

Pre-Bid Conference Minutes

Wednesday, March 19, 2014, at 11:00 AM

800 North Pearl Street, EIU Classroom

In attendance: Susan Ward, Coordinator, Psychological Screening Unit

Jerome Dawson, Assistant Director Personnel

Deborah Jackson, Contract Management Specialist

Mark Joly, Contract Management Specialist

Richard Watson, Jr., First Choice Evaluations

William McIntyre, Law Enforcement Psychological Services

Mark Joly went over Ground Rules and Procurement Lobbying Requirement sheet that was handed out.

Susan Ward went over basic candidate processing.

- Candidate takes a Civil Service Exam for a specific job title. If the candidate passes that exam, their name is placed on a list of eligible candidates. They will then have to pass all three components (medical, background and psychological) of the evaluation process to be qualified for hiring.
- DOCCS canvasses the Civil Service Eligible List for candidate interest in the position.
- Interested candidates are given a Day One date and a packet to fill out and bring with them to the Day One interview.
- On candidate's Day One date, they report to the New York State Department of Civil Service, Employee Health Services Unit for their medical evaluation. When that is complete, the candidate reports directly to the DOCCS Employee Investigation Unit (EIU) for their background investigation and fingerprints. Usually an all day process.
- After a preliminary review of the candidate's records, the background investigator either invites or does not invite the candidate to the next scheduled psychological test. Right now, psych tests are being given every month.
- If a candidate is disqualified in any of the three components of the evaluation process, their case is closed and they are deemed not eligible to be hired from that Civil Service List.
- If the candidate passes all three components of the evaluation process, they are deemed eligible to be hired and may be called to attend the Training Academy.

Overview of the psych test:

- One week prior to psych test – DOCCS gives vendor the geographic breakdown of where interviews will be needed. As noted in the RFP, DOCCS requires interviews to be held at locations across the state.
- One week prior to psych test – vendor gives DOCCS a schedule of interview rooms needed. As stated in the RFP, DOCCS will provide rooms if they are available. Room use is not guaranteed.
- Saturday psych test – vendor is in attendance to collect test materials and give appointments to candidates.

Questions from Richard Watson – “can you go into a little bit more on that because I am not really sure about how many people the vendor is supposed to have on site and does DOCCS have anybody on site that day to proctor that exam as well?”

Response by Susan Ward – DOCCS has staff on hand to set up and proctor the test. The vendor will send representatives, usually a few people depending on the size of the test, to hand out appointments in the different locations and collect testing materials. Generally, between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM it gets very busy in the lobby when candidates finish the test and receive their one-on-one interview appointment at one of the three locations, Albany, Rochester, or New York City. There could be more locations, with Department approval, if the vendor has other locations that they want to use. The vendor does not have to have a psychologist on site for the test, it can be any staff that are able to assign appointments.

Richard Watson – “I thought they were responsible for the whole proctor thing.”

Susan Ward – No, DOCCS actually proctors the test.

Richard Watson – “How many usually at one time at the Training Academy?”

Susan Ward – “Our test Saturday had 445 candidates.”

Richard Watson – “Just a questions about the test, it’s not a specific test you are using?”

Susan Ward – No. The vendor would provide tests that are approved in the contract prior to the test date, usually a day earlier. DOCCS will set up.

Jerome Dawson – The Psychological Screening Unit will tell the vendor how many candidates we are expecting at the test and the vendor will bring packets to the test site, with some extra packets for walk-ins that we are not expecting.

- Monday after psych test – vendor gives DOCCS the schedules of appointments that were given.
- Six weeks after psych test – results are due (narrative assessment report) to DOCCS.
- Results reviewed and any concerns or discrepancies are discussed.

Appeal Process:

Candidates have the right to appeal a psychological decision (Correction Law, Section 8) that finds them psychologically unsuitable for the position for which they applied. If a candidate appeals their decision, they are seen by the Independent Advisory Board, consisting of a Licensed Psychologist, Board Certified Psychiatrist and a representative of Civil Service.

Pursuant to Correction Law and Department policy, the appeal of a psychological disqualification constitutes the final determination of eligibility to be hired from a Civil Service list. The determination applies only to that Civil Service list and does not preclude a candidate from taking future Civil Service tests for this or other positions.

Closing:

Any questions not asked today are to be submitted in writing to the Department's designated contact as identified in Section 1.2 of the RFP by close of business Thursday, March 20, 2014.

Official answers to all questions will be distributed in the form of an addendum within five business days. Only answers provided by the addendum are considered official. The responses will be sent to each proposer's official representative attending today's conference, as well as those proposers originally sent the RFP. The responses will also be posted on the New York State Contract Reporter and the agency's websites.

Questions

Mark Joly - If a candidate comes in on Saturday for testing, the test is supplied by vendor, the vendor has one or two people there, the candidate turns in their exam then gets an appointment for an interview date. Six weeks from the psychological evaluation results are due. Is that the written or oral evaluation?

Susan Ward – Narrative assessment reports are due to DOCCS six weeks from the written evaluation. The oral interview has to be completed within that six week time to complete the assessment report.

Mark Joly – You have geared up recently because of a lot of retirements, etc.? We have fewer facilities so as a facility is closed, those employees will be redistributed as well, so that is one source of filling positions. Do you have any idea what is in next year's budget for academies?

Jerome Dawson – Proposed is 18 classes. The last few years, the trend has been approvals come one to two at a time.

Susan Ward - From the day a candidate comes in for their Day One, it is at least three months before they are finished processing.

Mark Joly - What is that buffer right now.

Dawson - 6-8 months after they are finished processing before they enter academy.

William McIntyre - How many are finished and waiting for an academy right now?

Jerome Dawson - About 200 right now are finished processing and waiting to go to an academy.

Susan Ward – Unfortunately, we only get notified of an academy approval two weeks ahead of time so candidates need to be qualified and ready to go when an academy is approved.

Richard Watson – “You say there are 4,500 exams a year. In past years, is that a pretty accurate assessment of that number because sometimes they inflate it”.

Susan ward – Right now, that is an accurate number. DOCCS does not approve the money for an academy. If Division of Budget says there is no money, we cannot put an academy in, regardless of what our need is. We have stopped processing for a year or so before. We have no control over the State budget. Every year is going to fluctuate. That 4,500 number is based on the projected academies.

Mark Joly - Having said that it varies, DOCCS needs the number of people that can do the oral interviews to meet that demand. The contract might be for a larger dollar amount than you will get, but it is a not to exceed amount. There is no guarantee.

Richard Watson – RFP states that doctors may have to testify. How many actually go to testimony?

Susan Ward - Most go to Human Rights first, once or twice a year the doctor may have to give a statement. DOCCS counsel’s office will work with the vendor on what is needed. About 10 years ago, a couple cases have gone all the way to trial.

Mark Joly - Any questions, please submit in writing if you need the official answer. No written questions have been received prior to pre-bid conference.

Thank you.