# C:\Users\sdowiat\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\XK0ONOUQ\ONEIDA COUNTY SEAL BW.jpgOneida County Civil Service

# § 55-a Policy

Section 55-a of the New York State Civil Service Law allows for qualified individuals with disabilities to gain civil service employment without having to participate in the competitive civil service process. A 55-a appointment is a non-competitive appointment to what would normally be a competitive position. In Oneida County, these non-competitive appointments can be made to any entry-level title as defined and designated by the Commissioner of Personnel. The purpose of the program is to help individuals with disabilities overcome barriers and gain access to entry-level civil service employment opportunities.

Process:

As with all titles, an application for the position must be filed and the minimum qualifications must be met. If the minimum qualifications are met, a Verification of Employment Eligibility under Civil Service Law, Section 55-a is requested from ACCES-VR/CBVH. ACCES-VR/CBVH evaluates the candidate’s skills and abilities against the essential functions (Typical Work Activities) of the job and either approves the 55-a status and suggests appropriate reasonable accommodations or disapproves the candidate as not being able to perform the essential functions of the job. This decision is made on a job-by-job basis so if a candidate is not determined to be physically or mentally able to perform the essential functions of one job, he/she may still be eligible for another. If approved, the candidate is eligible for hire on a non-competitive basis in the title for one year. If not hired within the one year timespan, a letter requesting reconsideration and an updated Oneida County application must be submitted.

55-a candidates are another employment option for an appointing authority. An appointing authority is under no special obligation to either interview or hire the candidate. The candidate must be able to interview well and move through the selection process on his/her own merits. As with any selection process, the appointing authority is looking for candidates who have the qualifications, knowledge, skills, abilities and personal characteristics necessary to perform the essential functions of the job at the highest level possible.

55-a candidates are under no obligation to share the nature of their disabilities with the appointing authorities during the interview process. The focus of the interview should be on the ability to do the job. Once the job has been offered, reasonable accommodations may be discussed.

Oneida County always encourages 55-a candidates to participate in the competitive examination process since it is advantageous to convert a non-competitive appointment to a permanent, competitive appointment as soon as possible. A permanent competitive appointment offers retention rights in a layoff situation and due process if a disciplinary situation should ever arise. Non-competitive employees have no rights until at least five years of service are obtained.