

Recommendations from Commission Members

Dr. Mary Archibald:

- The tests should be given in multiple languages and extra time for those applicants who speak a language other than English and requests it. If possible, there should be a study guide available to applicants.
- There needs to be much more marketing for potential applicants. Ie: College partnerships
- There needs to be exit interviews for the employees who resign.
- There needs to be data collected on those applicants who apply and fail to meet the minimum requirement

Representative Fellela

- There is a need for the civil service exam especially in social service jobs.
- Civil Service Exam should be given more frequently and the list should be updated more often as many applicants have found other jobs after a long time on the list.
- Reduce the time between a job offer and the start time.
- Benefits and salary are a factor and review if some jobs can be done remotely

Kimberly Merolla-Brito, DHS

- Increase the number of names provided to agency (RIGL 36-4-26), ideally the full list in rank order.
- Enhance the current Civil Service test administration
 - More frequent testing on a regular schedule (for ex: quarterly, will help promote recruitment and promotions)
 - Offer the test via computer
 - Offer the test in multiple languages – English, Spanish, Portuguese – align with federal regulations
- Recommendations to learn from the DCYF pilot program findings on its completion.
- Continue to explore opportunities to streamline the PAR process
- Continue with the continuous recruitment status for Eligibility Technician (ETs), social Caseworkers (SCW) and Customer Services Aides (CSA's)
- Standardize the exit interview process during employee offboarding process
- Explore opportunities for a more robust staff incentive program.

Jim Cenerini, RI Council 94 AFSME

Findings:

- Few applicants for state jobs is a national issue: (NEO Gov Report).
- Rhode Island state jobs are less attractive do to policy decisions and multiple rounds of pension and benefit cuts.
- PAR system causes delays.

- Neighboring states pay more for comparable jobs (including eligibility technician and social case worker).

Recommendations:

- More frequent test administration.
- Ability to take a Civil Service test on a computer.
- Providing all qualified names to the agency once scoring is complete.
- Translation of the Civil Service Test into other languages besides English.

Matthew Gunnip, Local 580, SEIU

Recommendations

- More frequent testing.
- Have an open and continuous application and exam process on the state website.
- Forward qualified candidate's names at once to the agency.
- Clear language that allows DCYF and DHS to call through the list by ranked score but eliminated excessive waiting periods for a response. As long as they make a diligent effort, there should not be a long wait time.
- Set a reasonable time that exams expire. We have a social casework exam list is from an exam offered in 2019. The statute needs clarity.
- Exams should be administered more often, the last list for names for ET's expired in April of 2023 and the test was administered in August
- If people apply for state jobs and are not qualified, the state should have the capacity to see if there is another opportunity that would be a better match. He also suggested a certificate program for people with degrees not in the specific fields but with the experience and the desire to do social service work
- The rules about temporary and permanent position need to be evaluated

Brenna McCabe, Department of Administration

- Expand the number of certified/ranked names that can be given to an agency at a time following a civil service exam. Allowing for a more nimble list certification process that can flex during individual FTE and mass onboarding.
- Partner with higher education institutions to look at innovative programming/help create a pipeline for social service workers.
- Standardize exit interview process during offboarding process. (HR already reviewing via the Enterprise Resource Planning implementation.)
- Explore computer-based testing to reduce/eradicate bulk of administrative burden. Would need to account for security, identification and proper scoring capabilities. Could partner with a state university or college; or hire an external vendor. This proposal would need a full review/assessment. (Agencies just purchased Scantron machines, so we would need to see if those could be repurposed, sold or if there's a way to still use them.)
- Explore adding the civil service tests in Spanish and, potentially, other languages. Would need to ensure the candidates possesses sufficient English verbal and written language skills to perform the job that is subject to testing.

- Assess the effectiveness of the DCYF Pilot program in terms of best practices and outcomes. This program should run for 1 year to fully gather all data and account for any variables that occur over time.