

**TOMPKINS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE  
VACANCY  
Inclusion Through Diversity**

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Office  
125 E. Court Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 274-5526**

**Tompkins County is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply**

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**TITLE:** Commissioner of Social Services

**SALARY:** \$148,990.40 Hire Rate - \$161,907.20 Work rate after 9 months

**TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT:** Full Time

**ISSUE DATE:** 03/24/25

**THE FINAL DATE TO FILE APPLICATIONS:** 04/20/25

**DATE THAT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM POSTING:** 04/21/25

**RESIDENCY WAIVED**

Tompkins County is seeking a visionary and strategic leader to serve as our next **Commissioner of Social Services**. This critical role oversees programs that promote economic security, housing stability, and family well-being, ensuring equitable access to services for all residents. The ideal candidate will be a collaborative and innovative leader, committed to fostering community partnerships, data-driven decision-making and advancing our mission of a healthy, inclusive, and supportive community.

For full consideration, please submit:

Cover letter that addresses qualifications, leadership experience and commitment to providing equitable and inclusive social services in a diverse community

Resume

Online Application

Note: Complete application packages will be reviewed upon receipt.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered four-year college or university with a Master's degree in Social Work, Public Health, Public Administration, Psychology, Human Services, Sociology or related field and

Six years of satisfactory full-time paid experience in a health, education or social agency, four years of which

must have been in a satisfactory administrative or supervisory capacity where there is responsibility for strategic planning, policy and program development and implementation, budget and personnel management and allocation, and directing and/or coordinating the work of staff in several units with separate functions;

**OR**

Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, Public Health, Public Administration, Psychology, Human Services, Sociology or related field and eight (8) years of experience as noted in A).

**APPOINTMENT TO THE POSITION:** Appointments to the title of Commissioner of Social Services shall be for a term of five years, pursuant to New York State law and the Tompkins County Charter and Code. Appointments are subject to the approval of the New York State Offices of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The position is in the non-competitive class of civil service

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:**

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.

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.

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:**

The Commissioner of Social Services is a senior executive role responsible for the administration and delivery of all mandated programs within the Department of Social Services, including eligibility assistance, child welfare programs, adult protective and guardianship of vulnerable adults and children, child support enforcement, and housing and homeless programming including county contracted or operated shelters as defined in the Social Services Law and provided for in annual directives from state oversight agencies. The Commissioner organizes, directs and coordinates the department's budget, personnel and resources to ensure effective and efficient operations and compliance with applicable federal, state and local regulations and guidelines as mandated by the Offices of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Department of Health, Department of Labor, the Office of Children and Family Services, and federal oversight including USDA and HUD. In collaboration with community partners, contracted providers and external agencies, the Commissioner is responsible for the administration of state and federal programs in an inclusive and culturally competent manner to support those in need, regardless of background, to reach self-determination and independence. The incumbent is expected to take an equity centered approach to ensure that the most vulnerable populations receive fair and equitable access to services and support to achieve economic and personal stability. The Commissioner makes high-level decisions in complex and sensitive social service matters. Direct supervision is exercised over the work of deputies, division leaders and senior administrative staff. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required, ensuring that the department's work reflects the County's broader commitment to an inclusive, equitable, and safe community.

**TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

Provide leadership and oversight of operations, programs and activities within the Department of Social Services;

Provide direct supervision of deputies, division leaders and senior administrative staff to ensure departmental goals and objectives are aligned with county priorities and community needs;

Develop, review and implement policies and strategies that guide programs and services, address systemic barriers and promote equitable access to services;

Oversee departmental budgeting and financial management, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to reduce disparities in service provision and improve outcomes for vulnerable populations;

Engage with local communities, advocacy groups, and service recipients to understand needs, improve equitable service delivery and bring continued understanding of county social service needs;

Represent the department among stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profits, and business and community leaders to ensure all clients, regardless of background, have the opportunity to achieve economic and personal stability;

Analyze data to assess program outcomes and identify areas for improvement;

Implement strategies to enhance program efficiency, quality, and client satisfaction;

Ensure that all programs comply with local, state and federal regulations and standards as provided for by the State Offices of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Children and Family Services, state departments of Health and Labor, as well as federal oversight agencies such as US Department of Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development in the operation and development of the local social services district program;

Collaborate with other government agencies, healthcare providers, non-profit organizations and community groups to address broad social issues, provide comprehensive services to clients and advocate for funding and regulatory changes;

Provide leadership and direction in fostering a department culture that is inclusive, responsive and culturally competent, ensuring that all employees have the tools, support and understanding to meet the diverse needs of the community and clients served;

Ensure that staff receive appropriate training, professional development and resources to stay current with best practices in social work and equitable service delivery;

Submit reports to County Administration, County Legislature and state oversight agencies as required;

#### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

Knowledge and understanding of federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations related to social services and public welfare;

Knowledge of the political structure that enacts laws that are promulgated as directives to local social service districts by state oversight agencies;

Basic knowledge of the local court system and social services collaborative relationship with the local Family Treatment Court;

Good understanding of social work principles, practices and ethics to ensure proper administration of programs and services;

Basic understanding of employment procedures and personnel management;

Excellent leadership, conflict and change management skills as well as familiarity with public service roles and requirements;

Effective communication and interpersonal skills to develop and foster strong relationships with a variety of stakeholders including the public, community partners and agencies, and governmental and private agencies;

Ability to build partnerships within local networks of community leadership to develop best practices and cultivate diverse and inclusive programs that serve as a standard of excellence in service provision in the county;

Ability to develop and manage budgets and resources to ensure fiscal sustainability;

Demonstrated ability to uplift and value the perspectives of diverse communities, cultivating respectful, inclusive and safe environments;

Ability to organize and analyze data for fiscal, evaluative and strategic planning purposes, utilizing inclusive practices to ensure equity in decision making;

Ability to plan, coordinate and supervise a wide variety of social services activities on a large scale;

Ability to interpret, implement and present complex material in ways that are accessible for diverse audiences.

Ingenuity and resourcefulness in solving complex and sensitive administrative problems;

Good judgment with a focus on attaining care for, and good decision making regarding and in the best interest of, those vulnerable populations (children, persons with disabilities, elders, court appointed guardians, individuals who may be homeless, mentally ill, and or with substance use disorder etc.);

Physical and mental condition commensurate with the demands of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation.

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## FURTHER INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Falsification of any part of the "Application for Employment" will result in disqualification.

Accepted candidates will be notified when and where to appear for the examination. If you do not receive your notice to appear at least three days before the date of the written examination, call Tompkins County Department of Human Resources at 274-5526. If an application is disapproved, due notice will be sent. This department does not make formal acknowledgment of the receipt of an application or take responsibility for non-delivery or postal delay.

Applicants must answer every question on the application form and make sure that the application is complete in all respects. Incomplete applications will be disapproved.

**ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL, VETERANS OR DISABLED VETERANS** desiring to claim additional credit will request the Veterans Credits application form, at any time between the date of application for examination(s) and the date of the establishment of the resulting eligible list. You must meet the requirements set by NYS for these credits and they may be used only once. **YOU MAY NOT CLAIM ADDITIONAL CREDITS AFTER THE ELIGIBLE LIST HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. IT IS THE CANDIDATE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REQUEST THE VETERANS CREDIT APPLICATION FORMS AND TO SUBMIT THESE FORMS AND ANY SUPPORTING PAPERWORK BEFORE THE ELIGIBLE LIST IS ESTABLISHED.**

Tompkins County's written examinations are prepared and rated by the New York State Department of Civil Service in accordance with Section 23-2 of Civil Service Law. The provisions of the New York State Civil Service Rules and Regulations, which deal with the rating and review of the examinations apply.

The duration of the eligible lists may be fixed for a minimum of one and a maximum of four years and may be extended beyond four years if there has been a restriction against the filling of vacancies in that title.

The candidates must complete a separate "Application for Employment" for each open-competitive and/or promotional examination that the candidate is eligible to take.

All experience required meeting the acceptable training and experience is full-time experience. (Part-time experience will be credited on a prorated basis).

Appointment from an eligible list must be made from the top three candidates willing to accept the appointment.

Tompkins County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. As part of its efforts to provide employment opportunities to the physically handicapped, Tompkins County Civil Service has adopted a rule permitting the employment of qualified physically handicapped persons without competitive examination (pursuant to Section 55 of Civil Service Law). If you meet the minimum qualifications for this position and wish to know more about this rule, please contact the Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Office.

Unless otherwise notified, candidates are permitted to use quiet, hand-held, and solar or battery powered calculators. Devices with Typewriter Keyboards, Spell Checkers, Personal Digital Assistants, Address Books, Language Translators, Dictionaries or any similar devices are prohibited. You may not bring books or other reference materials.

**CROSS-FILING - APPLYING FOR CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS IN MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS WHEN EXAMINATIONS ARE SCHEDULED ON THE SAME DATE:** When applying for examinations across multiple jurisdictions - all of which are scheduled on the same day - you must submit a Tompkins County Cross-Filing Form. This form must be submitted no later than 4:30 PM on the final filing date of the examination. On this form, list each examination that you are taking and then tell us where you would like to sit. The purpose is to ensure that all of the test materials for the various examinations that you are taking will be available in one location. If you do not provide the cross-filing form to us by the final filing date, we cannot ensure that we can accommodate your desire to cross-file. If any of the examinations are State level examinations, you must sit at the State test center. You will still need to complete the Tompkins County cross-filing form. If sitting at the State site, the State will notify you of when and where to report for your examination(s) and you should bring all admittance letters to the State site. If you are not taking a State examination, bring all admittance letters to your chosen testing site. If you have any question please call Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Department (607) 274-5526. The Cross File form is located at <http://www.tompkins-co.org/personnel/CivilSrvForms/index.html>

**FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION AND HANDICAPPED PERSONS:** If special arrangements for testing are required, please indicate this on your application.

**ALL CANDIDATES FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR POSITIONS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND BOCES GOVERNED BY TOMPKINS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE MAY HAVE THE FOLLOWING SPECIAL REQUIREMENT. PER CHAPTER 180 OF THE LAWS OF 2000, AND BY REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, TO BE EMPLOYED IN A POSITION DESIGNATED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR BOCES AS INVOLVING DIRECT CONTACT WITH STUDENTS, A CLEARANCE FOR EMPLOYMENT FROM THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS REQUIRED.**

In conformance with Section 85-a of the Civil Service Law, children of firefighters and police officers killed in the line of duties shall be entitled to receive an additional ten points in a competitive examination for original appointment in the same municipality in which his or her parent has served. If you are qualified to participate in this examination and are a child of firefighter or police officer killed in the line of duties in this municipality, please inform this office of this matter when you submit your application for examination. A candidate claiming such credit has a minimum of two months from the application deadline to provide the necessary documentation to verify additional credit eligibility. However, no credit may be added after the eligible list has been established.

**BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION:** Applicants may be required to undergo a State and national criminal history background investigation, which will include a fingerprint check, to determine suitability for appointment. Failure to meet the standards for the background investigation may result in disqualification.

TOMPKINS COUNTY PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT, 125 EAST COURT STREET, ITHACA, NY 14850