



**MEMO TO: Office Support, Clerical Staff and Other Interested Parties**

**FROM: Anita Fitzpatrick, Commissioner of Personnel**

**DATE: October 23, 2012**

**SUBJECT: Broad Classification – Administrative Assistant titles 1 through 4**

In order to increase promotional and lateral movement opportunities, Tompkins County is rolling out a series of broadly classified administrative titles. Please allow me to list the advantages:

- Though it is not in the Administrative series, Information Aide will provide an opportunity to enter civil service on a non-competitive basis. These employees will have opportunities to compete in promotion examinations for advancement to Administrative Assistant – Level 1 after serving a minimum of two years in the Information Aide title.
- This Administrative Assistant plan creates a clear and logical career path. You will be able to easily chart the progress of your career and take advantage of any lateral opportunities that might present themselves.
- We have removed at least two titles from the State’s testing process. Receptionist and Secretary Examinations will no longer be held.
- Administrative Assistant – Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 are now continuous recruitment, locally scored examinations that are administered in the Personnel Department’s state-of-the-art computerized testing lab. Tests are scored immediately and candidates interfiled on the lists within one week of the test. For these titles, there will be no more waiting for three or four months to get your test results back.
- Administrative Assistant is generally perceived to be a more modern, respectful and positive title than Clerk, Receptionist, Keyboard Specialist, etc.
- The title of Administrative Assistant is consistent with the title structure employed by other major employers in Tompkins County and broad classification is considered a “best practice”.
- There should be greater opportunities for promotion, reassignment, transfer and reinstatement throughout the entire jurisdiction of the County (departments, towns, villages, school districts, and special districts under our jurisdiction).
- For those of you with performance test anxiety, we have abolished the typing performance test for all Administrative titles, hopefully removing this barrier to employment.

County Departments and other Appointing Authorities are being encouraged to implement the Administrative Assistant plan in a phased manner so that it does not impact you. You will continue to serve in your current title and grade until you decide that you want a change and your department has the desire and financial resources to make the change. We are encouraging you to participate in currently posted promotional examinations for Administrative Assistant – Level 1 through 4. In turn, we are encouraging appointing authorities to adopt this plan in order to develop clear career ladders and stepped promotion plans within their departments (e.g., no skipping levels). A career ladder will give you the opportunity for continuous learning, to be challenged in your work, and the ability to progress along your chosen career path.

## THE CLASSIFICATION PLAN

**Information Aide (County labor grade of B – 2)** will be the starting point for our promotion line. This non-competitive title is considered to be in a collateral (or generally related) line of promotion to Administrative Assistant – Level 1. It is important to note that non-competitive employees do not enjoy the same civil service “rights” as competitive class employees. After obtaining two years of permanent non-competitive class status, employees will be qualified and encouraged (but not required) to participate in promotion examinations to the title of Administrative Assistant – Level 1. New hires will be able to avoid the insecurity of provisional appointments and the chance that they might not pass or be reachable on the eligible list.

**Administrative Assistant – Level 1 employees (County labor grade of D – 4)** can be assigned to perform any basic entry level clerical work. The job description has been made more broad and encompassing, creating greater opportunities for reassignment within the organization, transfer and reinstatement throughout the jurisdiction, and promotional opportunities for employees. Promotion to this title has been defined as two years of permanent non-competitive class status as an Information Aide. Continuous recruitment with a decentralized examination program and low minimum qualifications should provide good opportunities for entry to the competitive class. Promotion from Level 1 to Level 2 is currently defined as two years of permanent competitive class status as Administrative Assistant - Level 1, or two years as Clerk, Keyboard Specialist, Receptionist, Typist, or any other title determined by the Commissioner of Personnel to be qualifying. Keyboarding speed is no longer a selection criterion, which means no typing performance test.

**Administrative Assistant – Level 2 employees (County labor grade of F – 6)** will be assigned to perform moderately difficult clerical work. Again, the job description has been made more broad and encompassing, creating greater opportunities for promotion as well as lateral movement throughout the department and organization. Promotion to Level 3 is currently defined as two years of permanent competitive class status at Level 2 or other titles determined to be in a logical line of promotion. Again, keyboarding speed is no longer a selection criterion, which means that a typing performance test will no longer be required. **At this level, speed and accuracy may be a component of the provisional or probationary performance review process.**

**Administrative Assistant – Level 3 employees, at a labor grade of I – 9**, would essentially provide a more autonomous “direct report” level of administrative support. Again, the job description has been made more broad and encompassing, creating greater opportunities for lateral movement throughout the organization. The promotion qualifications have been tentatively defined as two years as an Administrative Assistant – Level 2 or other logical promotion titles as determined by the Commissioner of Personnel. Again, keyboarding speed is no longer a selection criterion, which means that a typing performance test is not required. **At this level, speed and accuracy will probably be a component of the provisional or probationary performance review process.**

**Administrative Assistant – Level 4, at a labor grade of L – 12**, will replace the current Administrative Assistant title. This title remains a New York State scored test on the State’s schedule. The promotion qualifications have been tentatively defined as two years as an Administrative Assistant – Level 3 or other logical promotion titles as determined by the Commissioner of Personnel. Again, keyboarding speed is no longer a selection criterion, which means that a typing performance test is not required. **At this level, speed and accuracy will probably be a component of the probationary and/or performance review process.**

Please review the job descriptions and examination announcements on the Personnel Department section of the Tompkins County web site. <http://www.tompkins-co.org/personnel/>

If you have questions, please contact the Personnel Department at 607-274-5526. Thank you.