

# ***Chemung County/City of Elmira Regional Civil Service Commission***

*PO Box 588 • 203 Lake Street • Elmira, New York 14902-0588*

## **Examination Notice**

### **SECRETARY I - OPEN COMPETITIVE**

**EXAM #67205**

#### **EXAMINATION DATE**

January 21, 2017

#### **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

December 2, 2016

**SALARY:** Varies by agency.

**EXAM FEE:** There is a \$15.00 non-refundable exam fee. This fee must be paid at the time of application, either by cash, check or money order made payable to "Regional Civil Service Commission". If your application is disapproved, the fee will not be refunded. You should carefully review the minimum qualifications and any residence requirements and apply only for those examinations for which you clearly qualify. Details concerning waiver of application fee are found in the "General Instructions."

**MULTIPLE EXAMINATIONS SCHEDULED FOR THE SAME DAY:** 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 take all your examinations at the State examination center. You will be advised by letter when and where to report for your examinations. If you have applied for another local government examination with another local civil service agency, call or write to each civil service agency to make arrangements. You must make your request for these arrangements no later than two weeks before the date of the examinations. You must notify all local government civil service agencies with whom you have filed an application of the test site at which you wish to take your examination.

**RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT FOR EXAM:** There is no residency requirement to participate in the exam.

**PREFERENCE IN APPOINTMENT FOR RESIDENTS:** At the appointing authorities' request, preference may be given to successful candidates who have been residents of the municipality or district in which appointment is to be made for at least one (1) month immediately preceding the date of certification and at the time of appointment from the resulting eligible list. FOR APPOINTMENT IN SOME JURISDICTIONS, you may be required to become a resident in accordance with law or resolution.

**VACANCIES:** This examination is being held to fill vacancies, as they may occur in the County of Chemung and School Districts.

#### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Either:**

- (A) Graduation from a regionally accredited college or university or one accredited by the NYS Board of Regents to grant degrees with an Associate's Degree in Secretarial Science or a related field and one (1) year of clerical experience; **or**
- (B) Graduation from high school or completion of an equivalency diploma and completion of a business certificate program and two (2) years of clerical experience; **or**
- (C) Graduation from high school or completion of an equivalency diploma and three (3) years of clerical experience.

**ANTICIPATED ELIGIBILITY:** If you expect to complete the college educational requirement by April 21, 2017 you can be admitted to this examination. If successful on the examination, you will not be certified for appointment until you have submitted proof of completion of the requirements to the Chemung County/City of Elmira Regional Civil Service Commission. Proof must be submitted by May 12, 2017. Failure to do so will result in removal of your name from the eligible list.

**JOB DESCRIPTION:** The work of employees in this class is distinguished by the fact that responsibility is involved for independently performing complex clerical operations and for relieving superior of administrative details by arranging his/her conferences and relieving him/her of contacts which should properly be made with subordinate officials. This work calls for a high degree of confidentiality and the frequent exercise of independent judgment in giving out information regarding departmental policies and practices, and in planning the routine of an office. The correspondence duties of these employees are distinguished by the fact that most letters and releases of a routine recurring nature are composed personally with correspondence being directed to supervisor only when new problems arise. Employees in this class work under general supervision, receiving detailed instructions only upon work where policies have not been determined. Only unusually important or complicated assignments are checked in detail upon completion. Employees in this class may exercise immediate supervision over the work of clerical assistants. Does related work as required.

**SUBJECT OF EXAMINATION:** A written test designed to evaluate knowledge, skills and /or abilities in the following areas:

1. **Grammar/Usage/Punctuation** The grammar and usage questions test for the ability to apply the basic rules of grammar and usage. The punctuation questions test for a knowledge of the correct placement of punctuation marks in sentences. You will be presented with sets of four sentences from each of which you must choose the sentence that contains a grammatical, usage, or punctuation error.
2. **Keyboarding practices** These questions test for knowledge of preferred practices in such areas as letter format, capitalization, hyphenation, plurals, possessives, word division, word and figure style for numbers, and common proofreading marks. In addition, there will be a passage to proofread followed by questions on how to correct the errors in the passage.
3. **Office practices** These questions test for knowledge of generally agreed-upon practices governing the handling of situations which typists, stenographers, secretaries, and office assistants encounter in their work, as well as knowledge of efficient and effective methods used to accomplish office tasks. The questions cover such topics as planning work flow; setting priorities; dealing effectively with staff, visitors, and callers; filing and retrieving information; safeguarding confidentiality; using office equipment; and making procedural decisions and recommendations which contribute to a well-managed office.
4. **Office record keeping** These questions test your ability to perform common office record keeping tasks. The test consists of two or more "sets" of questions, each set concerning a different problem. Typical record keeping problems might involve the organization or collation of data from several sources; scheduling; maintaining a record system using running balances; or completion of a table summarizing data using totals, subtotals, averages and percentages. **You should bring with you a hand-held battery- or solar-powered calculator for use on this test. You will not be permitted to use the calculator function of your cell phone.**
5. **Spelling** These questions test for the ability to spell words that are used in written business communications.

**STUDY GUIDE:** The New York State Department of Civil Service has not prepared a test guide for this examination. However, candidates may find information in the publication "How to take a written test" helpful in preparing for this test. This publication is available on line at: [www.cs.ny.gov/testing/localtestguides.cfm](http://www.cs.ny.gov/testing/localtestguides.cfm)

**PERFORMANCE TEST:** Candidates who receive a passing score on the written test must also qualify on the **typing performance test**. You must pass both the written test and performance test to be considered for appointment. Since the performance test is qualifying (pass/fail), if you pass the performance test, your final score for the exam will be the score that you achieve on the written test. The performance test is a test of keying speed and accuracy. It utilizes a standard keyboard and is given on computers. The computer program requires no prior knowledge of software. The test is five minutes long and is preceded by a three-minute practice session. Candidates enter ("key" or "type") as much of that passage as they can during the time available. In order to pass the test, candidates must enter the text at a rate of at least **35 wpm**, with at least 96% accuracy. For example, if a candidate enters the test at 35 words per minute, the maximum allowable number of errors is 8. (Note: A word is defined as five characters. The rating formula divides the total number of characters entered by five to determine the number of words entered.)

**Typing Performance Test Waiver:** If a candidate is employed by a public agency or jurisdiction served by the Regional Civil Service Commission and presently holds permanent or contingent permanent competitive status in a title for which passing of a performance test in typing at 35 words per minute or higher was required for appointment, the performance test may be waived. Candidates requesting a waiver based on present employment must clearly indicate the waiver request on their examination application. Performance tests may also be waived for candidates who have qualified on a prepared performance test administered by a recognized school, training program, or employment agency in the last four (4) years. Documentation from an agency must be made on the agency's official letterhead and include qualifying speed, error rate, and test date.

**PRE-EMPLOYMENT DRUG TEST/BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION:** Candidates being considered for appointment may be required to pass a pre-employment drug test and/or undergo a State and national criminal history background investigation, which will include a fingerprint check, to determine suitability for appointment. Failure to pass the pre-employment drug test or to meet the standards for the background investigation may result in disqualification.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENT FOR APPOINTMENT IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND BOCES:** "Per Chapter 180 of the Laws of 2000, and by Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, to be employed in a position designated by a school district or BOCES as involving direct contact with students, a clearance for employment from the State Education Department is required"

**CALCULATORS:** 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.

*EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER.*

## **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

**Applications:** A regular application form must be filed for each separate examination. The applicant should make sure that every question is answered and that the application is complete in all respects. An incomplete application may be disapproved. There is a \$15.00 non-refundable exam fee (the fee for Uniformed Protective Services exams is \$20.00). The fee must be paid at the time the application is filed and must be paid in cash, check or money order, made payable to the Regional Civil Service Commission. There is a \$30.00 fee for returned checks with non-sufficient funds. Before filling out your application, read carefully the announcement for this examination. When completing your application be sure to enter, at the top of page 1, the examination number which identifies the examination for which you are filing. Applications postmarked after midnight of the "Last Filing Date" will not be considered eligible for this examination.

**Waiver of Exam Fee:** The exam fee may be waived for the following reasons:

- You are unemployed and primarily responsible for the support of your household.
- You are receiving financial assistance from the Department of Social Services. Applications and Waiver of Application Fee forms are available at the Chemung County/City of Elmira Regional Civil Service Commission, P.O. Box 588, 203 Lake Street, Elmira, New York 14902-0588. Telephone: (607) 737-2915. When submitting your waiver form, please provide proof of eligibility, such as a check stub or benefit card.

**Qualification Process:** Upon review of applications, candidates will either be disqualified or conditionally approved. Disqualified candidates will be afforded the opportunity to submit facts in opposition to disqualification. Statements in the applications of conditionally approved applicants may be investigated at a later date. The Regional Commission may refuse to certify an eligible after examination pursuant to Section 50.4 of Civil Service Law who is found to lack any of the established requirements for admission to the examination or for appointment to the position for which he applies. No person shall be disqualified pursuant to this subdivision unless he has been given a written statement of the reasons therefore and afforded an opportunity to make an explanation and to submit facts in opposition to such disqualification.

**Admission to the Exam:** Accepted candidates will receive an admission letter which tells when and where to appear for the exam. No one will be admitted to the examination without the official admission letter. If an application is rejected, a disapproval letter will be sent to you. The Regional Civil Service Commission does NOT make formal acknowledgment of the receipt of an application; however, you should contact the Regional Civil Service Commission if you do not receive a notice within three (3) days of the examination informing you whether or not you are to be admitted to the examination.

**Multiple Exams on the Same Day:** Qualified candidates may take a combination of examinations being given on the same date. Prior to submitting applications for multiple exams, you may check with the Civil Service office for the maximum time allowance to complete all of the exams.

**Religious Accommodation:** Most written tests are held on Saturdays. If you cannot take the test on the announced test date due to a conflict with a religious observance or practice, check the area on the examination application (page 1, C) "Religious Accommodation". We will make arrangements for you to take the test on a different date.

**Veterans' Credits:** Veterans and disabled veterans desiring to claim additional credit must submit veteran's credit forms prior to the establishment of the resulting eligible list. Effective January 1, 1998 the State Constitution was amended to permit a candidate currently in the armed forces to apply for and be conditionally granted veteran's credit in examinations. Active members of the armed forces must provide proof of military status to receive conditional credit. Further information and applications are available at the Regional Civil Service Commission office.

**Additional Credit for Children of Firefighters and Police Officers Killed in the Line of Duty:** In conformance with section 85-a of the Civil Service Law, children of firefighters and police officers killed in the line of duty shall be entitled to receive an additional ten points in a competitive examination for original appointment in the same municipality in which his or her parent has served. If you are qualified to participate in this examination and are a child of a firefighter or police officer killed in the line of duty in this municipality, please inform this office of this matter when you submit your application for examination. 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.

**Failing Examination/Failure to Appear:** Candidates who fail the examination, or who fail to appear for the examination as scheduled, will be eliminated from further consideration.

**Eligible Lists:** Unless otherwise specified, the final rank order of the eligible list established, as a result of this exam, will be determined on the basis of the scores received on the written test, plus veterans and seniority credits where appropriate. The resulting eligible list for this examination will remain in force for at least one (1) year and may be extended by the Regional Civil Service Commission for a maximum of four (4) years.

This 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 exams will apply to this examination.

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