

# **GREENE COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

## **2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

Prepared by  
Nicole T. Maggio  
Human Resources Director/Executive Secretary to the Civil Service Commission

March 26, 2025

GREENE COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT  
AND  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
  
2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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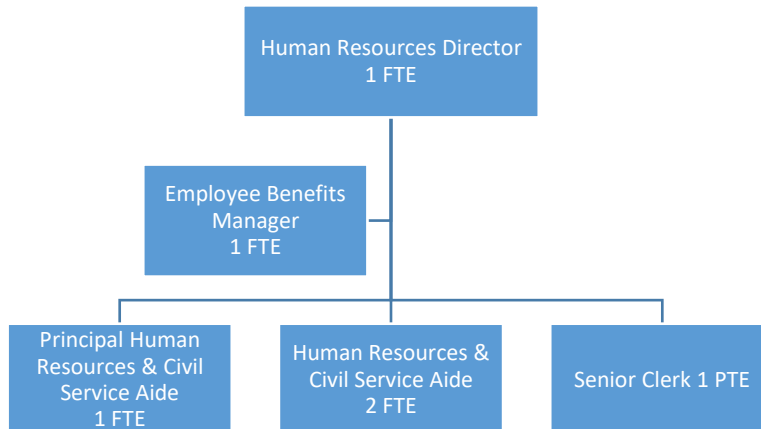
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## HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

**HR Mission Statement:** To provide the highest quality personnel services to our employees, retirees and other customers, while promoting effective and efficient County government.

**HR Vision:** To support the work of the Greene County community toward achievement of its strategic goals.

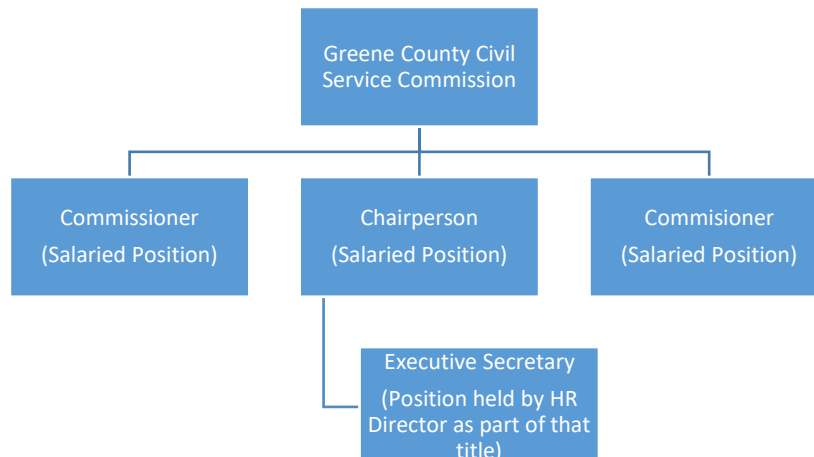
### HUMAN RESOURCES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



**Civil Service Commission Mission Statement:** To uphold the standards of The New York State Constitution as provided through Article V, Section 6, that "...all appointments and promotions in the civil service of the state of New York and all civil divisions including the county, towns, villages, etc., are ***made according to merit and fitness...***"

**Civil Service Commission Vision:** To ensure the merit system is adhered to, guarantee that all public service positions are filled based on merit and fitness through the exam process and to provide appointing authorities a list of qualified candidates from which selection will be made.

### CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF 2024**

Greene County Human Resources (HR) plays an important role in Greene County Government by supporting all departments, offices and agencies. This support includes recruitment and retention, employee and labor relations, and supplying information related to benefits for county staff. As is the case across New York State, Greene County continued to battle the challenge of extreme recruitment and retention difficulty and the retirement of long-term employees. The HR team worked diligently to onboard new employees to fill existing vacancies and develop programs to assist with retention of employees.

As part of HR, the Greene County Civil Service Commission ensures compliance with all Civil Service Laws, Rules and Regulations for the following appointing authorities: all Greene County departments, fourteen towns, five villages, six school districts, five public libraries and two special districts. Included in the job description for the Human Resources Director is the role of Executive Secretary to the Civil Service Commission.

The HR team has the unique opportunity to work together with all employees throughout their County careers, from the recruitment of candidates for vacancies through assisting our retirees with their continuing benefits. We enjoy interacting with the more than 600 active County employees and over 563 retirees we serve. In addition, we work with the administrators and employees covered by New York State Civil Service in all Greene County municipalities, school districts, libraries, and special districts, equaling approximately 1270 employees for 2024. In total, the HR team works together to provide civil service and personnel services, information and assistance to approximately 1870 active employees and over 563 retirees. While the numbers vary minimally from year to year, for 2024 they increased by almost 7% from our numbers in 2023.

During 2024, many of the required changes to operations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were eliminated with the exception of Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL). However, there is an end in sight for EPSL as will be discussed later in this report. New York State Civil Service continued their complete “overhaul” of testing administration, and I will elaborate on how that has affected local civil service agencies later in this report.

As was the case in 2023, the HR team worked through changes to staffing in our own department while ensuring there was no interruption to the excellent service provided to our employees and retirees. The HR team continues to operate at the highest level, working tirelessly for those we serve in Greene County. I provide you with the following information to show the amazing work we accomplished this year!

### **COVID-19**

Although the State of Emergency in Greene County related to COVID-19 was rescinded on June 4, 2021, COVID related work for the Human Resources team continued in 2024, although at a greatly reduced rate. HR continued with the responsibility of conducting and processing the COVID-19 intake interview for all Greene County employees.

#### **New York State Paid COVID-19 Sick Leave (aka NYS EPSL)**

New York State passed a law on March 18, 2020 providing paid sick leave and job protection to employees quarantined or for whom isolation is recommended. Under the NYS law, public employers (regardless of size) are required to provide up to 14 days calendar/10 workdays of paid sick leave to employees who are subject to isolation due to COVID-19. This leave can be utilized by employees for up to three separate occasions: the first allotment for isolation due to testing positive or quarantine due to exposure; the second and third allotments for isolation due to testing positive only. Late in 2023, due to

changes in guidelines, Greene County began requiring medical documentation of a positive COVID-19 test to be eligible for EPSL.

One of the most important provisions of the law passed in 2020 was that there was no expiration date. I'm pleased to report that as part of the Governor's 2024 Budget that was passed, the March 18, 2020 law providing EPSL will expire on July 31, 2025. While we await that date, the HR team continues to utilize our system to track the requests, the documentation required for the leave, the time frame of the leave, and the confirmation of the return from leave for employees entitled to COVID leave. This system allows us to track employees and assist departments with scheduling and entering payroll. Tracking was extremely important as many employees were requesting EPSL for a second or third time in 2024.

In 2024 the HR team processed 61 reports of employees subject to an order of isolation or quarantine, down 42% from the 105 reports in 2023. Some of that decrease is due to the new requirement for medical documentation of a positive COVID-19 test and some is due to a generalized decrease in those contracting the illness. A total of 60 requests were approved and one request was denied. Twelve employees utilized their third and final allotment of EPSL during 2024.

#### **Employer Paid Leave for COVID Vaccination**

Effective March 12, 2021, in accordance with NYS Civil Service Law, as amended to add Section 159-c, Greene County employees were entitled to a leave of absence, not to exceed four hours per vaccine injection, to be vaccinated for COVID-19. The entire period of leave of absence granted was paid leave and not charged against any other leave the employee was otherwise entitled to. The four hours per vaccine injection included travel time to and from the appointment. Any time taken in excess of the four (4) hours per vaccine injection entitlement was chargeable to available leave credits. Employees had to submit a copy of their vaccination card directly to the HR Department as proof of proper use of this leave. The documentation was placed in the employee's medical file and the HR Director notified the Department Head that proper documentation had been received. This leave entitlement was originally set to expire on December 31, 2022, however, Governor Hochul signed legislation that extended the expiration date to December 31, 2023. This legislation was not further extended and therefore is no longer available to employees.

#### **COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate & Tracking/Status for Active Employees & Outside Agencies**

***NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) Vaccination Mandate for all Article 28 Facilities and Diagnostic Treatment Centers:*** On October 4, 2023, the mandate was officially repealed effective immediately. Due to the repeal and the end of employer paid leave for COVID vaccination, the HR team is no longer required to track vaccination status for active employees and outside agencies.

#### **Updates to COVID-19 Guidelines**

##### ***Isolation & Quarantine Guidance:***

Early in 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated their guidance for quarantine and isolation orders for COVID-19 from 10 days of isolation to 5 days of isolation followed by 5 days of using a mask. When NYSDOH adopted this same guidance, the HR team adjusted our intake process for issuing isolation dates for employees.

Late in 2023, Greene County Public Health discontinued issuing "Health Order of Mandatory Isolation" for COVID-19 positive employees. As a result, the HR Director drafted a memo that was sent to all employees from the County Administrator on November 27, 2023 stating that proof of a positive COVID-19 test from a medical provider would now have to be provided if EPSL was being requested. Additionally, the HR team discontinued use of the Request for EPSL form, which was based on an isolation order from a public health department and moved to the use of the Affirmation of Isolation form. The Affirmation was developed by the NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL) for employees to complete

satisfying the requirement that they have an order of isolation from a duly authorized government authority to be eligible for EPSL.

Pursuant to all the changes to CDC and NYSDOH/NYS DOL guidance, updates were made to the interview/intake process that the HR team was conducting for employees and those who no longer needed to quarantine were notified at that time. Effective 12/1/2023 employees were required to submit proof of a positive COVID-19 test from a medical provider and we no longer accepted positive at-home COVID-19 test results to receive the EPSL.

As has been the case since March of 2020, COVID-19 continued to present challenges to all Greene County departments and employees, although at greatly reduced rates in 2024. With the expiration of EPSL set for July 31, 2025, HR has reached our goal of treating COVID-19 as we treat any other illness encountered by our employees.

## **CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

### **Commission Meetings**

The Greene County Civil Service Commission meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. The Commissioners conducted 11 regular monthly commission meetings in 2024 (the November meeting was canceled due to the availability of the Commissioners) and held three public hearings regarding proposed changes to the Greene County Civil Service Rules and Appendices and the NYS Civil Service program known as the Hiring Emergency Limited Placement Program (HELP Program). As outlined below, many actions take place during the Commission meetings such as: review of requests for reallocation or reclassification of positions, adoption of new job descriptions; approval of revisions to existing job descriptions; adoption and/or extension of eligible lists; approval of appointments from eligible lists; review and action on applications and appointments to positions in the non-competitive, labor and exempt classifications. Exam applications are reviewed when a disqualified candidate provides additional information regarding the required education or experience that would qualify them for participation in an examination. Additionally, various personnel issues regarding Greene County Departments, municipalities, school districts, libraries and special districts are discussed, reviewed and addressed.

### **Position Classification**

The Greene County Civil Service Commission has the power and duty to:

1. Classify and reclassify all positions in the civil service of all civil divisions under its jurisdiction.
2. Prepare and maintain job classification specifications for each class of positions in the competitive, non-competitive and labor jurisdictional classes and establish appropriate minimum qualifications for each class.
3. Prepare and maintain a classification specification for each class in the competitive, non-competitive and labor jurisdictional classes of the civil divisions under its jurisdiction.
4. Investigate all matters affecting the classification and reclassification of all positions and from time to time review the duties, responsibilities and qualifications requirements of all positions under its jurisdiction and to make revisions in the classification of positions.

These duties apply to all positions that fall under its jurisdiction for Greene County departments, villages, towns, school districts, public libraries and special districts. Classification of positions consists of creating a job specification/description and assigning it to a jurisdictional classification (defined below). The job specification provides an overall view of the position and is broken down into four sections: Distinguishing Features of the Class; Typical Work Activities; Full Performance Knowledge, Skills,

Abilities, Personal Characteristics, and the Minimum Qualifications with each section providing an outline of what is required.

The five jurisdictional classifications of Civil Service are:

1. **Competitive:** requires a formal examination in the form of a written, performance or training and experience evaluation. All positions are classified as competitive unless the NYS Civil Service Commission has approved them for an alternate classification.
2. **Non-Competitive:** formal written exam is not required. Pursuant to NYS Civil Service Law §42, candidates are subject to review to ensure that they meet the minimum qualifications of the position/job specification.
3. **Labor:** no examination or minimum qualifications required for positions in this classification.
4. **Exempt:** appointed positions as defined in NYS Civil Service Law §41
5. **Unclassified:** not subject to examination. This classification includes elected positions; all officers and employees of any other legislative body whose principal functions and duties are directly related to the performance of the legislative functions of such body; the head or heads of any department of the government who are vested with authority, direction and control over a department, and who have power and authority to appoint and remove officers and employees therein; all members, officers and employees of boards of elections, all persons employed by any title whatsoever as members of the teaching and supervisory staff of a school district, board of cooperative educational services or county vocational education and extension board as noted in NYS Civil Service Law § 35.

Creation of positions or the revision of positions varies from year to year pursuant to the needs of the appointing authorities and the changing duties of certain positions. Additionally, revision of positions can be the result of directives or a change in guidelines from New York State Civil Service. In July of 2022, NYS Civil Service issued a Policy Advisory Report with guidance regarding the amended federal regulations governing the recognition of accrediting agencies provided by the United States Department of Education. Pursuant to this report, all job specifications containing a requirement for a postsecondary education needed to be revised with updated verbiage for accreditation. This continues to be an ongoing project that coincides with our continuing goal of reviewing and updating all job specifications. This review is part of the HR team's goal of having all job descriptions available on our website.

The following chart reflects the Commission's actions on position classification over the last three years:

	2024	2023	2022
<b>Positions Created</b>	13	10	14
<b>Positions Revised</b>	18	17	33

As noted in the 2022 Annual Report, our office completed the digitization of the history of all job descriptions, which was roughly 2,045 records. The next stage of this project is to update the current version of all active job descriptions, some requiring revisions to be approved by the Greene County Civil Service Commission. This task was assigned to a new part-time position in the HR office, but that position had to address a more pressing project. We hope to get back to the project for job descriptions in 2025 with the continuing goal of having all current job descriptions available on the Greene County website.

### **NEW: HR Select/ EGov Civil Service Program:**

In March 2022, the Greene County Legislature approved the creation and maintenance of a new digital Civil Service database. This will allow the HR team to process applications digitally, as well as Civil Service exam results and will eliminate a large amount of unnecessary paper records. One of HR's goals for 2024 was to fully begin entering payroll data for all appointing authorities that fall under Greene County Civil Service. This included all Towns, Villages, School Districts, Libraries, (2) Special Districts and County Employees. This goal was far surpassed! Although we are still working on getting the program to a point where we can go live, we have made tremendous progress as you can see from the numbers provided below of roster card information and entries made. Our next goal of uploading all job specifications will immediately follow, once the roster card history is up to date. As the team works out any issues with the program, we will expand use of the software to outside appointing authorities. The final stage will be the electronic application and fee payment process.

Team members have worked very hard on entering data into EGov and our count of new roster card entries to date is 2,068 entered in from our old roster system. This number includes County, Villages, Towns, School Districts, Libraries and Special districts. In addition, there have been a total of 12,275 entries of roster card histories entered for Greene County as well as the other municipalities mentioned above. This has been a HUGE undertaking that was not anticipated when we developed the software. Our team has really done an amazing job of working on this endeavor in between other daily HR tasks. Our next goal is to begin working on closed roster records to be sure we have all data entered.

### **Hiring Emergency Limited Placement Program (HELP Program)**

On January 13, 2023, NYS Civil Service (NYS CS) sent a Policy Advisory Report (PAR) to all municipal Civil Service Agencies regarding a "temporary program to help local government employers address the current staffing issues for critical health and safety titles" known as the HELP Program, which was established by the NYS CS Commission on January 11, 2023. Under the HELP Program, local civil service agencies were able to request, through submission of Rules Resolutions, that Competitive class titles be placed in the Non-competitive class on a temporary basis (12 months) to aid in recruitment efforts at the local level. Initially, all Rules Resolutions for the HELP Program had to have been submitted to the NYS CS Commission by December 31, 2023.

As noted in the January 13, 2023 PAR, the original HELP Program Criteria was as follows:

"Titles appropriate for hiring under the local HELP Program will be limited to positions that provide critical services, which if left unfilled, would result in the basic health, safety, and daily needs of New Yorkers being unmet." "To ensure the integrity of the merit system, titles for which agencies can make appointments under the HELP Program must meet all the below criteria:

**Criteria 1:** Titles are deemed to be critical, direct care, health and safety titles. Employees serving in these titles provide services or care directly to clients, consumers, patients, or the public. Titles tested in the examination holdings listed above meet this criterion.

**Criteria 2:** A severe shortage of candidates exists, evidenced by an inability to attract sufficient qualified candidates to fill vacancies despite extensive and exhaustive recruitment efforts. It is the responsibility of the civil service agency to demonstrate this criterion.

**Criteria 3:** Titles are filled via open-competitive examination only. Titles are excluded from this program if they can be filled via promotion examination. It is the responsibility of the civil service agency to demonstrate this criterion."

During 2023, multiple titles fitting the original HELP Program criteria were approved by the NYS CS Commission for use in Greene County. At the end of the 12-month period, employees occupying positions filled through the local HELP Program were to be granted competitive class status without



examination. The January 13, 2023 PAR stated that local Civil Service Agencies would need to submit a rules resolution to delete the HELP Program titles from the non-competitive class and in doing so, that would have the effect of conveying competitive class status upon individuals appointed pursuant to the HELP Program. However, the best laid plans do not always play out to fruition and that was the case with the original HELP Program.

In January 2024, NYS CS provided municipal Civil Service Agencies with an Information Memorandum (IM) advising that the HELP Program was being extended until December 31, 2024 and all titles that were already approved in the HELP Program would remain in the Non-competitive classification through December 31, 2024 or until the local civil service agency submitted a rules resolution to have the HELP Program titles deleted from the Non-competitive class, whichever occurred first. Additionally, the IM advised that an expansion of the HELP Program would be proposed to the NYS CS Commission at their February 2024 meeting.

On March 4, 2024 NYS CS sent a PAR to all municipal Civil Service Agencies informing them that on February 14, 2024 the NYS CS Commission expanded the HELP Program. The PAR stated:

“To preserve the integrity of the civil service hiring process and to ensure current local government employees can compete for appointment to higher level titles via the NY HELPS Program – Local, when submitting rules resolutions for the Commission’s consideration, municipal civil service agencies must attest that:

1. There are no preferred lists in existence for the title requested;
2. Diversity, inclusion, and equity principles are integrated into outreach, recruitment, interview and hiring efforts associated with NY HELPS Program - Local positions; and
3. Any promotion eligible list for the title and any open-competitive eligible list for the title must be non-mandatory.

**NOTE:** Titles that are filled by promotion from direct-line titles may be requested for inclusion in the NY HELPS Program – Local. However, appointments to these titles can only occur if the promotion eligible list is non-mandatory. In addition, if there are three or more interested and qualified candidates serving in the direct-line, lower-level title(s) within the agency, non-competitive NY HELPS Program – Local appointments must be first offered to the qualified employee(s) in the direct-line, lower-level title(s) prior to appointing a qualified non-local government employee.

The NY HELPS Program - Local is not intended to be a permanent solution, but rather to serve as a temporary mechanism for municipal civil service agencies to immediately make permanent hires into titles covered by the Program to help reduce staffing challenges. Approval of this Program is also intended to afford the Department of Civil Service time to create a new long-term exam model that will better meet hiring needs into the future. This temporary program has been approved by the Commission through December 31, 2024. As such, agencies have until December 31, 2024, to submit NY HELPS Program – Local rules resolutions.”

The modification of the HELP Program opened the door for a multitude of titles to be requested for inclusion and to assist Greene County appointing authorities with our extreme recruitment difficulties. With the approval of each title, all provisional employees in those titles were appointed non-competitively and no longer were required to test for their positions. Provisional status was a huge deterrent to people considering employment with Greene County as they had no guarantee that they would score well enough on the exam to keep the position that they were already appointed to. Additionally, all recruitment material was updated to note that these titles did not require a test.

The following chart details the titles that have been approved for inclusion in the HELP Program in 2023 and 2024 and the number of candidates appointed to each HELP Program title:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Date Approved in HELP Program</b>	<b># Appointed in 2023</b>	<b># Appointed in 2024</b>
Account Clerk (all County Departments)	5/15/2024	N/A	12
Account Clerk (all Towns)	12/18/2024	N/A	1
Account Clerk (all School Districts)	12/18/2024	N/A	0
Administrative Aide (all County Departments)	10/16/2024	N/A	0
Administrative Aide (all Towns)	12/18/2024	N/A	
Administrative Aide (all School Districts)	12/18/2024	N/A	0
Administrative Assistant (all County Departments)	12/18/2024	N/A	1
Administrative Assistant (Soil & Water Conservation District)	12/18/2024	N/A	0
Administrative Assistant (all School Districts)	12/18/2024	N/A	0
Clerk/Typist (all County Departments)	10/16/2024	N/A	0
Community Services Worker (DSS)	6/14/2023	1	2
County Clerk's Worker (County Clerk)	9/18/2024	N/A	4
Deputy Public Health Director (Public Health)	12/18/2024	N/A	
Director of Community Wellness Programs (Sheriff's Office)	5/15/2024	N/A	1
Emergency Services Business Manager (Emergency Services)	10/16/2024	N/A	1
Emergency Operations Dispatcher (Emergency Services)	6/14/2023	1	3
Emergency Operations Dispatcher Trainee (Emergency Services)	6/14/2023	0	3
Family Planning Clinic Manager (Public Health)	12/18/2024	N/A	1
Human Resources & Civil Service Aide (Human Resources)	9/18/2024	N/A	0
Junior Accountant (Human Services)	9/18/2024	N/A	1
Meal Site Manager (Human Services)	9/18/2024	N/A	1
Medical Receptionist (Mental Health)	5/15/2024	N/A	1
Medical Receptionist (Public Health)	5/15/2024	N/A	0
Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) Patient Services and Linkage Coordinators (Public Health)	10/16/2024	N/A	1
Mental Health Business Manager (Mental Health)	10/16/2024	N/A	0
Mental Health Claims Processor (Mental Health)	5/15/2024	N/A	2
Mental Health Specialist (Mental Health)	6/14/2023	2	4
Mental Health Specialist II (Mental Health)	10/16/2024	N/A	0
Principal Account Clerk (all County Departments)	12/18/2024	N/A	0
Principal Account Clerk Typist (all County Departments)	12/18/2024	N/A	0
Principal Account Clerk Typist (Veterans)	9/18/2024	N/A	1
Principal Human Resources & Civil Service Aide (Human Resources)	9/18/2024	N/A	0
Principal Social Welfare Examiner (DSS)	10/16/2024	N/A	0
Project Manager (Economic Development, Tourism & Planning)	12/18/2024	N/A	1

Title	Date Approved in HELP Program	# Appointed in 2023	# Appointed in 2024
Public Health Educator (Family Planning)	10/16/2024	N/A	1
Public Health Educator (Public Health)	10/16/2024	N/A	0
Receptionist/Typist (all County Departments)	5/15/2024	N/A	3
Recording Systems Manager (Sheriff's Office)	10/16/2024	N/A	1
Records Inventory Clerk (County Clerk)	12/18/2024	N/A	1
Records Retention Clerk (County Clerk)	12/18/2024	N/A	1
Senior Account Clerk (Highway & Solid Waste)	5/15/2024	N/A	1
Senior Account Clerk (DSS)	5/15/2024	N/A	1
Senior Administrative Assistant (all County Departments)	12/18/2024	N/A	1
Senior Caseworker (DSS)	10/16/2024	N/A	0
Senior Clerk (all County Departments)	12/18/2024	N/A	0
Senior Family Planning Aide (Family Planning)	10/16/2024	N/A	0
Senior Human Resources & Civil Service Aide (Human Resources)	9/18/2024	N/A	0
Senior Mental Health Specialist (Mental Health)	10/16/2024	N/A	1
Senior Service Center Manager (Human Services)	9/18/2024	N/A	1
Senior Social Welfare Examiner (DSS)	10/16/2024	N/A	0
Senior Tourism Marketing Manager (Economic Development, Tourism & Planning)	12/18/2024	N/A	0
Senior Tourism Sales & Marketing Coordinator (Economic Development, Tourism & Planning)	12/18/2024	N/A	2
Service Coordinator (Public Health)	10/16/2024	N/A	2
Social Welfare Examiner (DSS)	6/14/2023	7	14
Specialist, Services for the Aging (Human Services)	9/18/2024	N/A	1
Tourism Marketing Manager (Economic Development, Tourism & Planning)	12/18/2024	N/A	1
Tourism Sales & Marketing Coordinator (Economic Development, Tourism & Planning)	12/18/2024	N/A	0
Veterans Benefit Representative (Veterans)	9/18/2024	N/A	1
Welfare Management System Coordinator (DSS)	5/15/2024	N/A	0

As you can see from the chart, Greene County has been able to utilize HELP Program titles to hire 11 employees in 2023, all in historically difficult to fill titles, and 74 employees in 2024, 30 of which were in historically difficult to fill titles. **That is a total of 85 employees hired through the HELP Program in 1.5 years** (our HELP Program titles in 2023 were not approved until June). To say this program has been a boost to our recruitment efforts is an understatement!

The initial HELP Program provided that at the end of the 12-month period from the date of appointment, employees occupying positions filled through the local HELP Program would be granted competitive class status without examination. The January 13, 2023 PAR stated that local Civil Service Agencies would need to submit a rules resolution to delete the HELP Program titles from the non-competitive class and in doing so, that would have the effect of conveying competitive class status upon individuals appointed pursuant to the HELP Program. However, under the modification to the HELP Program put in place in February 2024, appointments to titles in the HELP Program remain in place for as long as the local Civil Service Agency keeps the title in the HELP Program or NYS CS ends the HELP Program.

This is a significant change in that HELP Program appointments may be much longer than the initial 12 months set forth in the original version of the program.

We are continuing to request additional titles for inclusion in the HELP Program, including more and more for appointing authorities other than Greene County Departments. I look forward to providing you with the updated chart in the 2025 Annual Report.

### **Civil Service Examinations**

Greene County Civil Service administers two categories of examinations for titles utilized by County departments, municipalities, school districts, public libraries and special districts: centralized or decentralized. Centralized exams are scheduled and rated by New York State Civil Service. Decentralized exams are scheduled and rated by the Greene County Civil Service Commission and include Information Technology Training & Experience and Continuous Recruitment Training & Experience exams. Training & Experience exams consist of demonstrating the minimum qualifications on an exam application and receiving a rating based upon an evaluation, pursuant to established rating scales issued by NYS CS, of a candidate's training and experience against the duties of the position being tested.

The creation and revision of job descriptions, as well as vacancies and provisional appointments/promotions reported by appointing authorities and the expiration of existing eligible lists, resulted in the following requests for examinations in 2024.

#### ***Exam Information:***

##### **Centralized Exam Requests Submitted to NYS Civil Service**

<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
33*	66	60

**\*The drastic decline in the number of exams requested in 2024 is a direct result of the number of titles approved in the HELP Program.**

##### **Centralized Exams Administered by Greene County**

<b>Exam Type</b>	<b>2024*</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Open-Competitive	27	34	42
Promotion	22	25	11
Corrections Officer Training & Experience**	2	2	

**\*The reduction in the number of exams held during 2024 can be attributed to the number of titles approved in the HELP Program.**

\*\*2023 was the first year that NYS Civil Service permitted local Civil Service agencies to have Corrections Officer candidates participate in an online Training & Experience exam rather than sitting for a written multiple-choice exam. The state implemented this change for state Corrections Officers a few years ago but this option wasn't available at the local level until 2023. We anticipated that the state would further revise this program sometime during 2024 to allow local Civil Service agencies to hold the online Corrections Officer Training & Experience exam on a continuous recruitment basis. Unfortunately, that was not the case in 2024. We are hopeful that the change to continuous recruitment will occur in 2025.

#### Decentralized Exams Scheduled, Administered and Rated by Greene County

Exam Type	2024	2023	2022
Open-Competitive	3	4	7
Continuous Recruitment: Caseworker/Caseworker Trainee*	5	3	5
Information Technology Training & Experience	0	0	0
Continuous Recruitment Training & Experience	3	0	1

\*2020 was the first year the Caseworker/Caseworker Trainee exam was held as a continuous recruitment exam. The exam is scheduled for the second Tuesday of every other month beginning with February. This allows for an active eligible list at all times and has provided a sufficient number of candidates for the appointing authority when a vacancy occurs.

As of December 31, 2024, 40 exams requested from NYS Civil Service had yet to be administered, which is down from the 67 that were outstanding at the end of 2023. Of those 40 outstanding requests, 24 have been assigned exam dates in 2025 by NYS Civil Service, leaving only 16 requested exams without a scheduled date. This is a drastic improvement from previous years and can be attributed to the number of HELP Program titles being utilized by Greene County.

With that said, the time frame for the release of exam results is still between four and six months due to the state's claim of difficulty in their staffing level. Along with other counties throughout the state, the HR Director continues to lobby NYS Civil Service to make substantial changes to the Civil Service testing system and to implement those changes at the local level in the same timeframe as the plan to implement them at the state level. It remains my belief that the difficulties with the existing testing system are a driving force in local governments' recruitment difficulties, even with the HELP Program in place.

#### **Candidate Information**

Candidates who applied for exams with Greene County Civil Service for the last three years are categorized as follows:

	2024	2023	2022
<b>Total Candidates (all exams)</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>396</b>
<b>Total: Centralized (Open-Competitive &amp; Promotion)</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>343</b>
Centralized – Passed	119	158	226
Centralized – Failed	20	30	38
Centralized – Disqualified/Withdrew	3	4	15
Centralized – Failed to Appear	26	34	44
Centralized – Awaiting Results	8	1	20
<b>Total: Decentralized</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>43</b>
Decentralized – Passed	14	7	30
Decentralized – Failed	2	2	3
Decentralized – Disqualified/Withdrew	0	0	0
Decentralized – Failed to Appear	5	0	10

<b>Total: Continuous Recruitment</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
Continuous Recruitment - Passed	18	7	8
Continuous Recruitment – Failed	4	1	1
Continuous Recruitment – Disqualified/Withdrew	1	0	0
Continuous Recruitment – Failed to Appear	6	0	0
<b>Information Technology Training &amp; Experience</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

As reported in last year's report, the number of candidates participating in Civil Service exams has dropped dramatically across New York State over the last few years and Greene County's numbers reflect that trend. Use of the HELP Program has also contributed to less candidates being tested in 2024. NYS Civil Service and the local Civil Service agencies continue to work together on recruitment strategies such as on-line testing and more Training & Experience evaluations, including the possibility of conducting the Corrections Officer exam as a continuous recruitment Training & Experience exam as is done at the NYS level. The Greene County Civil Service Commission continues to collaborate with NYS Civil Service staff and increase the number of candidates participating in Greene County Civil Service exams for 2025.

### **Exam Fees**

Pursuant to New York State Civil Service Law Sections 23.2 and 50.5(b), Greene County assesses an exam filing fee for all Centralized, Decentralized, Continuous Recruitment and Training & Experience exams as follows:

- NYS Civil Service Law §23.2 states that NYS Civil Service can charge a reasonable fee as a condition of rendering services for and in providing exam materials as well as scoring the exams they provide to all local civil service agencies.
- A \$25.00 exam fee is assessed for uniformed exams. Uniformed exams are administered for all uniformed positions within municipal police agencies and the Sheriff's Office, including Corrections titles.
- A \$15.00 exam fee is assessed for all non-uniform centralized, decentralized, continuous recruitment and training and experience exams.
- Pursuant to NYS Civil Service Law §50.5(b) under certain criteria candidates are eligible to apply for an exam fee waiver.

Per NYS Civil Service Law §23(2), the Greene County Civil Service Commission is required to complete and submit to NYS Civil Service an Annual Exam Fee report for services provided by them for rating centralized exams and providing exam material and the rating chart for decentralized exams. The Commission must submit payment to NYS Civil Service within the first quarter of the year for the state's portion of the exam fees assessed in the previous year. The HR Director, in her role as Executive Secretary to the Commission, submitted the 2024 Exam Fee Billing Report to NYS Civil Service on February 20, 2025. NYS Civil Service certified the report on February 21, 2025, and a check in the amount of \$1,755.00 was submitted to NYS Civil Service on February 21, 2025. This amount represents \$12.50 for each uniformed exam applicant, \$7.50 for each non-uniform centralized exam applicant, and \$5.00 for each decentralized exam applicant.

The exam fees collected by the Greene County Civil Service Commission are categorized as:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022*</b>
<b>Total Exam Fees Collected</b>	<b>\$3,610.00</b>	<b>\$3,700.00</b>	<b>\$6,500.00</b>
Uniformed Exam Fees Collected	\$1,775.00	\$475.00	\$2,875.00
Uniformed Exam Fee Waivers	2	0	2
Non-uniform Exam Fees Collected	\$1,835.00	\$3,225.00	\$3,625.00

Non-uniform Exam Fee Waivers	0	7	6
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\*The large increase in fees collected for 2022 is due to the holdings of the Deputy Sheriff and Police Officer exams. These high candidate exams are traditionally held every two years in Greene County. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions regarding exam room occupancy, the Commission extended the Deputy Sheriff and Police Officer eligible lists for an additional year and held the exams in 2022.

### **Eligible Lists**

Candidates who achieve a passing score on a Greene County Civil Service examination will have their names entered on an eligible list for the title that they were examined for in order of their final rating. If two or more candidates receive the same final rating on the examination, the Commission has prescribed that the last four digits of the candidate's social security number break tied scores for the purpose of rank on the eligible list. This method was determined for use pursuant to the random nature of the last four digits of social security numbers.

The date the eligible list is established is the date fixed by Commission resolution and is entered on each list. The duration of all eligible lists is fixed by Commission resolution prior to the establishment of such lists but shall not be less than one nor more than four years. The date of establishment of a list and its duration is given to all successful candidates at the time when notice of standing on the eligible list is given to each candidate. When the duration of an eligible list is less than four years, by resolution the Commission may, prior to the list's expiration date, extend the list up to the maximum limitation of four years. All eligible candidates remaining on such list are notified in writing of the extension of the eligible list.

Eligible lists are open to public inspection at the office of the Commission. The names of the candidates who failed to receive a passing grade on the examination are not disclosed on the eligible lists.

Establishment and extension of the Greene County Civil Service eligible lists are broken down as follows:

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Total Eligible Lists Established</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>47</b>
- Open-Competitive	37	46	39
- Promotion	11	6	7
- Non-Competitive Promotion	9	14	1
<b>Eligible Lists Extended</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>

### **Canvassing and Certification of Names**

When a vacancy for a competitive title occurs in an appointing authority, the Commission determines the eligible list appropriate for the vacancy to be filled (in most cases the title for the vacancy and title of the eligible list will be the same). A certification of names is sent to the appointing authority containing a sufficient number of eligible candidates from which selection for appointment may be made. When the name of any eligible candidate is included in a certification for appointment, the names of all other eligible candidates on the list having the same score will be included in such certification.

A certification of names issued by the Commission to an appointing authority is valid for 30 days from the date of its issuance. Certifications issued for the titles of Probation Officer, Probation Officer Trainee, Caseworker, Caseworker Trainee, Corrections Officer, Deputy Sheriff or Police Officer are valid for a period of 60 days from the date of their issuance. After the expiration date of such period, no appointment can be made except from a new certification. The Commission, for good cause shown, may extend a certification for an additional 30 days upon request of an appointing authority.

When the canvassing process is completed in order to establish a certification of names, if a candidate fails to indicate their willingness to accept such appointment within five business days of the date of the canvass letter, the candidate is considered ineligible for selection for appointment. When a candidate fails to respond to two successive canvass letters, their name is restricted from consideration from the eligible list. The candidate may request that their name be restored to active status on such list prior to the expiration of the list.

The name of a candidate who declines appointment is eliminated from further consideration from the eligible list unless declination is for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Insufficiency of compensation offered when below minimum of grade of the position for which the examination was held;
2. Location of employment;
3. Temporary inability, physical or otherwise, which must be satisfactorily explained by the eligible in writing.

Appointments or promotions to Competitive positions must be made from those candidates willing to accept such appointment and whose exam score is equal to or higher than the score of the third highest ranking candidate on the list indicating willingness to accept such appointment. Whenever a vacancy exists in a position in the competitive class and an open-competitive exam results in two or fewer candidates on the eligible list, the list is considered non-mandatory. The appointing authority may choose from one of the candidates, but they are not required to do so and may appoint a candidate provisionally pending the next exam for the title.

The Commission administers the canvassing process and/or provides certification of names for all Greene County departments, municipalities, school districts, libraries and special districts who have vacancies for a title in the Competitive Classification. In 2024, the Commission conducted the canvassing process for 36 vacancies within the appointing authorities served, down 28% from the 50 conducted in 2023, and issued 28 certifications of names, down 26% from the 38 issued in 2023. As reported in 2023, the reduction in both certification of names and the number of canvassings is a result of a few factors:

1. The implementation of the HELP Program has reduced the number of requests for canvassings to fill positions that previously needed to be filled on a competitive basis.
2. Fewer candidates on eligible lists resulted in the lists being exhausted quicker and provisional candidates needing to be appointed.
3. A higher number of Promotion and Non-competitive promotion vacancies that do not require the canvassing process.

### **Requests for Examination Appropriateness**

The Commission can make a request to NYS Civil Service to support the appropriateness of various merit system administration transactions including transfers/reinstatements, non-competitive promotion, eligible list, and preferred list usage.

***Non-competitive promotion 52(7):*** Non-competitive promotion requests are related only to the examination taken by the candidate and therefore do not require a comparison of minimum qualifications. If the examination scopes are not identical, the Testing Services Division (TSD) is asked to review scopes for the examination taken by the candidate versus the scope of the examination given for promotion to the higher-level title.

***Transfers/Reinstatements:*** Section 70(1) of Civil Service Law prohibits the transfer of an employee to a title for which there is an examination involving essential tests and qualifications that are higher than or



different from the essential tests and qualifications involved in the examination for the title held. Municipal civil service rules prescribe reinstatement to the same title once held or to any title an employee was eligible to transfer to; therefore, section 70(1) also applies to reinstatements. This includes reinstatement following resignation, retirement, or layoff. Therefore, transfers and reinstatements involving transfer require a review of the open competitive minimum qualifications for the position by NYS Civil Service staff.

***Use of an eligible list or preferred list (pursuant to CSL 23(4); 61; 81):*** The substitution of an eligible list or preferred list for the purpose of filling a title for which there is an established examination requires the same principle of comparable minimum qualifications. The minimum qualifications for the substitute eligible list or preferred list must be the same as or higher than the minimum qualifications for the title being filled. If the minimum essential test and qualifications are not consistent, an individual could qualify for the examination for the eligible list title and not qualify for the examination that would be held for the position to be filled.

While submission of these requests can be time consuming and require substantial documentation, approval of such requests saves the appointing authority and the candidate time in that the candidate does not have to sit for an exam and the appointing authority does not have to wait for exam results to appoint the person from an eligible list. During 2024, the Commission submitted two requests for examination appropriateness to NYS Civil Service, down from the nine that were submitted in 2023. One of the requests was approved and one was denied. The Commission will continue to utilize this tool when appropriate to avoid unnecessary examinations and the long wait time for exam results.

### **Certification of Payrolls**

Pursuant to NYS Civil Service Law §95, §97(1), §97(2), §100 and §101, the Commission has the responsibility of certifying payrolls for all appointing authorities under its jurisdiction to ensure that appointments and employment are in compliance with Civil Service Laws and Rules, identify discrepancies, and provide for resolution of discrepancies. The Commission requires the certifications of payroll for the appointing authorities according to the following schedule:

<b>CIVIL DIVISION</b>	<b>PAYROLL TO BE CERTIFIED:</b>
County	First Full Payroll in January
Towns (14)	First Full Payroll in January
Villages (5)	First Full Payroll in June
School Districts (6)	First Full Payroll in October
Public Libraries and Special Districts (7)	First Full Payroll in January

The certification of payroll consists of reviewing employees' names, position titles and salaries to verify information listed on the wage report matches Civil Service records. Additionally, certifying the payroll involves creation of roster records for newly hired employees and updating existing employees' records including title changes, salary increases and any other relevant employment information.

The Commission investigates any discrepancies between the payroll and the official roster or any other instance where the Commission finds the employment of a person may be in violation of the law and rules. When the Commission finds satisfactory evidence that the employment of a person is in violation of law and rules, or the Commission finds satisfactory evidence of intent to evade the provisions of law or rules, the Commission will refuse certification.

Although our goal is to complete payroll certification for every appointing authority each year, at times there are circumstances that prevent that from happening. In 2023, the turnover of staff in our own department as well as the turnover of staff in many of our appointing authorities continued to result in a lower number of certifications being completed. In 2024, the HR Director assigned this task to a different team member who began the monumental task of communicating with our appointing authorities and cleaning up outstanding payroll certifications. While we didn't reach our goal of having all of our appointing authorities up-to-date, we are drastically closer with less than five who still have outstanding payroll certifications.

### **New York State Civil Service Annual Report**

NYS Civil Service Law § 26(1) requires all municipal civil service agencies to complete and submit an Annual Report. These local reports are the basis of NYS Department of Civil Service's "Municipal Civil Service in New York State Summary of Annual Reports." On February 28, 2024, Greene County's 2024 Annual Report was submitted to NYS Civil Service.

The local report consists of the local Civil Service Commission's staffing information, finances, meeting information, exam administration information, projects, and goals. Additionally, the bulk of the annual report contains the total number of full-time, part-time and provisional employees classified under the Greene County Civil Service Commission's jurisdiction in all Greene County departments, villages, towns, school districts, libraries and special districts. The figures contained in the table below were outlined in the annual report and were based on the employees' status as of December 31, 2024.

	Greene County Departments	Public Libraries & Special Districts (7)	School Districts (6)	Towns (14)	Villages (5)
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>169</b>
Permanent Competitive	263	29	101	25	27
Provisional	27	4	6	1	0
Non-Competitive	204	28	363	246	102
Exempt	23	1	15	50	7
Labor	0	2	157	75	33
Temporary	9	0	0	0	0

As you can see from the table above, the Greene County Civil Service Commission has jurisdiction over 1798 employees, an increase of 8.7% over the 1,654 employees in 2023. As noted multiple times in this report, the HELP Program has been a contributing factor to being able to successfully fill vacancies.

## **STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT**

### **Personnel Changes**

One of the HR Team's most significant responsibilities is to process personnel changes. These changes include, but are not limited to processing employment applications, completing the onboarding process and paperwork for new hires, and processing promotions, inter-departmental transfers, appointments of current County employees to different titles in different departments, retirements, resignations, and terminations.

**Posting/Advertising:** HR worked closely with Department Heads to post, advertise, and fill vacancies in compliance with NYS Civil Service Law, Greene County Civil Service Rules and Regulations, applicable provisions of the seven CBAs and County policies/procedures. When filling vacancies for titles covered by a CBA, HR is required to post within an agency, on a countywide basis or to refer to an existing eligible

list generated by Civil Service examination. Job announcements are sent to the departments for posting in accordance with Civil Service Rules and applicable union contract language, placed on the HR website and posted on the HR Facebook page. In 2024 HR continued to send job announcements to departments via email for distribution when possible or posting on a bulletin board when all department employees do not have access to email. This procedure was implemented in 2021 as part of the County's initiative to go paperless when possible. When, and if, the search for candidates requires external advertising, we utilize as many free alternatives as possible, before consulting with a Department Head about paid advertising options.

Due to ongoing recruitment AND retention difficulties, the HR team spent a lot of time posting and advertising for vacancies. In some cases, multiple advertisements were needed over the course of months to fill a vacancy. Free advertisements are listed on a number of different websites dedicated to recruitment, such as Indeed, NYS Job Bank, LinkedIn, etc. as well as different educational websites. When paid advertising is utilized, the HR team provides the department with several different paid options. The department then decides which option they feel will work best for them from a recruitment standpoint as well as from a budgetary standpoint.

The chart below shows the 2024 numbers as compared to 2023:

	2024	2023	Percentage Change
Notice of Vacancy	53	43	23.25% increase
Job Announcement – Free	48	81	40.74% decrease
Job Announcement - Paid	2	4	50% decrease

The significant decrease in free Job Announcements could be attributed to an increase in the number of vacancies filled during the posting period for the Notice of Vacancy, a decrease in the number of times a vacancy needed to be advertised before it was filled or a change in procedure where the HR team began advertising certain vacancies without a deadline to file an application and used the phrase, "The vacancy will be posted until a successful candidate has been chosen."

During the annual review of procedures for 2022 a decision was made that the HR team would keep track of when a vacancy is filled by posting, free advertising or paid advertising to assist the HR Director in making needed changes to our recruitment process. The chart below demonstrates our first two years of data on this topic:

Vacancy Filled via:	2024	2023	Percentage Change
Notice of Vacancy	10	22	54.55% decrease
Job Announcement – Free	56	31	80.65% increase
Job Announcement – Paid	0	0	No change

As our team tracks this information moving forward, we will evaluate any necessary changes to the existing recruitment process and the platforms that are utilized (i.e. use of QR codes, modification to existing templates, etc.).

**Processing Personnel Changes:** Historically, vacancies have been filled from a Civil Service eligible list or an internal posting at a higher rate than those filled as a result of advertising. As noted in the previous section of this report regarding the HELP Program, the temporary change of Competitive titles to Non-competitive has allowed for less provisional appointments but also less vacancies filled from an eligible list.

When HR does need to fill a vacancy for a Competitive title, hiring from an eligible list is preferable to hiring a candidate provisionally since there is a risk the incumbent may not pass the test or be “reachable” on the list. This outcome can be devastating to the employee, and an unnecessary use of resources by the employer. When possible, appointing authorities have been encouraged to wait for an eligible list to be established rather than appointing provisionally.

As you can see in the chart below, the HR team processed almost 19% more personnel changes than we did in 2023.

	New Hires	Change in Title	Rehired	Resigned	Retired	Terminated	Declined/ No Show	Deceased	Total
<b>2022</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>2023</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>2024</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>264</b>

### **Pre-employment Screenings**

Upon a conditional offer of employment to a candidate, HR orders a background check as well as a physical and drug screen for all prospective new hires, including elected and appointed officials. The background checks ordered by the HR Department are conducted by the Greene County Sheriff’s Office. (Note: Sheriff’s Office, Jail, Mental Health, Probation, and DSS complete their own background checks and forward the results to HR.) Once HR receives an appropriate background check, physical and drug screen, the candidate is contacted, and an appointment is scheduled for them to come to HR to complete the onboarding paperwork with one of our team members.

As an addition to the background check for prospective employees holding a commercial driver’s license, a query of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse is conducted as required by federal regulation. The Clearinghouse is a secure online database that gives employers, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), State Driver Licensing Agencies (SDLAs), and State law enforcement personnel real-time information about commercial driver’s license (CDL) and commercial learner’s permit (CLP) holders’ drug and alcohol program violations. The Clearinghouse contains records of violations of drug and alcohol prohibitions in [49 CFR Part 382, Subpart B](#), including positive drug or alcohol test results and test refusals. When a driver completes the return-to-duty (RTD) process and follow-up testing plan, this information is also recorded in the Clearinghouse.

### **Promotional Opportunities**

The HR Director continued to collaborate with Department Heads, the County Administrator and the Civil Service Commission on promotional staffing needs as the County filled vacancies created by the high number of resignations and retirements in 2024. As part of this process the HR Director evaluated the need for newly created bargaining unit titles and assigned pay grades accordingly. Additionally, the HR Director participated in establishing appropriate salaries for any newly created management/confidential titles. In total, the HR team processed 54 promotional appointments during 2024, an increase of 64% from the 33 processed in 2023.

### **Employment Outreach**

The HR team continued efforts towards outreach to local high school students regarding employment opportunities with Greene County, completing employment applications and the Civil Service examination process, and how to interact with a potential employer. As part of this process HR team members attended the Cocksackie-Athens Central School District’s Annual Readiness Day on March 19, 2024. This is a great event that our team thoroughly enjoys attending. Our hope is that more Greene County school districts will offer events similar to this event.

As was the case in 2023, the HR team attended two Capital Region Virtual Career Fairs through the New York State Department of Labor. This is a great opportunity for our team to reach out to candidates who may not know the employment opportunities available in Greene County. Additionally, the HR team is able to interact virtually in real time with candidates.

The HR team returned to the Greene County Youth Fair from July 25-July 28, 2024. Our team enjoyed manning our table with information on HR and Civil Service opportunities, as well as interacting with other Greene County agencies in attendance. However, the most meaningful part of this event was interacting with the public, providing them with information and answering their questions. We look forward to participating in this event again in 2025.

The HR team has plans to participate in more outreach events during 2025, including The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Career Fair in Albany hosted by the NYS Department of Labor and the SUNY Ulster Career Fair. As we are made aware of other opportunities for outreach, we will pack up our “swag” and hit the road to get the word out about employment opportunities in Greene County!

### **Reclassifications/Reallocations**

NYS Civil Service Law Section 22 and Greene County Civil Service Rule XXIII provide the Civil Service Commission with the authority to reclassify or reallocate positions/titles. In 2024, four requests for reallocation of a title to a higher pay grade were submitted to the Civil Service Commission. The HR Director, working in her capacity as Executive Secretary to the Civil Service Commission, presented the requests and supporting documentation to the Civil Service Commission for review. The Commission recommended approval of all requests and the County Administrator acted in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission.

Additionally, in 2024 four requests were submitted to the Commission for reclassification of a position. Upon review of the supporting documentation, the Commission recommended reclassification of all the positions to different or new titles at a higher pay grade within the pay rate scale. The HR Director worked with the Department Head and the applicable collective bargaining unit to determine an appropriate existing title or to create a new title, which was adopted by the Commission and assigned the corresponding pay grade.

By comparison, there were nine requests for Reclassification/Reallocation submitted for consideration in 2023.

### **Salary Analysis**

The HR Director works very closely with the County Administrator and the Deputy Budget Officer regarding the salary for Management/Confidential (M/C) employees. Any requests for salary adjustments or setting salary for new titles go through a salary analysis conducted by the HR Director. The analysis may include comparisons of salary, duties and qualifications of similar titles used by the County or may require comparisons to titles used by other counties in New York. Once the analysis is complete, a recommendation is submitted to the County Administrator who issues the final determination. In 2024, the HR Director conducted 16 salary analyses (excluding those required for encroachment) for existing or newly created M/C titles.

Encroachment of employees covered by a bargaining agreement and their closest non-union member supervisor is another situation that requires salary analysis. The HR Director works with the County Administrator to correct encroachment as soon as possible upon full ratification of any collective bargaining agreements or when subordinate union employees are promoted to a higher-grade union title. There were 10 encroachment issues due to CBA ratification for CSEA 7000 and CSEA 7002 in 2024.

### **Random Drug Screens**

A random drug screening program initiated for employees in the Managerial/Confidential (M/C) group in 2017, was expanded to members of the CSEA General and CSEA Dispatch/Probation Units in 2018. Resulting from contract negotiations in 2019, the UPSEU random drug screen program, which previously only applied to nurses at the Jail, was expanded to all members of the bargaining unit effective January 1, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented the contractor who performs our random drug screening for these groups of employees from coming on site during 2020, 2021, and 2022. The HR Director contacted our vendor to resume these services during 2023. Unfortunately, due to the staffing level in the HR Department, we were not able to conduct the screening in 2023. Late in 2024, the HR Director and the vendor were able to set a date in February 2025 to resume the screenings. From this point forward, the screenings will go back to being conducted on a regular basis per the terms of the County Administrative Manual and respective collective bargaining agreements.

Employees of the County's Highway and Solid Waste Management Department, the Sheriff's Office/Jail and certain employees of the Human Services Department participated in separate, agency-specific random drug screen programs during 2024.

### **License Event Notification Service (LENS)**

The Principal Human Resources & Civil Service Aide monitored the LENS Program through the NYS DMV, checking the system daily, entering new hires and deleting employees who have retired, resigned or were terminated. LENS is a data service that gathers information daily from the DMV's files and reports any new information to us regarding the status of a license (e.g., suspensions, expirations, renewals, accidents etc.). Accordingly, we can monitor the NYS license records of CDL holders and other employees that drive for the County in the course of their work duties or are required to maintain a valid NYS driver's license as part of their job description. When our team member is alerted to an issue, the employee and Department Head are notified and given a specific deadline to rectify the situation. This service is free to government agencies and helps reduce the County's insurance rates.

### **Employee Performance Appraisals**

Employee performance appraisals are a valuable tool used to recognize an employee's strengths and encourage that employee to continue to strive for improvement. They can also be used to assist employees in addressing deficiencies in the performance of their duties, and to assist departments with performance needs. An ongoing goal for the HR team has been to increase the number of employee performance appraisals. To address this goal HR sent out quarterly reminders and monitored the completion of employee performance appraisals by department managers and supervisors. The HR Director also continued to stress the importance of the completion of performance appraisals during monthly Department Head Meetings.

As noted above, one of the HR team's continuing goals is to increase the number of appraisals completed annually. While the number of appraisals completed didn't increase in 2024, the decrease was minimal: 212 in 2024 compared to 214 in 2023. We are proud of the almost **71% increase in submissions since 2020**. The HR team appreciates the department heads, managers and supervisors who collaborated with us to make this a reality. We will continue in our efforts to increase that number even more.

### **Employee Exit Survey**

HR provides employees the opportunity to complete a survey upon retirement or voluntary separation from employment. The procedure for distribution is to provide employees with the survey as soon as HR is notified of an intention to separate from County employment. This approach is based on the idea that the initial feeling of emotion has eased but we are catching the employee before they completely "check out." The Employee Benefits Manager then follows up with a phone call to the employee to see if there are any

questions, or if the employee would prefer to meet with an HR team member in person rather than completing the survey. The HR Director provides Department Heads with three key points concerning the survey process:

1. The Exit Survey is an HR function, not a departmental function.
2. The Exit Survey is **confidential**.
3. The Exit Survey provides employees leaving County employment with an opportunity to provide beneficial data/information.

Of the 94 surveys distributed in 2024, 7 were returned compared to 2023 where 76 surveys distributed and 16 were returned. The number of surveys returned in 2024 declined by 56.25% compared to 2023. The HR team will continue to think “outside the box” for creative ways to generate a higher return rate.

#### **New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) Annual Salary Survey**

The HR Director responded to a request in June to assist in updating the NYSAC Annual County Official Salary and Employee Benefits Surveys. The request included logging into a secure website and updating the information for Greene County. As a result of our participation, the 2024 NYSAC County Salary Survey and Employee Benefits Report contained accurate information for Greene County.

#### **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO-4) Reporting**

In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) requires biennial reports in odd-numbered years from public employers which indicate the composition of their workforce by sex and by race/ethnic category. The reporting agencies provide information on their employment totals, and employee job category and salary by gender and race/ethnic group, as of June 30<sup>th</sup> of the survey year. HR generated the data necessary to complete the EEO-4 survey instrument on-line, then submitted it to the federal government electronically on December 1, 2023 in advance of the December 5, 2023 deadline. Since the report is only required in odd-numbered years, no report was submitted in 2024.

#### **Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Requests and Police Discovery Requests**

The HR Director collected data for the County Attorney in response to seven Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests received during the year. Additionally, as a result of various police reform legislation, HR has the additional duty of collecting data for the District Attorney’s office in response to discovery requests for information contained in the personnel files of the employees of certain County departments. In 2023, the HR Director responded to 10 such requests from the DA’s Office while in 2024 the HR Director responded to 18 such requests, an increase of 80%.

### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

#### **Affordable Care Act (ACA)**

Greene County continued in 2024 with the same self-insured health insurance plan. The HR team continued to fully implement all necessary measures to make sure we were and continue to be ACA compliant. This includes the tracking of “Covered Individuals” in detail (which had formerly been done by the insurance carrier) in addition to the “Offer and Coverage” information for 1095 reporting. Careful tracking, review and entry of *all covered employees and dependent(s) information* into the personnel/payroll system for individuals subject to the reporting requirements, is completed on a monthly basis. Additionally, HR continued updating the records of all staff in the County’s database as employment status and/or health insurance coverage changes occurred throughout the year.

HR continued to closely monitor activity at the federal level concerning possible amendments or repeal, replacement, and/or repair plans. Beyond that, HR persisted in managing the myriad of tasks needed to successfully achieve compliance with the ACA's many mandates, including:

1. Monitoring the hours worked of all on-going part-time and per diem employees during the County's "Standard Measurement Period" in order to evaluate their eligibility for health insurance
2. Monitoring the hours worked of all newly hired variable hour part-time and per diem employees during their "Initial Measurement Period" in order to evaluate their eligibility for health insurance
3. Conducting "Affordability" calculations for each of the health plans offered by the County
4. Regularly re-evaluating the "Offer and Coverage" and "Safe Harbor" codes being used to ensure our selections are appropriate for each individual's circumstances, in order for our end product to be as precise as possible.

### **Health Insurance**

HR continued to administer the following health insurance plans in 2024 for **approximately 1,507 Greene County employees, retirees and dependents**:

- 1) Anthem BCBS Medicare Advantage Plan with Senior Rx (*name change formerly Empire*)
- 2) Anthem BCBS Non-Deductible PPO and EPO (*name change formerly Empire*)
- 3) Anthem BCBS Deductible PPO and EPO (*name change formerly Empire*)

Note: The Teamsters Health and Hospital Fund Select Plan is managed by the Greene County Department of Highway and Solid Waste for Teamsters bargaining unit members.

***Non-Deductible PPO and EPO plan for Retirees:*** The carrier for our retirees still on the active health insurance plan (not Medicare eligible) and part of the Non-Deductible group remained the same. The mail order pharmacy, CarelonRx, also remained the same with. Prescription drugs remained consistent with 3-tier rate intervals of \$10/ \$30/ \$45. Mandatory mail order remained in place unless a member preferred to use CVS Pharmacy, Walmart Pharmacy and/or Greene Medical Arts Pharmacy for their maintenance medications and have medications prescribed as a 90-day refill. Office visit copays for Primary Care Physician and Specialist copays remained the same at \$20 per office visit.

***Medicare Advantage Plan (MAP):*** The carrier for our MAP plan, Anthem BlueCross BlueShield MediBlue Freedom PPO with Senior Rx (name change formerly Empire) remained the same. There were no plan changes. There were approximately 389 active members enrolled in this plan in 2024, a slight decrease from the 396 active members enrolled in 2023.

HR continues to monitor when benefit eligible retirees and their benefit eligible dependents become qualified for Medicare Part B in order to appropriately transition them to the County's Medicare Advantage Plan. Notification is sent to retirees and spouses 2-3 months prior to their eligible date, to begin the process of applying/registering for Medicare. This can be a cumbersome process. The Employee Benefits Manager works with retirees and their eligible dependents to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

***Creditable Coverage Notices:*** HR sent annual compliance notices to all Medicare eligible actively working individuals and their dependents, Medicare eligible COBRA individuals and their dependents, Medicare eligible disabled individuals and their dependents, and retirees and dependents covered by the Greene County Prescription Drug Plan, informing them that the Greene County plan is a creditable plan so they need not join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. This resulted in a total of 580 mailings by September 26, 2023 for the 2024 plan year. The HR Department also fulfilled the on-line 2024 Notice of Disclosure to CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) requirement by October 2, 2023.



***Health Insurance Buyout:*** HR continued to process applications and maintain records for the Health Insurance Buyouts for employees providing proof of alternative health care coverage. Total number of employees enrolled for January 1, 2024 was 114, but with dependent tracking added, the total number of enrollees in the County Health Insurance Buyout was 307, up from 108 and 305 in 2023. A buyout cap has now been established for all bargaining units. Rather than the health insurance buyout being tied to health insurance premiums which continually rise, the caps are fixed dollar amounts. The Teamsters do not have a buyout option.

### **Dental Insurance**

The dental insurance carrier, MetLife Dental, remained the same for plan year 2024. Dental rates remained the same.

### **Vision Insurance**

The Vision insurance carrier BlueView Vision remained the same. In the plan year 2024 we had approximately 1,402 members enrolled both active employees, retirees, spouses and dependent children under the age of 19 (unless full time students and then covered up to the age of 25), a 1.22% increase from the 1,385 members enrolled in 2023.

### **Open Enrollment**

HR developed, coordinated and successfully expanded our in-person Employee Benefits Fair between 2 offices, 16 outside vendors and 3 Departments within Greene County that could potentially offer services to employees and their family members to promote awareness of what services are available to them. We had our workers' compensation carrier, PERMA set up a table as well and bring a video for each room about safety within the workplace. Our team sent advance notice to employees by email and through payroll, notifying them of our onsite and in-person Benefits fair. We continued to have phenomenal informational takeaways and raffle prize giveaways for our employees. HR also sent out information biweekly through email to all employees, including links for all insurance/benefit related carriers for quick access. We posted all insurance and benefit related information with quick links on the Greene County employee portal as another method of outreach.

HR also processed all enrollment changes made during Open Enrollment for a January 1<sup>st</sup> start date.

### **Life Insurance**

HR continued to oversee the life insurance plan, however there was a plan change in 2024 to TheHartford. Greene County's previous carrier was TheStandard. The Management/Confidential (M/C) group initially were the only employees allowed to sign up for this benefit. However, in 2024 that changed. Now life insurance is available as an elective benefit for all other employees interested in signing up. HR handled the manual processing of enrollments for members and cancellations, including generating COBRA notices for those retiring or terminating employment. The retirement benefit remained in place with no change to the \$10,700 for 10 years into retirement for the Management/Confidential group. In the plan year 2024 we had a significant increase in enrollment with approximately 184 active members and 18 enrollments in the retiree subgroup, compared to 134 active members and 14 in the retiree subgroup in 2023.

### **Flexible Spending Plan (FSA)**

HR continued to administer the FSA in 2024. Enrollees enjoyed an approved increase in the 2024 annual maximum medical FSA designation to \$3,300 from \$3,200. There was a total of 149 initial enrollments in 2024, a slight increase from the 143 initial enrollments in 2023. Enrollments and disenrollments were manually processed by HR including COBRA notices as applicable.

**The Dependent Care FSA** for 2024 the dependent care maximum allowance continued to be \$5,000 if single or if married and filing jointly; \$2,500 if married and filing separately. There was a total of 7 enrollments in the Dependent care account, which remained the same as 2023.

### **COBRA Administration**

HR routinely extends health, dental and vision insurance coverage under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) to covered employees and their family members when there is a “qualifying event” that would result in a loss of coverage under an employer’s plan (e.g., resignation, loss of dependent care status, divorce, death, etc.). The COBRA amount is equal to the full cost of the monthly insurance premiums. HR continues to use separate and distinct COBRA notices for the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and Life Insurance Plan.

### **Premium Assistance Program**

HR updated and posted a mandated notice on the employee portal, and sent the same to all departments for posting, regarding potential employee eligibility for a program available through New York State that can help those struggling to pay their insurance premiums. NYS uses funds from its Medicaid or Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) to help people who are eligible for employer-sponsored health coverage but need assistance in covering the cost of their health premiums. This premium assistance program became effective for local government employees on September 1, 2010.

### **NYS Statutory Disability Insurance**

Greene County’s short term disability carrier changed in 2024 to TheStandard from our previous carrier, TheHartford. A total of 8 claims were filed in 2024, a significant decrease of 61.9% from 2023 in which there were 21 claims filed.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

As co-ADA Coordinators, the HR Director and County Attorney processed 15 requests for accommodation in 2023, which was an increase of 114% over the previous year’s 7 requests.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free, confidential service available to Greene County employees and their immediate family members that provides a way to cope with issues such as stress, grief, anxiety, family/marital concerns, substance abuse and work-related issues. A report of aggregate data received for the 2024 plan year revealed utilization increased in 2024.

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Greene Co. Employees Utilization	2.5%	0.5%	0.68%

Note: 3% is slightly above the national average.

### **Paid Family Leave vs Family and Medical Leave Act**

The County opted not to participate in the New York Paid Family Leave program, which became effective in 2018. The program is optional for public employers in New York State. There is currently no collective bargaining obligation to provide the Paid Family Leave benefit to Greene County employees. Employees are extended leave benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Greene County Administrative Manual and the CBAs covering County employees.

The FMLA entitles eligible employees to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees are entitled to:

- Twelve workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for:
  - the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
  - the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
  - to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
  - a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job;
  - any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty;" **or**
- Twenty-six workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the service member's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).

HR processed a total of 48 new requests for leave under the FMLA in 2024, which was a decrease of approximately 19% from the 59 requests the previous year. As in 2023, **all** requests in 2024 met the criteria for the leave and were approved.

	2024	2023	Percentage + or -
Total FMLA Requests Approved	48	59	-18.64%
- Full-time	26	37	-29.73%
- Intermittent	22	22	No change
FMLA Military Leave	0	0	No change

### **Workers' Compensation**

HR continued to guide claimants and department representatives through the Workers' Compensation claims process, transmit paperwork to the County's Third-Party Administrator (TPA), and follow-up as needed. In January 2025, HR completed the SH900 and SH900.1 forms for 2024, distributed them to County departments in compliance with posting mandates, and sent copies to the NYS Department of Labor. HR also maintained records of all existing and new work-related injuries and illnesses that occurred throughout the 2024 calendar year. In 2024, Greene County had the following experience:

- **0 deaths (no change from 2023)**
- **42 cases of missed work (a 35% reduction from the 65 cases reported in 2023)**
- **0 job transfer or restriction cases (no change from 2023)**
- **13 other reportable cases (an 18% increase from the 11 cases reported in 2023)**

**These occurrences resulted in 55 total incidents reported for 2024, an 27.63% decrease from the 76 reported in 2023. Due to requirements resulting from the national COVID-19 pandemic, 34 of the 55 incidents reported were related to COVID-19 (raising the number of incidents significantly).**

### **Unemployment Claims**

HR and the County Attorney's office processed all claims for unemployment insurance benefits in 2024. Beginning in 2021, a result of the pandemic was a huge increase in the number of fraudulent claims received by the County, and in some cases notifications to the employees directly. We were very pleased that 2024 saw only one inquiry submitted for a fraudulent claim.

	2024	2023	2022	Percentage + or -
Total Unemployment Claims Received	8	12	10	-33%
- Legitimate	7	12	8	-42%
- Fraudulent	1	0	2	+100%

### **Retirement: New York State Voluntary Defined Contribution Program**

The HR Department continued to offer this alternative to membership in the NYS and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) to all eligible new hires. (General eligibility: Non-union employees hired on or after July 1, 2013 that make \$75,000 or more and are not already enrolled in the NYSLRS.) Defined contribution plans are retirement savings vehicles that provide benefits “defined” by employer and employee contributions to the plan and the investment earnings on those contributions. Participants are responsible for managing the investments in their accounts. Their retirement benefits are based on the success of their investments. This is different from the NYSLRS, which is a defined benefit plan that provides a fixed and predictable lifetime monthly income at retirement. **In 2024, there was 1 employee who elected to participate in this alternative program, slight increase from 2023 which had 0.**

### **Compliance Postings**

HR conducted its annual audit of federal and state employment posting mandates and distributed new and updated postings to all departments at that time and as required throughout the year.

HR continued with our goal in 2024 of ensuring all department bulletin boards are fully up to date with regard to compliance posting. Working together with the Safety Officer, an in-person audit was conducted of each department's boards, including satellite locations. Once the audit was completed by the Safety Officer, he contacted HR to receive any missing materials from department boards. Those materials were taken by the Safety Officer to the location and placed on the board, bringing all department boards up to date.

### **Employee Wellness**

**Wellness Committee:** One of the goals set for 2024 was to revamp the Wellness Committee and we were able to successfully carry out that goal. We were able to create a whole new committee consisting of 7 employees and we successfully had 3 meetings. During each meeting events were identified, and we were able to send out email blasts to employees to get the information about these events distributed. Many plans are still in the works and our goal for 2025 is to have more variation of wellness opportunities for employees.

**Wellness Station:** An additional piece to employee wellness was the creation and implementation of the “Wellness Station” which started in March 2024 and has continuously changed each month with informative, health and wellness tips. The wellness station is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor by HR's Operation Affirmation Board and by each door in the front and rear stairwells as well as each elevator.

**Be Well Incentive Program:** The *Be Well Incentive* program was in full effect throughout the 2024 year. This incentive program allows employees who had physicals completed to receive a \$25 gift card. The incentive program is based on an idea the County Administrator has been promoting for some time for all active employees enrolled in the County's primary health insurance plans. For 2024, there were 154 employees who participated in the program, an approximate 23% decrease from the 199 participants in 2023.

**Operation Affirmation:** This Wellness program continued with full force and tons of enthusiasm from employees! The program focuses on the importance of overall wellbeing, including mental health. HR set

up a bulletin board titled “Appreciation Station” located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of 411 Main Street. The board is used as an opportunity for employees to acknowledge each other. Submissions are collected via email to [hr@greencountyny.gov](mailto:hr@greencountyny.gov) or for those who don’t have access to email, there is a drop box for anonymous submissions located beneath the board on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The person submitting the affirmation remains anonymous however their name is entered into a monthly raffle drawing. An email is sent to all staff on the first workday of each month with the names of those acknowledged for the previous month, a picture of the board (with a new theme each month), and a link to the HR website where each individual “shout out” is posted. HR’s goal was to make this positive, uplifting and cheerful, while recognizing the employees who shine through their hard work and dedication to their job. We have received nothing but positive feedback on this program and you can see from the numbers below, the employees are enjoying acknowledging their coworkers.

- January – 7 acknowledgements
- February – 7 acknowledgements
- March – 25 acknowledgements
- April – 14 acknowledgements
- May– 30 acknowledgements
- June – 29 acknowledgements
- July – 17 acknowledgements
- August – 18 acknowledgements
- September – 14 acknowledgements
- October – 15 acknowledgements
- November – 17 acknowledgements
- December – 26 acknowledgements

Thank you to the amazing Greene County employees who have shown their appreciation for each other. The HR team continues to truly enjoy this program. In addition to positive “shout outs” we have incorporated informative and educational information related to each month. For example, acknowledging historical events or medical awareness initiatives that may have occurred in each given month.

**Miscellaneous: Assistance** continued throughout 2024 in helping employees enroll in the telemedicine program through Anthem BlueCross BlueShield (formerly Empire), and travel size first aid kits continued to be dispersed to all new employees participating in the County’s primary health insurance plans during 2024.

### **Onsite Events**

- Human Resources & Civil Service set up an informational table at the Greene County Historic Point during the Veteran’s Day Event. It was an all-day event with many vendors and great opportunities for career outreach and recruitment for Greene County.
- HR organized and implemented visits from NYS Deferred Compensation by scheduling (2) all day events in Catskill at 411 Main Street and in Cairo at Greene County Mental Health and Emergency Services to offer one-on-one sessions with employees to plan/prepare for retirement.
- HR organized and implemented visits from AFLAC by scheduling (2) all day events in Catskill at 411 Main Street and also in Cairo at Greene County Mental Health and Emergency Services to offer one-on-one sessions with employees.
- HR restarted our annual blood drive with the American RedCross, available for Greene County employees located at 411 Main Street, Catskill. The event was held on March 19, 2024 from 10am-4pm and we successfully filled all 23 time slots available!

### **Blood Borne Pathogens**

The Blood Borne Pathogens committee resumed their meeting schedule in 2024. HR continued to work with the Public Health Department and the Safety Officer to coordinate and track training for County employees in 2024.

## **LABOR AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

### **Union Contract Negotiations**

The HR Director maintains an active role on the management teams for union contract negotiations, including assisting with the development of the County's proposals and analyzing the proposals of each union. The HR Director is also responsible for the preparation of the employee data sheets for each bargaining unit, including hire and longevity dates, leave time accrued and taken, overtime earned, health insurance enrollment information, etc. Upon ratification of each contract, the HR Director assists in checking the final document for accuracy, works with the Payroll Department to establish the pay schedules, and implements new or amended terms of each CBA, as required.

***AFSCME:*** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2025.

- MOA – approved by the union and adopted by the Legislature on May 15, 2024, to implement summer hours for the Highway Department of 6:00 AM to 4:30 PM, four days per week effective June 3, 2024 through August 30, 2024.
- MOU – signed on May 13, 2024, to modify Article 14.3.1 of the CBA to specify medical documentation for “return to work” must stipulate whether the employee has specific restrictions relevant to the employee’s job description or whether there are no restrictions.
- MOA – signed December 19, 2024 to modify the CBA so that for the term of the current CBA (through the 2025 year and any time while negotiations for a successor CBA are proceeding) the County will not institute a second shift as detailed in Article 7.2 of the CBA.

***Corrections Unit (Council 82):*** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2025.

***CSEA General Unit 7000:*** The negotiating teams for this bargaining unit began meeting on November 17, 2023, during which the parties exchanged proposals. Additional meetings were held on December 18, 2023, January 4, 2024, and January 17, 2024. An MOA was signed on January 4, 2024, with the parties' agreed upon terms. The MOA was brought to the union on February 1, 2024, where it was ratified by a large majority of the members. On February 21, 2024, the legislature ratified the MOA. Due to delays in the review of the draft CBA it was not signed until September 18, 2024, although the terms as outlined in the MOA were made effective as of the date the legislature ratified the MOA. The new term for the successor CBA is January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2027. The noteworthy provisions of the contract that were negotiated were:

- Pay rate increases as follows:
  - \$2,500 added to the base salary, plus 4.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2024 (this was applied retroactively)
  - 3.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2025
  - 3.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2026
  - 2.5% for 1/1 – 12/31/2027

- Change to the employee's contribution to health insurance rates. Per the County's proposal, all those contributing 0% to health insurance remain at 0%. All other employees move to a 12.5% contribution rate effective one month after ratification of CBA by all parties
- Additional increments for longevity payments
- Change to how pay rate steps are calculated when an employee moves to a title in a higher pay grade
- Change to the amounts paid to future employees for buyout options on health insurance
- Addition of language defining "qualifications" for "Equalization of Overtime" and "Seniority in Scheduling Days Off"
- Clarifying language for "Verification of Sick Leave" and "Bereavement Leave"
- An increase in meal allowances to be consistent with the Greene County Administrative Manual

**CSEA Dispatch and Probation Unit 7002:** The negotiating teams for this bargaining unit began meeting on November 1, 2023, during which the parties exchanged proposals. Additional meetings were held on November 6, 2023, November 30, 2023, and on December 13, 2023 at which time a verbal agreement was reached by the parties. Due to scheduling conflicts and the holidays, the parties had to schedule a subsequent meeting to review the written terms of and sign the MOA, which took place on January 10, 2024. The MOA was brought to the union on February 2, 2024, where it was ratified unanimously by the members. On February 21, 2024, the legislature ratified the MOA. Due to delays in the review of the draft CBA it was not signed until October 17, 2024, although the terms as outlined in the MOA were made effective as of the date the legislature ratified the MOA. The new term for the successor CBA is January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2027. The noteworthy provisions of the contract that were negotiated were:

- Pay rate increases as follows:
  - \$2,500 added to the base salary, plus 4.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2024 (this was applied retroactively)
  - 3.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2025
  - 3.0% for 1/1 – 12/31/2026
  - 2.5% for 1/1 – 12/31/2027
- Change to the employee's contribution to health insurance rates. Per the County's proposal, all those contributing 0% to health insurance remain at 0%. All other employees move to a 12.5% contribution rate effective one month after ratification of CBA by all parties
- Additional increments for longevity payments
- Change to how pay rate steps are calculated when an employee moves to a title in a higher pay grade
- Change to the amounts paid to future employees for buyout options on health insurance
- Addition of language defining "qualifications" for promotions, equalization of overtime, shift assignments, scheduling of work week assignments, scheduling holidays
- Deletion of Election Day and addition of Juneteenth as a paid holiday
- Addition of "Line of Duty Death" provision for Probation Officers
- Addition of a "Dispatcher Compensation for Maintaining Certifications" provision for Dispatchers and Senior Dispatchers
- Addition of a provision for "On-call" in Probation
- Increases for clothing allowance in Emergency Services and firearm stipend in Probation
- An increase in meal allowances to be consistent with the Greene County Administrative Manual

To avoid a delay in ratifying the successor CBA, the parties agreed to move the issue of "Verification of Sick Leave" for the Emergency Services Department to a Labor/Management meeting for further consideration. The parties met on August 22, 2024, to discuss this matter, as well as discussion of

uniforms for Dispatchers and implementation of software for a scheduling system. During that meeting and follow-up emails, the parties agreed to the County's proposal for "Verification of Sick Leave" with a new "status" system being put in place for sick leave use. Additionally, the parties agreed to modify the language of the CBA regarding the initial issue of uniforms and the annual uniform stipend for Dispatchers. The MOA for these two items was signed on January 7, 2025. The scheduling software is being researched, and a determination will be made as to whether a program exists that will work with the terms of the CBA or if one has to be developed.

***Deputy Sheriff's (Council 82):*** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2025.

***Teamsters (Solid Waste Management):*** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2025.

***UPSEU (Nurses):*** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2025.

### **Contract Grievances**

The HR Director was present at all Step 2 grievance meetings at the request of the County Administrator. A total of 8 on-going or new grievances were processed in 2024, which is the same as those processed in 2023. These actions resulted in the following outcomes:

- Denied at Step 1. Settled by MOA at Step 2 – 3
- Denied at Step 2. Demand for Arbitration. Settled on the day of arbitration prior to the start of proceedings. Arbitrator issued Consent Award – 1
- Accepted at Step 1. – 1
- Demand for Arbitration – 1 – Arbitration scheduled for April 2025
- Withdrawn due to change in legislation directly related – 1
- Withdrawn by union – 1

### **Labor-Management Meetings**

The HR Director participated with the County Administrator and/or several department heads in labor-management meetings to discuss a number of department-specific policy development issues and grievance-related matters. Many issues were settled with clear communication and mutual agreements.

### **Management Team Support**

The HR Director continued to be regularly engaged with department heads and supervisors in a consultation and support role regarding staffing and employee relations matters. This continued to be vitally important in 2024 as we battled ongoing recruitment and retention issues while trying to maintain essential services to Greene County residents.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

The HR Director assisted department heads in processing **16** new or continuing disciplinary actions in 2024. This represents a slight increase in disciplinary actions from 15 in 2023. The following is a breakdown of 2024's actions:

- Notice of Discipline – Letter of Reprimand – 1
- Notice of Discipline – 4-day unpaid suspension – 1
- Notice of Discipline – 6-month unpaid suspension – 1
- Letter for Imposed Discipline on a Probationary Employee – 3-day unpaid suspension – 1
- Stipulation in lieu of discipline – loss of 36 hours of vacation leave – 1
- Stipulation in lieu of discipline – letter of reprimand and Performance Improvement Plan – 1



- Stipulation of Settlement in Lieu of Disciplinary Hearing - Performance Improvement Plan/Last Chance Agreement – 1
- Resignation in lieu of discipline – 4
- Termination – 5

### **Workplace Investigations, Administrative Proceedings and Hearings**

The HR Director serves as the County's Sexual Harassment Compliance Officer, the Discriminatory Harassment Compliance Officer, the American with Disabilities Act Co-coordinator in partnership with the County Attorney and is a member of the Workplace Violence Hazard Reduction team. In these capacities, the HR Director participated in a number of workplace investigations, administrative proceedings, and hearings.

### **Employee Awards**

In 2024, the HR Director proposed changes to the Employee Recognition program which were embraced and supported by the Chairman of the Legislature and the County Administrator. The ceremony was moved from June to February so the awards better coincided with the fact that the awards are in recognition of the previous year. Additionally, a new category was added to award a "Team of the Year" in recognition of the collaboration that is often required to bring services to the citizens of Greene County.

HR produced the annual employee awards event on behalf of the Legislature in collaboration with the County Administrator's office. Service award pins and certificates were conferred within the departments and most departmental ceremonies were held in close proximity to the February Legislature meeting to announce the Employee of the Year, Team of the Year, and Chairman's Award Winner. In 2024, an employee from the Mental Health Department was awarded Employee of the Year recognition for more than 20 years of outstanding work, support and dedication to the mission of the department. The Team of the Year recognition was given to employees from the County Clerk's Office and the Real Property Tax Services Department for their work in digitizing the process to distribute real property transfer reports, deeds and miscellaneous documents to Town Assessors, saving copy costs, postage and staff time. Finally, the Chairman's Award was given to an employee in the County Attorney's Office for outstanding work ethic and dedication to supporting the operations of the department.

## **STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

HR coordinated the following on-line classes in 2024, and continued to administer a database to track employee participation in County-sponsored compliance (i.e., sexual harassment and discrimination harassment training, workplace violence prevention, Active Shooter, HIPAA, Title VI, etc.) and other training:

### **Sexual Harassment Prevention**

In 2024, the HR department continued to facilitate compliance with the annual sexual harassment prevention training and related mandates as set forth in the 2018 New York State Budget. As was the case in 2023 HR provided the mandated training in an on-line format for all Greene County staff members and elected officials in 2024. HR staff utilized a known resource with whom the County already had an affiliation that offers access to its entire database of on-line classes and related tools at no cost.

*NOTE: NYS Human Rights Law also protects those providing services in the workplace from sexual harassment. Therefore, the policies and an acknowledgement form were also made available by the County Attorney's Office to contractors, subcontractors, vendors, consultants or others providing services to Greene County. These documents can be found in the Legal Notices section of the Greene County website.*

### **Workplace Violence Prevention Training**

The HR team took over coordination of the mandated Workplace Violence Prevention Training from the County Attorney's office in 2021. Utilizing the on-line platform, this training was assigned with the Sexual Harassment Prevention training giving employees the opportunity to complete both trainings at their convenience.

The following rates of completion were achieved in 2024 for the employees enrolled in the mandated training courses:

- NYS Discrimination and Harassment Training: 562 enrolled; 350 completed
- Sexual Harassment Training: 555 enrolled; 360 completed
- Workplace Violence Prevention Training: 546 enrolled; 360 completed
- Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act for Municipalities: 63 enrolled; 30 completed
- Bloodborne Pathogens Training: 430 enrolled; 225 completed

HR's goal is to continuously strive to achieve 100% completion rate for these mandated training courses. New protocols will be established to increase communication between the HR team and department liaisons to drastically increase completion rates for 2025.

### **Training Records**

A new project started by the HR team in 2024 was the digitization of all training records. Due to the need to reduce paper in the employees' personnel files, training records are now being scanned into a centralized digital location and a "Training Transcript" has been created for each employee. Individual certificates are kept in a digital format but for personnel record keeping, all trainings are listed in a single document. All past records will be scanned by the end of 2025 and this new procedure will be continued for future trainings.

### **New York State Association of Personnel and Civil Service Officers (NYSAPCSO) 2024 Annual Conference**

The HR Director attended the NYSAPCSO Annual Conference held in Saratoga Springs, NY from June 9-12, 2024. The topics covered during the conference were:

- Updates from NYS Civil Service: Civil Service Administration, Special Projects/Initiatives
- Navigating the Fork in the Road when it Comes to Employee Discipline Versus Mental or Physical Incompetence
- Navigating the FLSA Pregnant Workers Fairness Act
- Rules Resolutions and Appendices Changes
- The Rochester Police Department Workforce Development Program: Developing Tomorrow's Community Leaders
- Driving and Embracing Change with a Positive Mindset
- Merit System Transformation
- Bridging the Gap in a Generational Workforce
- How Effective Payroll Certifications Can Help You Anticipate Vacancies and Recruitment Needs
- Persons with Disabilities: An Untapped Resource
- Recruitment Strategies using Decentralized Exam Programs
- "Town Hall" Meeting with the NYS Civil Service Commissioner

In addition to the valuable information obtained from the various sessions held, the HR Director was able to network with her peers, which is the most valuable part of this conference as we continue to move through uncertain times necessitating new and innovative policies and procedures.

### **HR Team Training**

The HR team participated in a number of professional development trainings throughout 2024. Topics included:

- HR Strategies
  - Social Medica Policies and the First Amendment
  - Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training
  - Accessibility for State and Local Government Funded Facilities
  - Disability Etiquette
  - ADA & Employment Overview
  - Key Considerations for Recruiting and Hiring Job Seekers with Disabilities
  - Making the Business Case: Strategy for Promoting ADA Implementation
  - Labor and Employment Law Academy – FMLA and PFL – Real World Playbook
  - Labor and Employment Law Academy – If Managing Employees Were Easy, Everyone Would Do It
  - Labor and Employment Law Academy – Leaves and Other Common Reasonable Accommodation Concerns
  - Labor and Employment Law Academy – Untangling the Web of Employee Misclassification Issues
  - Labor and Employment Law Academy – 50 Ways to “Leave” Your Employer
- New York State Retirement
  - NYSLRS Employer Education Seminar
- Employee Benefits
  - Affordable Care Act Information reporting 1094/1095
  - Employee Benefits Trends: Insights & Innovation from the 2024 Employee Benefits Survey
  - Avoid Hidden Risks: Keep your organization compliant, safe & secure
  - How to build & execute a benefits strategy
  - Building your 2025 HR Priorities: A game plan for the future
  - FMLA, ADA & Workers Compensation & navigating the Bermuda Triangle of Leave
  - Flexible Spending Account
    - How HR can help employees use their FSA funds before runout periods
- Leadership
  - Burnout: How its Affecting the workforce & HR Professionals
  - Employee Engagement – The work life balance
  - AI & HR: A Balancing Act
  - Sustainability Strategies to help you future proof your work place
  - Workplace Etiquette: Promoting Professionalism in your organization

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

The HR team is always striving to improve the services provided to Greene County's employees, retirees and members of the public while streamlining our procedures. Looking ahead to 2025, our team has set the following goals:

### **1. Digitization:**

- The continuing goal for 2024 into 2025 is to digitize all closed roster records.
- Continuing review and updating of all active job specifications with the end goal of having them available on HR's webpage.
- Updating the Civil Service Rules for Greene County and the Greene County Civil Service Commission Rules Appendices so they can be placed on HR's webpage.
- Working with the Records Management Director towards Greene County's common goal of the digitization of all records. This will be a daunting task as we have identified over 150 boxes dating back to the 1940s that were not properly labeled. The HR Director will send team members to the Records building to sort through the boxes and determine what documents must be retained and those that can be scheduled for destruction.
- Completion of digitizing all training records in active employees' files to establish a "Training Transcript" rather than individual training certificates. This goal is two-fold: freeing up space in the physical personnel files and providing all training records in one location.
- As noted in this report, we will continue to work towards implementation of our Civil Service software and will work to have our exam and employment application process fully available online by the end of 2025.

### **2. Training:**

- Continue training for all employees in accordance with NYS law and train as many staff as possible in an on-line format with a goal of 100% completion rate.
- Work with the Safety Officer to coordinate mandatory Occupational Safety & Health - Mandated Training - Active Shooter.
- Have both Human Resource & Civil Service Aides attend the NYS Civil Service Institute in 2025.

### **3. EAP:**

- Think creatively of ways to rejuvenate our efforts to increase utilization of this valuable resource for employee well-being. Work with our vendor to update material and notify employees on a monthly basis of the resources available to them.

### **4. Civil Service Payroll Certifications:**

- A continued goal is to bring all appointing authorities up to date on their payroll certifications. We will work closely with the appointing authority to compare records and identify missing information, including on-site visits to the appointing authority if needed.

As the HR Director, I cannot express how proud I am of the work the HR team was able to accomplish this year. This was an exceptionally busy year implementing changes to benefit carriers and the changes to CBAs while continuing to battle the turnover in the staff of the team. However, through it all, we continued to provide vital services to the residents of Greene County. We look forward to all that 2025 has in store and the many exciting projects our team is working on. We will continue to conquer challenges while improving on our success through innovative thinking and improved efficiency.