



Department of
Civil Service

REGIONAL FORUMS ON TRANSFORMATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

Municipal Services Division

July 2026



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Overview

The Department of Civil Service (DCS) is undertaking a comprehensive effort to engage a variety of stakeholders and develop the future vision for the civil service merit system in New York State. This transformation is focused on customer service, sustainability, and onboarding best practices aimed at recruiting the next generation of public employees and leaders while upholding all mandates of merit and fitness found in the New York State Constitution.

As part of this effort, DCS is leveraging technology to develop a customer-friendly, fully accessible, innovative method to examine candidates for merit and fitness, while building a workforce that mirrors the diversity and ability of all New York State residents.

Local civil service agencies currently receive most of their examination services from DCS. Transformation of the testing model will have an impact on the operations of local civil service agencies who provide civil service administration to more than 360,000 New Yorkers employed by counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts, libraries and other special districts in local government.

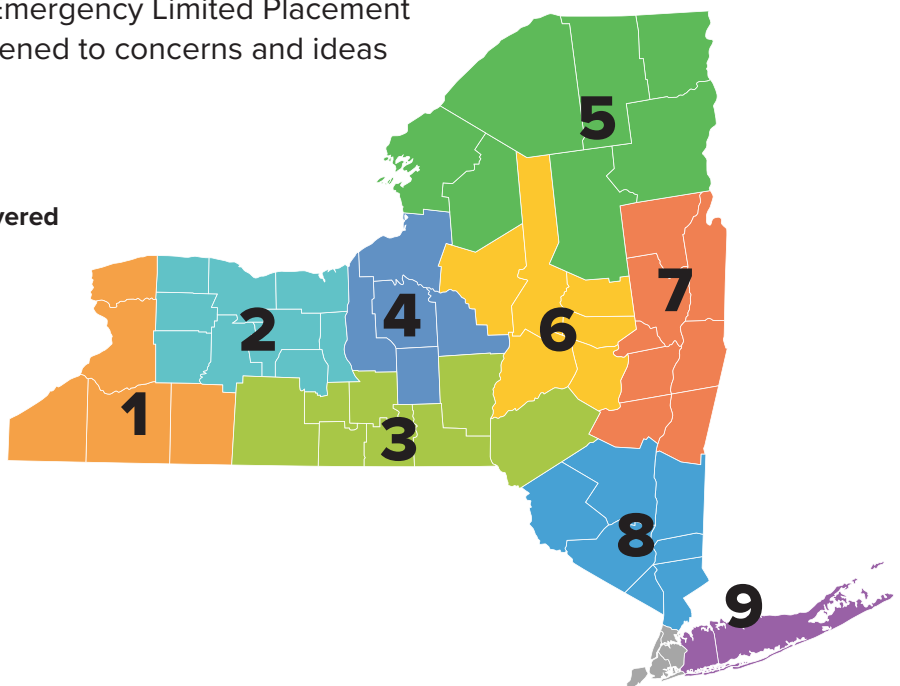
To ensure local civil service agencies have the most up-to-date information about the transformation project and to seek their input, DCS led 11 Regional Forums on Transformation across the State between January and March 2026. Two hundred and forty-eight staff members representing 79 local civil service agencies attended one or more of the forums.

The forums updated local agencies on the Transformation initiatives, including the development of a new Jobs Portal and Applicant Management System (AMS) and Computer-Based Testing Centers. Additionally, the forums modeled vacancy-based training & experience (T&E) examinations and gathered agency feedback to inform system design considerations.

The Regional Forums on Transformation also gathered agency input on the local New York State Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide (NY HELPS) program and listened to concerns and ideas pertaining to public safety recruitment.

Local Regional Forums on Transformation covered 9 regions across New York State.

1. Western New York
2. Finger Lakes
3. Southern Tier
4. Central New York
5. North Country
6. Mohawk Valley
7. Capital District
8. Hudson Valley
9. Long Island



Applicant Management System and Vacancy-Based T&Es

DCS found that questions about AMS posed by local civil service agencies throughout the State were similar, regardless of the region or size of the agency. Attendees had the most questions about system functionality such as the creation of job postings and the review of applications. They also asked about system access, including available roles for agencies and appointing authorities, integration with existing systems, anticipated system costs, and the project timeline.

DCS provided information about the benefits of competitive T&E exams, including their convenience for job seekers and efficient scoring process. Questions about the vacancy-based T&E model were diverse and, in some instances, varied regionally. Local agencies asked about minimum qualifications and the development of rating factors, verifying candidate responses, scoring methods and notifications, and the management of resulting eligible lists. In regions where recruitment efforts for some open-competitive positions produce large candidate pools, there were some concerns about processing a large volume of candidates and diluting the competitiveness of examinations and the “rule of three”.

Frequently Asked Questions

DCS staff were able to answer many of the questions asked by local agencies during the forums, including some of the common questions and answers listed below.

Will the “rule of three” still apply to the vacancy-based T&E model?

Yes, the “rule of three” will apply in the new model. The “rule of three” requires agencies to make an appointment from among the three highest ranking eligibles willing to accept appointment.

Why can’t promotion exams be offered as T&Es?

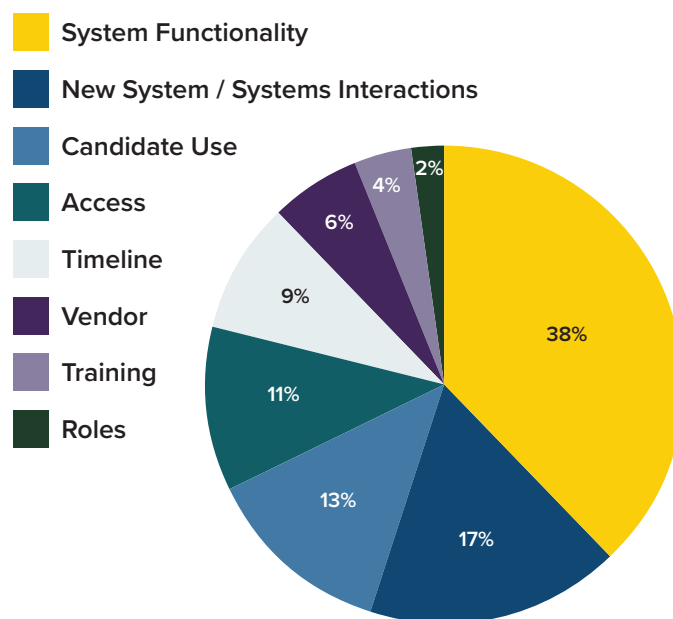
Historically, DCS has mainly offered T&Es for open-competitive titles only, with limited exceptions when a T&E was held for hard-to-fill titles that necessitate holding both a promotion and open-competitive examination (e.g. Librarian). DCS will continue to hold most promotion examinations via multiple-choice tests that evaluate employees’ current knowledge, skills, and/or abilities that will allow them to successfully perform the duties of the higher-level position.

How will titles that are filled both on an open-competitive and promotional basis be tested?

When titles are filled both on an open-competitive and promotional basis, DCS will analyze titles and job families and determine which will be held as vacancy-based T&Es and which will continue to be held as multiple-choice format tests. Titles filled on both an open-competitive and promotional basis will use the same test format (either T&E for both or multiple choice for both).

Individuals seeking more information can also access the [Civil Service Transformation Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) on our website, which is updated periodically.

Questions which could not be answered during the forums were recorded. As answers become available, they will be added to the FAQs on the website.

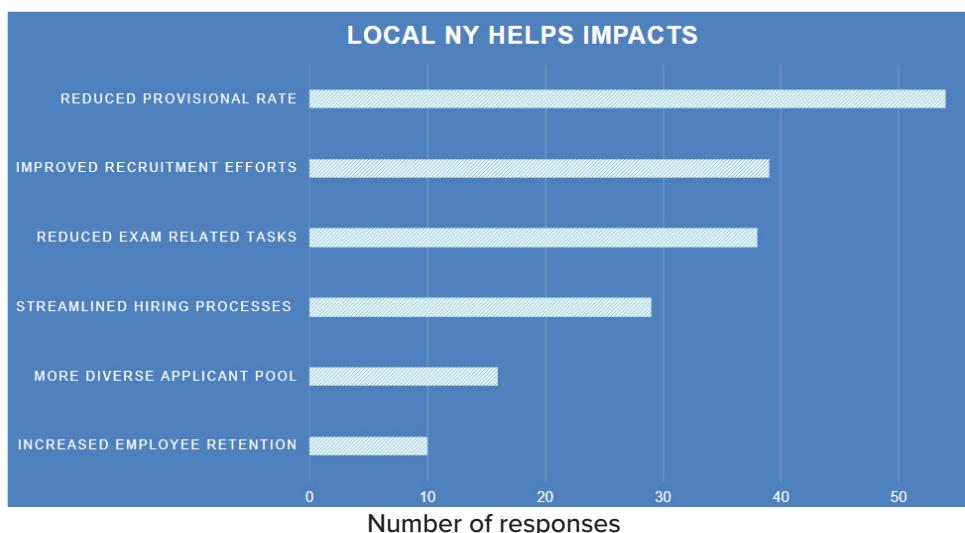


Local civil service agencies were surveyed in advance of the forums and asked to share their experiences with the NY HELPS program. NY HELPS is a temporary program that waives civil service examinations for nearly all positions open to the public. Of the agencies who responded, a majority realized reduced provisional rates, improved recruitment efforts, and a reduction in exam-related tasks.

The NY HELPS program for both state and local use has been extended until June 30, 2028, to ensure operational continuity during the transformation transition period. This will allow more time for a strategic and efficient rollout of the new Jobs Portal and Applicant Management System (AMS) for the future of open-competitive hiring in New York State.

The extension is in response to the feedback received from local agencies at the statewide Municipal Workforce Roundtable Tour convened by the Senate Committee on Civil Service & Pensions and led by Senator Jackson in October 2025. Additionally, we heard formal requests for an extension from the New York State Association of Personnel and Civil Service Officers (NYSAPCSO) and the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC).

In addition to the continued positive impacts on the recruitment and hiring of local government employees anticipated by the program extension, agencies who shared their challenges with the complicated administrative process of requesting titles for the local NY HELPS program will be helped by the NY HELPS Omnibus Rule. Developed by DCS, the rule empowers the Municipal Services Division with administrative authority to oversee the NY HELPS program on behalf of any municipal agency that adopts it, allowing for quicker processing of NY HELPS titles.



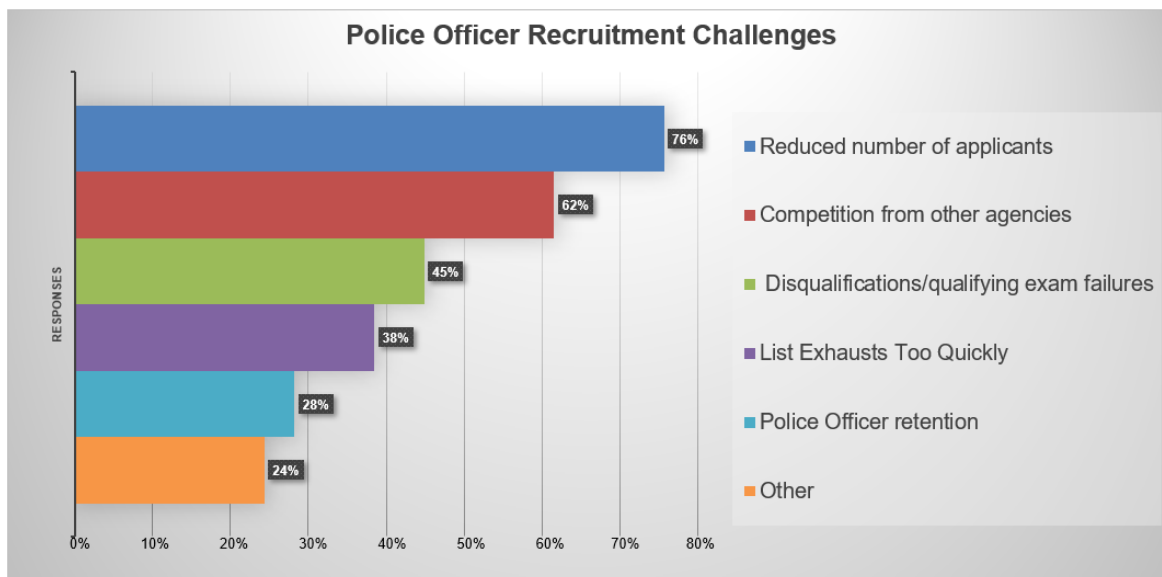
75 local agencies reported the positive impacts of NY HELPS to date.

Public Safety Recruitment

Prior to the forums, local civil service agencies were surveyed about their biggest challenges regarding police recruitment and selection. A majority cited a reduction in the number of applicants for the Entry-level Law Enforcement exam as their greatest challenge.

To remediate recruitment difficulties, local agencies reported efforts to increase community outreach through job fairs and advertising, eliminate exam fees, offer exams more frequently, and initiate continuous recruitment exam programs.

Local agencies offered their ideas to improve recruitment for Police Officers during discussions at the forums. Ideas included use of the State Computer-Based Testing Centers to hold exams on a continuous recruitment basis, improving physical agility exam processes, and focusing on better retention practices.



Over 80% of local agencies reported Police Officer recruitment as one of their greatest challenges.

Outcomes

DCS will continue to inform local government partners about civil service transformation and the project's timeline. Local civil service agencies are encouraged to share information about civil service transformation with their appointing authorities.

For the small number of local civil service agencies that were unable to attend a Regional Forum on Transformation in person, a virtual Regional Forum Recap was held.

Copies of monthly transformation updates and a link to a 2023 study by the Rockefeller Institute of Government, [New York State's Civil Service Examination Process and Its Impact on Diversity in the Public Sector](#), have been added to MSD Online, for access by local civil service agency staff at any time.

To better meet the needs of local government agencies, the Entry-Level Law Enforcement Officer (ELLEO) examination was moved to October 17, 2026. Additionally, DCS is further streamlining the NY HELPS program for local civil service agencies to reduce the administrative burden.

Next Steps

Staff in the Municipal Services Division will continue to work closely with the DCS Transformation project team to develop the local vacancy-based T&E process and organize positions in local government into job families and program areas. Additionally, the team is looking to streamline the local examination schedule for the coming testing year to focus on the future exam model.

DCS met with the New York Conference of Mayors, New York State Association of Towns, and the New York State Association of Counties to share information about the project and garner their input.

Additional information about DCS transformation efforts was also shared with local civil service agencies during the New York State Association of Personnel and Civil Service Officers (NYSAPCSO) Annual Training Conference in June.

DCS will continue to collect valuable information and feedback from local civil service agencies on their recruitment and appointment processes to inform the design of the AMS.

About the Municipal Services Division

Created in 1941, the Municipal Services Division of the New York State Department of Civil Service delivers technical advice and assistance to more than 95 local civil service agencies across New York who provide civil service administration to more than 360,000 local government employees at the town, city, county, village, and school district levels.

The Municipal Services Division is committed to providing exceptional customer service to all local agencies throughout the Transformation process, with assistance including but not limited to increased communication on the status of the project, agency training both on-site and virtual, and advocacy on behalf of local governments in State-led development sessions.

Regional Transformation Forum Host Agencies

The regional forums would not have been possible without the collaboration and support from local civil service agencies throughout New York State. Thank you to all our hosts!

Nicole Yaggle, Montgomery County	1/6: Mohawk Valley in Fonda
Beth McCarthy, NYS OCFS	1/20: Capital Region #1 in Rensselaer
Lisa Denig, Westchester County	1/27*: Hudson Valley #1 in White Plains
Carole Ruiz, Hamilton County	1/30: Northern NY in Piseco
Julie Bell, Oswego County	2/10: Central NY in Fulton
Kerry Brennan, Yates County	2/11: Finger Lakes in Penn Yan
Rachel Kashimer, Dutchess County	2/17: Hudson Valley #2 in Hyde Park
Cristina Blake, Suffolk County	2/18: Long Island #1 in Hauppauge
Brian Bray, Erie County	3/10: Western NY in Buffalo
Christine Segrue, Broome County	3/11: Southern Tier in Binghamton
Robin Lynch, City of Long Beach	3/13: Long Island #2 in Long Beach
Hannah Black, Albany County	3/16: Capital Region #2 in Albany

**Cancelled due to inclement weather.*



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