

Commissioner of Whole Health Tompkins County

Department: Whole Health Department

Classification: Competitive -Pending Jurisdictional Classification

Labor Grade: Management 92

Approved: 3/2025

By: RP, Commissioner of Human Resources

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Shall possess:

1. Master's degree in Public or Mental Health, Public Administration, Health Administration, Health Science or related field from a regionally accredited or New York State-registered college or university that demonstrates the core competencies of a public and/or mental health education (Biostatistics, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology, Health Policy and Management, and Social and Behavior Sciences). Related fields include public health nursing, health administration, community health education, environmental health, psychiatry, psychology, psychiatric nursing, social work or behavioral science; **and**

Five years of administrative experience, two of which must be in a senior supervisory capacity, in a health-related organization or government agency that demonstrates that the candidate possesses the knowledge and skills necessary to administer public and/or mental health, developmental disability and substance use disorder programs including workforce and budget management, effective communication, effective establishment and implementation of policy or business goals, and compliance with legal requirements.

OR

2. Bachelor's degree in Public or Mental Health, Public Administration, Health Administration, Health Science or related field from a regionally accredited or New York State-registered college or university that demonstrates the core competencies of a public and/or mental health education (Biostatistics, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology, Health Policy and Management, and Social and Behavior Sciences). Related fields include public health nursing, health administration, community health education, environmental health, psychiatry, psychology, psychiatric nursing, social work or behavioral science; **and**

Seven years of administrative experience, two of which must be in a senior supervisory capacity, in a health-related organization or government agency that demonstrates that the candidate possesses the knowledge and skills necessary to administer public and/or mental health, developmental disability and substance use disorder programs including workforce and budget management, effective communication, effective establishment and implementation of policy or business goals, and compliance with legal requirements.

NOTE: The Tompkins County Commissioner of Whole Health may serve in the capacity of a Public Health Director or shall designate staff to fulfill the role. If the selected candidate or designee does not fully meet the education or experience requirements at the time of appointment, the State Commissioner of Health may approve a conditional appointment of two (2) years, with an opportunity for two additional one-year conditional renewals. Final approval of conditional candidates shall be contingent on satisfactory progress in meeting a public health education or experience plan developed in conjunction with and approved by the State Commissioner of Health.

All appointments as the Public Health Director and the appointment and arrangements for the medical consultant are subject to the approval of the State Commissioner of Health.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. This role requires the ability to meet travel demands, with or without reasonable accommodation. The Commissioner of Whole Health shall possess a valid New York State driver's license at the time of appointment, or within 30 days of appointment if in possession of a valid out-of-state driver's license and shall maintain for the duration of employment.
2. This position is considered to be a public officer. Pursuant to Article 3 of the NYS Public Officers law, the holder of this position must be a United States citizen and a resident of Tompkins County.
3. Per Section 351 of New York State Public Health law, this position is subject to a six-year term appointment.
4. While this work involves 24/7 on-call responsibilities, Tompkins County supports work-life balance and provides resources to promote employee wellness.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

The Commissioner of Whole Health serves as the County's Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Whole Health, a consolidated department of Public Health and Mental Health. The Commissioner is responsible for implementing a cohesive and compliant integrated framework for the delivery of public health, mental health, developmental disability, substance use disorder and environmental services and programs, involving cooperative agreements and relationships with governmental and non-governmental agencies within the jurisdiction. The work includes the development of strategies, policies and procedures that will build toward a healthy, equitable community that addresses the root causes of health disparities and enables all providers to deliver the highest quality integrated care service to all patients. The incumbent is directly responsible to the County Administrator for the implementation of the department's financial, personnel, and administrative policies established by the Tompkins County Legislature and the County Charter. The work will involve considerable demands from tight deadlines and conflicting priorities, requiring highly effective interpersonal skills to obtain trust and to successfully negotiate critical and sometimes highly controversial issues that have the potential of life-or-death outcomes. An extreme level of autonomy and independent judgment are exercised with full and direct accountability for final results. Direct supervision is exercised over the deputies, medical personnel and higher-level staff of the various units and divisions of the Whole Health Department. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

(The activities below are illustrative and not intended to be all-encompassing).

- Oversees the development and implementation of policy, procedures, contracts and direct services for Whole Health activities, in accordance with state and local law and guidelines, and applicable policies;
- Plans, organizes and directs local mental health and public health prevention, surveillance, treatment and service-oriented programs in collaboration with other government and non-governmental agencies as required;
- Develops policies for approval by the Board of Health, Community Mental Health Services Board, State Department of Mental Hygiene and/or Tompkins County Legislature;
- Provides oversight and coordination of public and mental health education programs with public and private community based organizations and groups throughout the County;
- Directs the preparation of the annual budget and submits to the appropriate bodies as needed for policy implementation;
- Directs the annual evaluation of direct and contract agencies, monitoring fiscal and administrative responsibility and program effectiveness to ensure conformity with federal, state, and county requirements;
- Presents decision options and/or specific recommendations, together with supporting data, to facilitate policy and priority deliberations;
- Consults with the Medical Directors in order to develop and implement policies with a medical basis;
- Works with appropriate community bodies to develop a common system of evaluation (to include accountability) of Environmental Health, Children With Special Care Needs, Community Health Services, Mental Health, developmental disabilities, and substance use disorder services;
- Represents health and mental health, developmental disability and substance use disorder services to the Health and Human Service Committee of the Legislature as well as to state regulatory agencies and financial bodies;
- Pursues sources of funding for programs and services;
- Directs the operation of a program of licensing and inspecting to insure the sanitary quality of food served in public eating places;

- Directs programs for promotion and supervision of water supply systems and sewage disposal systems, insofar as sanitation is concerned;
- Drafts and negotiates department contracts with other County departments or with non-county entities, and reviews and evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of those entities in carrying out County work on a cost effective basis;
- Serves as the registrar for the Vital Records Unit following all applicable state rules and regulations;
- Appoints all unit staff and supervises staff activities to maximize departmental cooperation, cooperation with other County departments and community-based organizations, and overall department effectiveness;
- Performs public relations duties with media and with representatives of the public;

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES: (AT FULL PERFORMANCE)

- Comprehensive knowledge of the principles, practices, strategies and terminology of public and/or mental health programs and administration.
- Thorough knowledge of current public and/or mental health, developmental disability and substance use disorder programs.
- Thorough knowledge of local government organization and operations, demonstrating the ability to work respectfully with legislative, community and media representatives in order to define and implement the mission and vision for public health, mental health, developmental disability and substance use disorder in Tompkins County.
- Ability to plan, lead and assess the impact of a variety of public health and mental health programs, ensuring equitable and community centered outcomes.
- Good knowledge of the various private sector and not-for-profit entities throughout the county who may utilize the services of the various Whole Health units.
- Demonstrated ability to uplift and value the perspectives of diverse communities, recognizing and addressing their unique needs to foster equity, inclusion, and innovation in public health, mental health, developmental disability and substance use disorder systems.
- Ability to organize and mobilize staff to implement long and short range plans and objectives for the provisions of a wide variety of health and mental health services.
- Ability to organize and analyze data for fiscal, evaluative and strategic planning purposes, utilizing inclusive practices to ensure equity in decision making.
- Ability to interpret and effectively implement complex oral and written information in ways that are accessible for diverse audiences.
- Ability to engage and collaborate with diverse communities on public health, mental health, developmental disability and substance use disorder initiatives, valuing input and fostering trust.
- Ability to meet the travel requirements of the position.

This position involves significant computer use and data analysis. We are committed to providing reasonable accommodation to support the incumbent in meeting these requirements.

The employee's physical and mental condition shall be commensurate with the demands of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Tompkins County Government centers diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are committed to the empowerment of employees and residents to dismantle systemic barriers that inhibit inclusive governance and the provision of government services to all. Guided by our values of Respect, Accountability, Integrity, Equity, and Stewardship, we strive to build a workplace and community rooted in trust, belonging, and opportunity for all.

Learn more about our [Strategic Plan](#) and [Institutionalizing Equity Report](#), which embed equity across our operations.

