

## **Frequently Asked Questions for New York City's 55-a Program**

### **Program Eligibility and Requirements**

#### **Who is eligible for the 55-a Program?**

To be eligible for the 55-a Program, you (1) must be certified as having a mental or physical disability; (2) must be qualified to do the job with or without a reasonable accommodation; and (3) must meet the minimum education and/or skills required for the position(s) sought.

#### **What types of disability qualify under the Program?**

The program is not limited to any specific types of disability. Candidates can have any physical, medical, mental, or psychological impairment, or a history or record of such impairment, which includes a full range of sensory, mental, physical, mobility, developmental, learning, and psychological disabilities—whether they are visible and apparent or not.

#### **Who decides if I'm eligible?**

The New York State Education Department's Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) unit certifies persons as having a mental or physical disability and makes determinations as to whether an individual is qualified to perform satisfactorily the duties of the position sought. The New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) certifies persons who are blind and makes determinations as to whether an individual is qualified to perform satisfactorily the duties of the position sought. The findings of ACCES-VR and the NYSCB are given due consideration by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS).

#### **Do I have to submit medical documentation, and if so, who reviews them?**

Medical documentation is required and must be submitted for review to either ACCES-VR or the NYSCB, depending on your disability. The respective agency will provide you with instructions on how to submit documentation.

## **Recruitment**

### **What types of positions are available through the 55-a Program?**

City agencies use the 55-a Program to fill positions at all levels and in almost every field. In general, any position that requires a competitive civil service examination (competitive class) for hiring can be filled using the 55-a Program.

### **How do I apply for the 55-a Program?**

Candidates are required to be offered a position before they can be placed in the 55-a Program. You can visit [nyc.gov/jobs](https://nyc.gov/jobs) to apply for positions in the competitive class and request 55-a Program consideration on your resume and cover letter. Your cover letter should not include references or documents relating to your disabilities and/or medical conditions. Agencies then select qualified candidates that they wish to interview for their position. Once a candidate has been interviewed and hired, the agency's 55-a coordinator works with DCAS to complete the internal 55-a Program application process.

Note: The City does not have a central database for 55-a applicants.

### **If I am a person with a disability and I apply for a job, am I guaranteed the position?**

No. There is no guarantee of receiving an interview or a position. Appointments through the 55-a Program are discretionary for each City agency.

### **What are my promotion opportunities if I am appointed under the 55-a Program?**

Under civil service law, employees hired in the 55-a Program have the same opportunities to take civil service exams for promotions as employees who were hired after taking a civil service exam.

### **Can I take civil service exams even if I am applying for the 55-a Program or if I am already enrolled in the 55-a Program?**

Yes. While the 55-a Program provides the opportunity to work in a position that would normally be within the competitive class, employees enrolled in this program are considered non-competitive and do not hold a permanent status because they have not taken a civil service exam. The only way to obtain a permanent status is to take and pass a civil service exam, be hired from the pool of people who took the exam, and successfully complete the probationary period.

If you are already in the 55-a Program, you can and should take any exam for which you meet the requirements. Such exams provide an opportunity for career advancement and greater job security.

[Click here](#) to view current exams open for registration.

### **Can I get a reasonable accommodation to take a civil service exam?**

**Yes.** We offer special testing accommodations, such as a large print format, audio versions, or additional time, to those who need it. Testing accommodations information can be found in our [special circumstances guide](#).

### **What is the 55-b/c Program?**

The 55-b/c Program covers New York State government positions. You may visit their website at <https://www.cs.ny.gov/rp55/> for more information.

### **What is the difference between the 55-a and the 55-b/c Programs?**

The 55-a Program applies to local municipalities within New York State. Whereas the 55-b/c Program applies to New York State government positions. Each local municipality has their own 55-a program. New York City's 55-a Program has the largest total number of participants.

### **If I have the 55-b/c Eligibility Letter, may I use it to apply for 55-a positions?**

No. The 55-b/c Eligibility Letter cannot be used to apply for local government positions. This letter is only applicable for New York State government positions.

## **Partners and Resources**

### **What does the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) do?**

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) is the liaison between New York City government and the disability community. In partnership with all City offices and agencies, MOPD consistently ensures that the rights and concerns of the disability community are included in all City initiatives and that City programs and policies address the needs of people with disabilities.

### **What is MOPD's NYC: ATWORK?**

*NYC: ATWORK* is an employment initiative that builds partnerships and expands coalitions by connecting people with disabilities who are unemployed or underemployed to meaningful, living wage jobs across the five boroughs. This initiative focuses on creating a centralized pipeline of talented candidates including transitioning youth, college students and graduates and recipients of state vocational rehabilitation services. Additionally, MOPD assists DCAS in providing outreach to 55-a participants and potential candidates; and helps to educate agencies regarding the benefits of the 55-a Program. Candidates are also encouraged to contact the [Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities](#) for employment assistance.

## Organizations to Contact for More Information

### **New York City's 55-a Program**

NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services

Tel: (212) 386-1701

Email: [CitywideRecruitment@dcas.nyc.gov](mailto:CitywideRecruitment@dcas.nyc.gov)

Website: <https://bit.ly/55aProgram>

### **Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD)**

100 Gold Street, 2nd Floor

New York, NY 10038

Tel: (212) 788-2830

Video Phone: (646) 889-2626

Website: [www.nyc.gov/mopd](http://www.nyc.gov/mopd)

### **NYC: ATWORK**

Email: [nycatwork@mopd.nyc.gov](mailto:nycatwork@mopd.nyc.gov)

Website: [www.nyc.gov/nycatwork](http://www.nyc.gov/nycatwork)

### **Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)**

Toll Free: 1-800-222-JOBS (5627)

Email: [accesadm@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:accesadm@mail.nysed.gov)

Website: [www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/](http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/)

### **New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)**

Toll Free: 1- 866- 871-3000

TTY: 1- 866- 871-6000

Website: <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cbvh/>