

WARREN COUNTY HIRING & APPRAISAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Warren County is an equal opportunity employer, and all hiring shall be conducted through the Personnel Department to ensure proper procedures are followed.

Warren County is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination pursuant to Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as amended by the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972 and the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination as amended by the New Jersey Pregnant Worker's Fairness Act (LAD). Under no circumstances will the County discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital or political status, disability or handicap (including AIDS or HIV infection), affectional or sexual orientation, domestic partnership status, civil union status, atypical heredity, cellular or blood trait, genetic information (including refusal to submit to genetic testing), disability, pregnancy (including pregnancy related medical condition), childbirth, breastfeeding, liability for service in the United States armed forces, gender identity or expression, and/or any other characteristic protected by law. Decisions regarding the hiring, promotion, transfer, demotion or termination are based solely on the qualifications and performance of the employee or prospective employee. If any employee or prospective employee feels they have been treated unfairly, they have the right to address their concern with their supervisor, or if they prefer their Department Head, or the Personnel Director.

Employment Applications: All candidates applying for a position with Warren County must complete an employment application. Resumes will not be accepted in lieu of an application; however, resumes will be accepted as additional information. The application is a confidential document and will not be available to anyone who is not directly involved in the hiring process, except as required by law. Testing may also be required by Civil Service rules and regulations. The County relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of all other data material presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications or material omission in any of this information or data may result in the County's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, in termination of employment.

Job Postings: The Personnel Department will post for a period of seven (7) days, all newly created job titles, other than promotional vacancies to include vacancies created by an employee's retirement, termination, demotion, or transfer and authorized by an approved Hiring Request. New Jersey Civil Service Commission notices of promotional examinations will be posted in the personnel office and in the department which contains the position subject to the promotional examination procedure, in accordance with the opening and closing dates of the promotional announcement.

Any County employee who is interested in applying for the vacant position should express interest by submitting an application to the County Personnel Department. Vacancy notices will be posted on the personnel bulletin boards in the administration building and in all other buildings containing County departments.

I. HIRING FOR VACANT POSITIONS

A. Approval of Hiring Request

- In order to fill a vacant and authorized position, department heads must submit a Hiring Request form to the Personnel Department.

- After receiving a Hiring Request, the Personnel Department investigates the position to ensure that the position is vacant and has been previously approved by the Warren County Board of County Commissioners, either through resolution or budget appropriation. Once the Personnel Department confirms that the position is vacant and authorized, the Personnel Director will make a recommendation for action to the County Administrator.
- Upon approval of the Warren County Board of County Commissioners, the Personnel Department will commence the recruitment process.

B. Civil Service Certification List

The Personnel Department is required, under Civil Service regulations, to request from the New Jersey Civil Service Commission the appropriate current Certification of Eligibles for Appointment listing for all hiring requests. Personnel must be hired from bona fide certification lists, unless the County wishes to fill a position through promotional procedures, the list is rejected as unsuitable, a current list does not exist for the position, or the position is an appointed position, or the title is classified as a non-competitive title by the New Jersey Civil Service Commission.

C. Recruitment and Interview - Under Grade/Range 15

- It is the intent of Warren County government to fill vacant County positions from within its current workforce. All vacant positions other than promotional vacancies will be posted for seven (7) days. If it is not possible to fill a vacancy from within, a certification list shall be requested from the New Jersey Civil Service Commission to fill the vacant position. If no certification list has been promulgated for the vacant title or candidates on a certification list are rejected as not having met the qualifications for the position, then the position may be filled on a provisional basis either with candidates from within or outside the Warren County workforce pending an examination announcement to fill an open competitive position.
- All applications from County employees for a position must be forwarded to the Personnel Department for review. The Personnel Department will screen applications and send qualified applicants to the department for an interview.
- Department heads or their designees will conduct all interviews for positions under Grade/Range 15. Departments will select one successful candidate and return all candidate information to the Personnel Department. Questions pertaining to the interview and selection process should be directed to the Personnel Department.

If the internal posting does not generate enough qualified applicants for a vacant position, the Personnel Department will advertise the position through other sources and/or local media. Once again, the Personnel Department will screen applications submitted and forward qualified candidates to the respective department for interviewing.

D. Recruitment and Interview - Grade/Range 15 and Above

The procedures for filling unclassified/non bargaining positions above Grade 15 are the same except for advertising and interviews. Depending on the position to be filled,

advertisements may be posted in other media or for longer periods of time in order to generate a larger qualified pool of applicants. After receiving and reviewing applications, the Personnel Director, in conjunction with the department head and/or County Administrator, may conduct the initial screening and interviews of applicants for such unclassified/non-bargaining unit positions.

E. Offer of Employment

Once all interviews are completed and a candidate is chosen for the position, the candidate may receive an offer of employment. Prior to said offer, all proposed salaries or hourly rates must first be confirmed by the Personnel Department. Once the salary is verified, an offer of employment may be extended.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, after an offer of employment is made and prior to commencing employment, the County may require applicants to pass a physical examination in order to insure that they can perform the duties of their position without injury to themselves or others. The same post-offer physical examination must be performed on all applicants for a particular position. The County may require periodic physical examinations to determine the employee's continued ability to perform the duties of the position. All physical examinations must be performed by a physician chosen by the County at the expense of the County. All medical records of employees and prospective employees are confidential and are to be maintained by the Personnel Director separate from the employee's official personnel file. Medical exams may include tests for drug and alcohol use.

Depending on the position applied for, applicants may be required to submit to a criminal background check, psychological, job specific and/or drug/alcohol testing after a conditional job offer has been made.

Classified positions are subject to the successful completion of NJ Civil Service examination procedures.

Additionally, some positions may require a formal resolution or approved contract passed by the Warren County Board of County Commissioners before work may commence. In all cases, a mutual agreement should be made between the department head and the newly hired employee to begin work at the start of a new pay period.

F. Appointed Positions

For those positions requiring an appointing resolution passed by the Warren County Board of County Commissioners, the Personnel Department will draft a resolution appointing the candidate for Board action. Upon adoption by the Board, a mutually agreed upon starting date will be coordinated by the Personnel Director and the department.

II. CREATING/DELETING POSITIONS

The Warren County Board of County Commissioners must approve the creation or deletion of any positions by resolution. No hiring may commence until board approval of a newly created position is filed with the Personnel Department.

If a department requests the creation of a new position outside of formal budget procedures, the department head must submit written correspondence expressing the intent to the Personnel Department. A completed Hiring Request form must accompany this request. Such correspondence should include justification for said position inclusive of a cost/benefit analysis revealing the advantage, benefit or efficiency of the request.

As with the filling of vacancies, personnel will review the request and make a recommendation to the County Administrator. The County Administrator will review the request and then present the request to the Board, along with a recommendation for action. Only the Board may take final action on the creation or deletion of positions. Once the Board decides to approve or reject a request for creation or deletion of a position, the department head should be subsequently notified of this decision. After Board approval of the hiring request, the Personnel Department will commence with the recruitment and hiring process outlined previously.

III. HIRING UNDER CIVIL SERVICE REGULATIONS

In most cases, Warren County public service positions fall under the provisions of Civil Service regulations and may require Civil Service testing to establish permanency. All candidates under consideration for hire should be informed, when applicable, of the terms of hire in conjunction, with Civil Service procedures. The following sequence of activities should be communicated to all employees hired provisionally into competitive and promotional Civil Service positions.

- All newly hired employees filling open competitive or promotional civil service positions be hired on a provisional (non-permanent) basis pending civil service examination. Prospective employees should be informed that upon scheduling examination, the New Jersey Civil Service Commission posts the exam information on their Job Vacancy Announcement web page. It is the responsibility of the employee who is serving on a provisional basis to file for, take and pass any examination which has been announced for his or her title. The Personnel Department will notify the employee of the examination announcement and procedures for filing an application to qualify for testing. Generally, civil service examinations are scheduled anywhere from eight to twelve months after the onset of provisional employment providing a certification list for the title under consideration does not currently exist. To determine whether such a list is in process, contact the Personnel Department.
- Civil Service Examination: Prospective employees must be made aware that failure to apply for, or qualify for Civil Service testing through the application process or failure of a Civil Service examination may lead to termination of service. Conversely, employees who qualify to take the Civil Service examination and are successful in achieving a passing grade are subjected to positional ranking on a Certification of Eligibles for Appointment list promulgated by the New Jersey Civil Service Commission. Generally, an employee must rank among the top three interested candidates on this list to be eligible for selection and subsequent permanency, pending a working test period. Employees shall be made aware of “veteran’s preference” as it applies to final rankings. For further explanation on “veteran’s preference”, contact the Personnel Department.

IV. WORKING TEST PERIOD and PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

A. New Employees

The County of Warren operates in accordance with the rules and regulations of the NJ Civil Service Commission. For employees covered by Civil Service, upon being hired or appointed to a new position, an employee is considered “provisional” until the necessary Civil Service requirements have been met. Upon taking an examination and/or being officially appointed from a NJ Civil Service Commission list, an employee becomes “probationary” for a three-month period. A “provisional” or “probationary” employee is subject to a working test period, where the employee is evaluated as to the merits of obtaining “permanent” status as an employee of the County subject to the rules and regulations of the NJ Civil Service Commission and any applicable union contracts.

With regard to employees covered by Civil Service, a performance appraisal is to be conducted and documented during the working test period (90 days). All County Correctional Police and Sheriff’s Officers should undergo a one (1) year working test period.

The appraisal shall include a review of performance at the completion of sixty (60) days, with a final appraisal conducted at the completion of ninety (90) days. These appraisals should include documented supportive counsel and redirection when necessary. Should the employee’s performance prove to be unsatisfactory, the department head may exercise an option to release the employee at the end of the working test period provided sufficient documentation supports efforts to correct poor performance. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 4A:4-5.3, law enforcement titles are subject to an interim review after the completion of six months.

Note Regarding Working Test Periods: Civil Service regulations at N.J.A.C. 4A:2-4.1 require that any employee terminated from service or returned to a former permanent title at the conclusion of the working test period shall be given written notice of removal by the appointing authority in person or by certified mail. The notice shall inform the employee of his or her right to request a hearing before the New Jersey Civil Service Commission within twenty (20) days of receipt of notice of such action. The notice to terminate employment shall be provided to the employee within five (5) working days prior to or five (5) working days following the last day of the working test period.

Copies of these appraisals and any correspondence denoting corrective counsel must be kept on file with the Personnel Department in the event of an employee appeal. At the end of the working test period, all related documents should be forwarded to the Personnel Department to be entered into the employee’s personnel file. All employees shall be evaluated using a form authorized by the appointing authority and provided by the Personnel Department.

Performance appraisals for newly hired employees not subject to Civil Service should be conducted within the first ninety (90) days of employment. If the performance of the employee is not satisfactory at the conclusion of this appraisal period, the employee can be terminated from employment without right of appeal.

Following the successful completion of the first ninety (90) days of employment, employees shall receive an annual performance appraisal. During the month of the employee's anniversary date, the Personnel Department shall notify the Department Head of the need to complete the appraisal. Completed performance appraisals are expected to be returned to the Personnel Department with any required training certifications within 30 working days of notification.

B. Promoted Employees

In competitive titles where employees have recently received Civil Service promotions, the performance review is similar to a new employee performance review. The employee's performance should be appraised at the completion of sixty (60) days and ninety (90) days and documented. Should the two appraisals reveal unsatisfactory performance at the conclusion of the ninety (90) day probationary period, the employee may be returned to a previously held title. Again, following the notification procedures as indicated above for new employees, all documentation of the review process must be filed in the event of an employee appeal.

V. DEFINITIONS

Listed below are commonly used terms and definitions used by the New Jersey Civil Service Commission with regard to Civil Service hiring practices.

- A. *Career classified service:*** Those positions that are subject to testing and appointment procedures under Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes and the rules and regulations of the New Jersey Civil Service Commission affecting local political subdivisions.
1. Non-competitive titles (e.g. clerk typist, laborer)
 2. Competitive titles -Titles that require Civil Service examination
- B. *Unclassified service:*** Those positions and titles that are not subject to the Civil Service testing process. Certain New Jersey statutes permit a local government entity (such as Warren County) to fill specific positions without following the same hiring procedures for those titles in the career classified service.
- C. *Working test period:*** A part of the examination process after regular Civil Service appointment, during which time the work performance and conduct of the employee is evaluated to determine if permanent status is merited. For those employees hired into a non-competitive title, this 90-day working test period begins at the onset of employment. For those employees hired or promoted from a New Jersey Civil Service Commission list of certified eligibles, the 90-day working test period begins on the effective date of regular appointment from the list. Law enforcement titles are subject to a one year working test period.
- D. *Provisional appointment:*** An employee who is hired into a competitive title prior to the examination for that position.
- E. *Appointment:*** The offer, acceptance, and commencement of employment.
- F. *Regular appointment*** means:
1. The hiring of a person to fill an open competitive position or promotional in the career

service once the examination and certification process has been completed.

2. The hiring of a person appointed to a Civil Service position that does not require examination (i.e. non-competitive titles).
- G. *Permanent employee:*** The designation of an employee in the career service once he has successfully completed the working test period.
- H. *Certification of Eligibles for Appointment:*** A roster compiled by the New Jersey Civil Service Commission of persons who have successfully completed and passed the appropriate Civil Service examination for a position or who are otherwise qualified for employment or reemployment.
- I. *Promotional examination:*** A test open to permanent employees who meet the prescribed requirements to compete for the position through examination procedures.
- J. *Open competitive examination:*** A test opened on priority preference to residents of Warren County, bordering counties, then other residents of the state and United States to members or residents, who meet the prescribed requirements for the examination.
- K. *Temporary Employee:*** Any employee who is hired for a short-term job assignment of six months or less in any aggregate 12-month period. Temporary employees do not receive any County benefits while employed in this capacity except for sick leave and as otherwise provided by state or federal law.