



## VACANCY-BASED TRAINING & EXPERIENCE EXAMINATION FACT SHEET

### September 2025

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#### WHAT IS A VACANCY BASED TRAINING & EXPERIENCE (T&E) EXAMINATION?

- A vacancy-based Training and Experience (T&E) examination is a competitive civil service assessment method that scores candidates based on their education and work experience rather than a written cognitive test. The vacancy-based T&E is one component of the competitive examination process.
- For the future of civil service merit assessment in New York State, most state and local open-competitive examinations will be held via vacancy-based T&E examinations.
- Candidates will apply online to job postings of interest and will go through an online T&E examination to evaluate their education, experience, and skills against the posted job requirements.
- The T&E examination will be scored to assess the candidate's merit and fitness as it relates to the posted job they are applying for.

#### WHY T&Es?

- The Department of Civil Service (DCS) has used T&Es for decades, and they are currently utilized to assess candidates for a broad range of open-competitive, entry-level titles.
- Currently, approximately 40% of the examinations DCS holds are T&Es.
- These include some of the most high-volume titles such as Correction Officer and Motor Vehicle Representative, as well as a variety of professional titles such as Attorneys, Engineers, Child Protective Specialists, Emergency Medical Technicians, and Nurses. Additionally, the Professional Career Opportunity (PCO) Exam, used to fill more than 200 entry-level professional job titles, was successfully held as a T&E test in its most recent iteration.

#### WHEN WILL VACANCY-BASED T&Es BE USED?

- T&Es will be used for most state and local open-competitive examinations to assess merit and fitness based on the job posted.
- T&Es will NOT be used for public safety/law enforcement titles. T&Es will also not be used for promotion examinations. Promotion examinations will continue to be held in-person at soon to be established Computer-Based Testing Centers across the state.

#### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF VACANCY-BASED T&Es?

- While each test type has benefits and challenges, vacancy-based T&Es are well-suited to deliver on the needs of agency partners and prospective job applicants for open-competitive positions.
  - **Convenient for Job Seekers** –T&Es meet prospective job candidates where they are. Rather than requiring travel to a physical location to take a written test for the chance of being considered for a job vacancy at an indeterminate future date, the vacancy-based T&E model is uniquely suited toward allowing candidates to take the examination online anytime, at any location, for job vacancies that exist now.

- **Efficient and Valid Scoring** –Vacancy-based T&Es can be processed instantaneously, meaning that candidates can apply and take the test for a job vacancy in real time. The scoring will also be verified.
- **Enhance Diversity** – In advance of the decision to move toward increased use of T&Es, DCS collaborated with the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government to identify opportunities to enhance workforce diversity through improvements to the recruitment and examination processes. This study found improvements in the exam performance of racially diverse candidates following the migration of the very large PCO examination from a written test to a T&E. The results of this study were considered when determining to expand the use of T&E examinations, and demonstrate the alignment of our approach with ongoing efforts to enhance diversity in public employment.
- **Alignment with other Governments** – The use of T&Es within a governmental merit system framework is not unique to New York State. T&Es are widely utilized by many other states, including California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Georgia, and Minnesota. Many of these states have adopted this examination format as part of their efforts to update and modernize their public sector hiring.