




COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
HUMAN RESOURCES

DATE: March 22, 2019

TO: Sheriff and Police Chiefs
Town Supervisors and Mayors with Police Departments

FROM: Steven J. Rector, Commissioner of Human Resources 

RE: Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer Qualifications

This office has received numerous requests to re-evaluate the current minimum qualifications for Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer and reduce them to the level of needing only a High School Diploma and remove the 60 credits/work requirements.

As you may know, the qualifications were raised for the 2014 exam. The rationale being a Deputy/Police Officer requires critical decision making, legal analysis and understanding, and an advanced ability to read and right. Civil Service guidance also states setting minimum qualifications should include a realistic consideration of the needs of the job and potential work force supply in the area and not create an artificial barrier to employment. At the time of the change, many surrounding Civil Service jurisdictions as well as the State police held minimum qualifications higher than High School, and historically we've had a candidate pool largely in excess of the candidates hired, so we implemented the change.

As we evaluate the minimum qualifications, we'd like to share some information and solicit your thoughts:

- Surrounding Counties: We've re-surveyed many of the surrounding civil service jurisdictions that had higher qualifications when we made the change in 2014. The results show most have reverted the qualifications back to requiring only a high school diploma.
- Transfer/Reinstatement: We understand the desire to save costs by hiring Officers from outside of the County that are trained and experienced. We also appreciate that having different criteria from other jurisdictions presents a barrier to this function, however the ability to reinstate is not a criteria used in determining minimum qualifications of a title.
- Diversity: Several entities have expressed concerns the increased qualifications have a negative impact on the diversity of the candidate pool and may pose an artificial barrier to employment. The chart on the following page details the exam statistics from the past four exams including the diversity information that is voluntarily submitted at time of application.

As demonstrated by the following chart, there appears to be a decline in total applicants, however application decline is also reflected across the board in other civil service exams and in other Counties as well. Anecdotally we think there's an inverse relationship between the economy and civil service participation, as one improves the other declines and vice versa.

Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer Exam Statistics

	2007 (high school)		2010 (high school)		2014 (60 credits)		2017 (60 credits)	
Total Applicants	1,061		1,744		1,457		881	
Approved Applicants	1,054		1,687		1,223		742	
Approved that took the Written Exam	917		1,377		998		612	
Pass	758	83%	1190	86%	941	94%	584	95%
Fail	159	17%	187	14%	57	6%	25	5%
Appointments from Eligible List	26		34		53		25 as of 2/20/19	
Agility Test - Passed	83	69%	172	78%	154	72%	171	79%
Agility Test - Failed	37	31%	48	22%	61	28%	45	21%
Candidates left on List when it expired	625		1080		726		N/A	
Diversity Statistics are Voluntarily Submitted at Time of Application								
Female Candidates	Data Not Available		130	15%	177	17%	110	18%
Male Candidates			753	85%	850	83%	495	82%
Caucasian			719	78%	801	77%	447	74%
African American			48	5%	72	7%	58	9%
Hispanic			111	12%	111	11%	82	13%
Asian			19	2%	17	2%	9	1%
Other			30	3%	42	4%	19	3%

The other statistic of note appears to be an approximate 10% increase in the written test pass rate, however there doesn't seem to be a clear statistical impact on the other statistics indicating the higher qualifications have not had an adverse impact on diversity.

As we move forward with our consideration of the minimum qualifications, we'd like to solicit your thoughts and opinion. Should the requirements remain at the current level or be reduced to high school and why? Have you perceived a change in the caliber of candidates and new hires? Are there other factors you've identified that have improved/declined with the new standard?

You may provide input to me directly at srector@dutchessny.gov or written correspondence to my attention at Human Resources, 5th Floor, 22 Market St, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. We intend to make a determination on the minimum qualifications in the next 90 days that will set the standard for the next several years.

Thank you in advance for your input this matter.