



**Department of
Civil Service**

**Testimony of the
Department of Civil Service
Before the Senate Civil Service
and Pensions Committee**

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Department of Civil Service

Good Morning Chair Gounardes and distinguished members of the Senate Civil Service and Pensions Committee. My name is Lola Brabham and it is my privilege to serve as the Acting Commissioner for the New York State Department of Civil Service. Thank you for the invitation to appear before you today.

As the central personnel agency for State government, the Department of Civil Service is responsible for the administration of the civil service merit system, serving approximately 150,000 employees. In this capacity, the Department:

- Classifies and allocates positions;
- Develops, administers, and scores civil service examinations;
- Establishes and maintains eligible lists; and
- Provides policy advice and assistance with respect to personnel recruitment and placement, diversity efforts, and workforce restructuring.

Similar services and other technical assistance are also provided to the 94 municipal agencies that are responsible for 360,000 local government employees.

In addition, the Department is pleased to administer New York State's Student Intern Program. The Student Intern Program is part of Governor Cuomo's *New New York Leaders Initiative*, which focuses on attracting new and highly-skilled individuals to State government through both internship and fellowship programs. Through this program, New York State is preparing both undergraduate and graduate students for future public service opportunities by providing them with valuable hands-on program experience that will assist them as they begin their professional careers.

As you know, employees are essential to the success of government, and the Department of Civil Service is proud to play the lead role in providing the diverse talent that agencies need to provide critical services to New York's residents and customers.

In State government, appointments and promotions are made according to the principles of "merit and fitness," as mandated by the New York State Constitution. And since the State's workforce is overwhelmingly competitive, civil service examinations are the key mechanism used to fill most entry-level and promotional job opportunities.

State agencies and localities rely on the Department for consistent and timely civil service exams to ensure they can meet their staffing needs and effectively perform their core functions. To that end, the Department is taking proactive measures to further streamline the examination process through the use of technology and business improvements, so that our agency partners continue to have a pipeline of talent available to meet their hiring needs – when they need it.

Through the Professional Career Opportunities (PCO) exam, the Department is also attracting new talent to the State's workforce by providing them with the unique opportunity to gain access to a number of rewarding and meaningful careers with New York State. The PCO exam is one civil service exam that is used by State agencies to fill more than 100 different job types across a wide range of disciplines – including health and human services, environmental conservation, and transportation, just to name a few.

In 2017, the PCO exam was expanded to include college juniors and seniors and was held at local universities for the first time – including select SUNY and CUNY campuses – to complement the Department's larger strategic efforts to expand testing venues and reach a more diverse talent pool. I am pleased to report that more than 3,000 jobseekers have been hired to positions across various State agencies since the launch of the PCO exam in 2014. In addition, the success of the PCO exam program has laid the foundation for the exploration and potential use of other innovative testing initiatives moving forward.

The Department has also expanded its efforts to promote the many employment opportunities available throughout State government. Over the past year, the Department participated in more than 250 outreach and recruitment events, connecting with more than 26,000 jobseekers at universities, community organizations, and job fairs. These outreach efforts complement the more targeted recruitment efforts of State agencies seeking specific needs and skillsets to meet their workforce needs.

Furthermore, the Department has implemented new strategic outreach and marketing initiatives – from the development of a new user-friendly public website to enhanced social media efforts – designed to brand New York State as an employer of choice and create greater awareness of the civil service exam process. At the same time, the Department is actively engaged in enhancing exam preparation materials and resources to further encourage participation in civil service exams and better prepare exam takers for future success.

The initiatives I have highlighted today underscore the Department's ongoing commitment to supporting high-priority workforce needs, while promoting equal opportunity and access for all New Yorkers. Our workforce is strongest when everyone is able to participate, and ensuring that our State government remains able to attract, hire, and retain a diverse talent pool is key to our current and future success.

I look forward to working with you to advance a shared vision for a top tier workforce to deliver critical services to the State of New York. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today.