HELPS	✓	✓	X
Transformation	✓	✓	✓

The transformation approach combines the **proven NYS T&E Exam Model** with **Automated Applicant Management** to create one **centralized automated T&E** for most open-competitive examinations.

# APPLICANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM & EVALUATION PORTAL

## Job Seeker Benefits:

Improves, demystifies and modernizes the overall jobseeker experience, leading to a larger pool of candidates for agencies and enhanced reputation of New York State as an employer of choice by:

- Matching active, interested candidates with relevant job openings based on their education, experience, and skills to improve job offer outcomes.
- Streamlining the application process by saving candidates profiles for easy, repeated use.
- Ensuring clear and consistent communication throughout the hiring process.



## Agency Benefits:

Reduces the overall time and associated cost of hiring, onboarding and retaining qualified staff by:

- Automating routine recruiting and onboarding tasks, allowing HR to focus on strategic priorities and candidate communication.
- Offering advanced reporting, dashboards, and tracking not available in current manual processes.
- Enabling data-driven decision-making for improved recruiting, training and hiring practices.
- Reducing time-to-hire by minimizing administrative burdens.

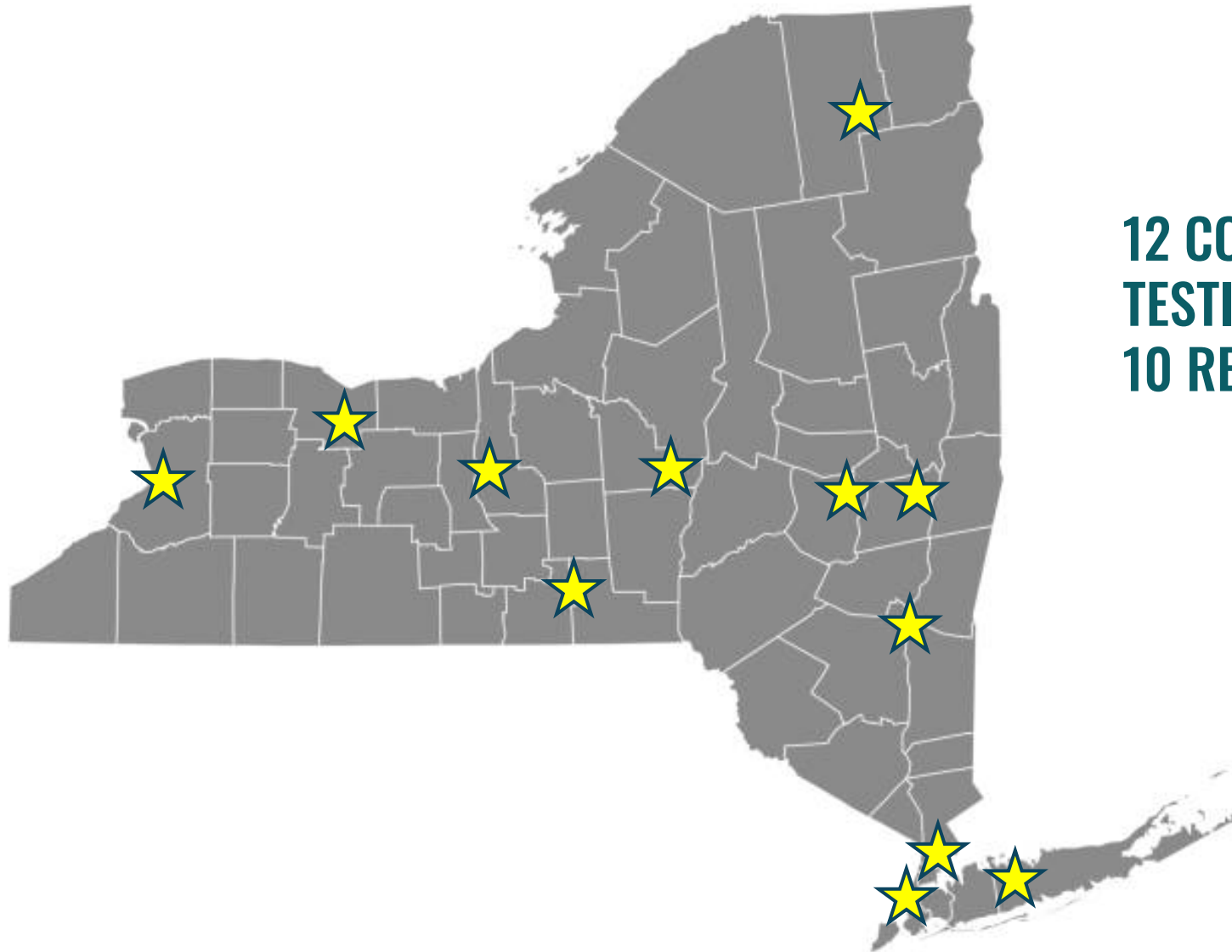
# APPLICANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TIMELINE

Applicant Management & Evaluation Portal Replaces NY HELPS in July 2026



# **TRANSFORMING PROMOTIONAL APPOINTMENTS**

## SHORT-TERM PROMOTION TRANSFORMATION: COMPUTER-BASED TESTING



**12 COMPUTER-BASED  
TESTING CENTERS (CBTs) IN  
10 REGIONS OF THE STATE**

## LONG-TERM PROMOTION TRANSFORMATION: CBTs + APPLICANT PORTAL

Focus on updating exam content, offering promotion exams more frequently, and integration of promotion examination and hiring into applicant management system.



## WEB BASED TESTING SYSTEM IN CBTS

### Web Based Testing (WBT) System in CBTs in 2026:

- Continued work to support the current Test Management System so we can continue to hold exams during the transition period to CBTs.
- DCS and ITS resources dedicated to implementing a new Web Based Testing System to ensure a successful roll out of CBT centers.

In the longer term, work to develop a new exam system that will support the range of testing needs.

# CBT TIMELINE AND CENTER STATUSES

- The Department is on schedule and expects to open multiple Testing Centers in Fiscal Year (2025-26), beginning with the center in **Syracuse** and then the Capital Region site in **Cohoes**, followed by sites in **Buffalo, Rochester, Long Island**, and **Newburgh**.
- For Fiscal Year 2026-27, the Department plans to open sites located in the **North Country, Utica**, and **Binghamton** along with a second **Capital District** and both **NYC** metropolitan locations.
- Of these locations, the status of the leases and sites as of today is as follows:

## Construction Complete

- Cohoes
- Syracuse
- Rochester

## Executed leases

- Buffalo

## Leases In Negotiations

- NYC
- Long Island
- Newburgh
- Schenectady
- Utica

## Site Search Ongoing

- NYC
- North Country
- Binghamton

**NEXT STEPS**

# COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION PACKAGE

The new **Open-Competitive Examination Model** and **Applicant Evaluation Portal** create the foundation for NYS Workforce Transformation

## **Additional Building Blocks of Ongoing DCS Transformation Efforts:**

- Public Service Matters Marketing Campaign
- Centers for Careers in Government Outreach and Recruitment
- Total Compensation Study
- Review of Educational Requirements and Minimum Qualifications
- Electronic Medical Records

Governor Hochul supports this approach and is providing DCS with the necessary funding and staffing to ensure successful merit system transformation.

# ENGAGING OUR STAKEHOLDERS

**We need the participation of  
our partners!**

## Feedback survey on the DCS Transformation approach and workgroups

Workgroup	Topics
Applicant Management System	Requirements, Functionality, Workflows, Testing
Computer-Based Testing	Prototyping, Policies, Procedures
Open-Competitive Examinations	Qualifications Development, T&E
List Maintenance	Eligible Lists, Certifications, Canvassing
Law, Rules, Regulations	
Veterans	Veterans Credits and 55-a/b/c
Change Management	Transformation Ambassadors

We need your expertise and feedback to navigate a solution for our future.



Pain doesn't last. And when it's gone, we have something to show for it. **Growth.**

Just when the caterpillar thought the world was ending, he turned into a butterfly.

First comes thought; then organization of that thought, into ideas and plans; then transformation of those plans into reality.

When we quit thinking primarily about ourselves and our own self-preservation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness.

The business changes. The technology changes. The team changes. The team members change. The problem isn't change, per se, because change is going to happen; the problem, rather, is the inability to cope with change when it comes.

**Together, we will transform merit system hiring in New York State.**



**Department of  
Civil Service**