

Hiring Emergency Limited Placement Program (HELP Program)

In response to local agencies having significant challenges filling positions across local government due to the tight labor market, competition with private sector employers and eligible lists that have become exhausted, the New York State Department of Civil Service, Municipal Services Division (MSD), announced the Hiring Emergency Limited Placement Program (HELP Program). This is a temporary program to help local government employers address the current staffing issues for critical health and safety titles.

The Department of Civil Service also worked with the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) who advocated for the program's establishment on behalf of Local Districts of Social Services (LDSS) statewide given the aggravated recruitment difficulty some LDSS are experiencing filling Caseworkers and Social Welfare Examiners on a permanent basis.

The Municipal Services Division sought approval from the Commission at its January 11, 2023, meeting to establish the HELP Program for local government employers.

The HELP Program is a tool that is available on a temporary basis for agencies that believe eliminating the competitive examination will speed up the hiring process for critical titles that meet the HELP Program's criteria. Using this tool, local civil service agencies can place competitive class positions in the non-competitive class on a temporary basis.

Local agencies experiencing emergency staffing issues can seek approval from the Commission to implement the HELP Program for titles that meet the program's criteria. **The duration of this program for Niagara County is effective June 26, 2023 – December 31, 2024.**

At its June 14, 2023 meeting the NYS Civil Service Commission approved the Niagara County Personnel Officer rules resolution submission to amend the local Civil Service Rules. **Effective June 26, 2023, employees hired in the following titles will be appointed permanently to the non-competitive class and then will be included in the cover in process per instructions from NYS Civil Service. On January, 24, 2024, NYS notified Niagara County that the program has been extended until December 31, 2024.** Once the program expires, employees occupying positions filled through the local HELP Program will be granted competitive class status without the need to participate in a competitive examination.

Titles included in the HELP Program are:

Care Services Coordinators, Early Intervention Program (HELP Program)
Community Mental Health Aides (HELP Program)
Crisis Services Phone Aides (HELP Program)
Licensed Clinicians (HELP Program)
Caseworkers (HELP Program)
Social Services Workers (HELP Program)