

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

## **2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

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March 23, 2022

GREENE COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT  
AND  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
  
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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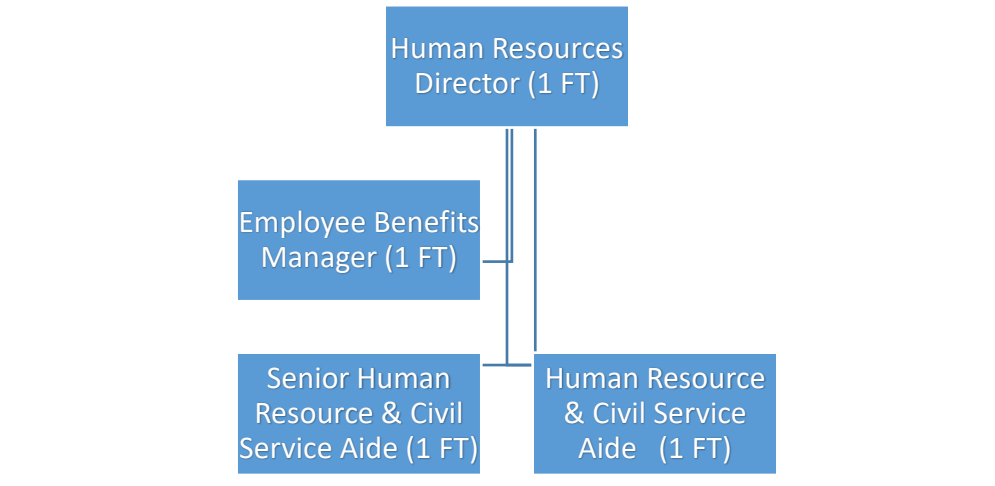
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## **HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

**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.

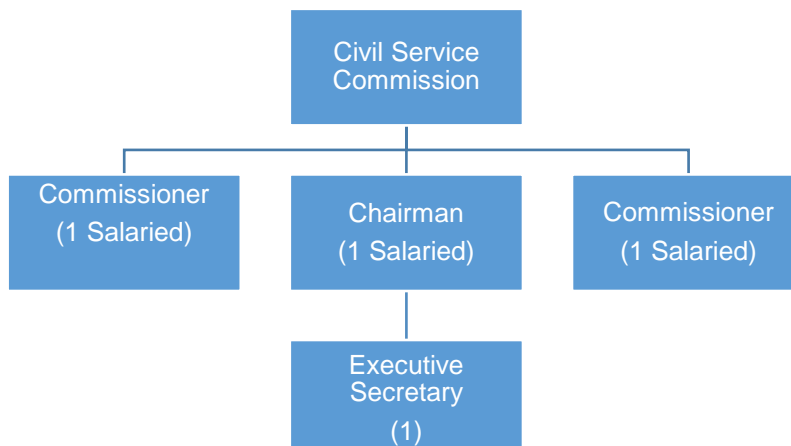
### **HUMAN RESOURCES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



**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 2021**

Greene County Human Resources (HR) plays an important role in Greene County Government and that role continued to be vital during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that required all of us to change the way we delivered services in 2021. The HR team delivers employment-related resources and addresses the information needs of staff, as well as serving our retirees, prospective employees, and other customers.

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.

In September 2020, the Greene County Legislature voted to consolidate the Civil Service Department and the Human Resources Department upon the retirement of the Human Resources Director. The Civil Service Commission would stand as its own entity but the departments would combine under the direction of one leader. For budgetary reasons, the departments remained separate on paper through December 31, 2020, but the daily operations and staff combined effective September 7, 2020. Beginning January 1, 2021, HR officially incorporated all of the personnel and civil service duties for Greene County.

The HR team has the unique opportunity to work together with all employees throughout their County careers, from recruitment of candidates for vacancies through assisting our retirees with their continuing benefits. We enjoy our interaction with the almost 565 active County employees and approximately 350 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 1,100 employees for 2021. In total, the HR team works together to provide civil service and personnel services, information and assistance to approximately 1,664 active employees and 350 retirees.

During 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to provide hurdles to the way business had always been conducted but the HR team adapted as we began to return to a “normal” Civil Service testing schedule and backfilling vacancies that had been placed on hold. This was the year of playing “catch up” and the HR team worked tirelessly, even as the decision was made not to fill a vacancy within our own department. We went from a staff of six when Civil Service and Human Resources were stand-alone departments, to a staff of four and you will see in the report that follows, we worked hard to accomplish quite a bit in 2021.

## **COVID-19**

On March 15, 2020, the Chairman of the Greene County Legislature declared a State of Emergency in Greene County “due to the threat to public safety produced by the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 Virus, affecting all portions of the jurisdiction.” The declaration was extended on a monthly basis through June 4, 2021 when it was rescinded. However, COVID-19 kept the HR team very busy through the duration of 2021.

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

Effective December 31, 2020, the Federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) expired. 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 at least 14 days of paid sick leave to employees who are subject to a mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine or isolation issued by the State of New York, state or local department/board of health, or any governmental entity authorized to issue such orders due to COVID-19 (“quarantine or isolation.”) Since the FFCRA leave benefits were “equal or greater than those in the NYS bill”, those provisions applied in

most cases in 2020. With the expiration of the FFCRA on December 31, 2020, Greene County employees were only covered by the NYS EPSL in 2021. One of the most important provisions of the state law is that there is no expiration date, a large difference from the federal legislation.

On January 4, 2021, the HR Director sent a memo to all staff notifying them that the requirements and benefits of employer paid emergency sick leave under the FFCRA expired on December 31, 2020 but the NYS COVID-19 paid sick leave law does not have an expiration date and would be available to employees. The memo clarified that under the NYS law, employees are eligible to receive employer paid leave at their regular rate of pay for 14 calendar days (10 workdays) when the employee is subject to an order of isolation or quarantine issued by a state or local health department. It also noted that the key differences in the leave that was available under the FFCRA and the NYS law were that the NYS law does not require employer paid sick leave for the following:

- A quarantine or isolation recommended by a health care provider
- Leave to care for a family member who is subject to a quarantine or sick with COVID-19
- An employee who is symptomatic and seeking a diagnosis
- Leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed for COVID related reasons
- Quarantine required by the state due to an employee's personal travel to a non-contiguous state or a foreign country on the CDC's level 2 or 3 list

In order to process the employer paid leave under NYS EPSL, the HR Director developed a "Request for Emergency Paid Sick Leave under COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Law" form for employees to complete when requesting paid leave. The form was disseminated to all Department Heads, was placed on the Employee Portal and, when appropriate, was emailed directly to affected employees.

During 2021, the HR Director processed **180** reports of employees subject to an order of isolation or quarantine. A total of **146 requests were approved for a total of 6,778.5 hours of EPSL granted**, up from 77 requests that were approved for employer paid leave during 2020. Due to the employee having the ability to quarantine on-site or the employee being granted the ability to telework, **32 of our employees who were quarantined did not need to utilize EPSL**. A total of **two requests for EPSL were denied** due to use of the maximum hours permissible under the law.

A 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 was developed by the HR team in 2020 but was utilized to its fullest during 2021. This system allowed us to track employees and assist departments with scheduling and entering payroll. Tracking became extremely important as the new variants of the virus caused a spike in employees being isolated or quarantined, some for a second or third time. EPSL has limitations on the amount of time available to employees after their initial allotment, as outlined in the HR Director's December 28, 2021 memo to all employees explained. The HR tracking system allowed us to work with employees and their departments to ensure their absences were either paid by EPSL or from their benefit accruals when necessary.

Additionally, the system allowed us to work with the Public Health staff to quickly identify employees who needed to isolate or quarantine to eliminate unnecessary exposure of additional staff within the employee's department.

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

On March 15, 2021, the HR Director issued a memo to all employees to inform them that effective March 12, 2021, in accordance with NYS Civil Service Law, as amended to add Section 159-c, Greene County employees are 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 is paid leave and not charged against any other leave the employee is otherwise entitled to. The four hours per vaccine injection includes travel time to and from the appointment. Any time taken in excess of the four (4) hours per vaccine injection entitlement is chargeable to available leave credits. Employees must submit a copy of their vaccination card directly to the HR Department as proof of proper use of this leave. The documentation is placed in the employee's medical file and the HR Director notifies the Department Head that proper documentation has been received. **This leave entitlement expires on December 31, 2022.**

### **COVID-19 Vaccination Mandates**

#### ***NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) Vaccination Mandate for all Article 28 Facilities and***

***Diagnostic Treatment Centers:*** On August 26, 2021, NYSDOH mandated COVID-19 vaccination for all Diagnostic and Treatment Centers and Article 28 Facility staff, which included the staff employed in or assigned to work with or at Greene County Public Health. NYSDOH defined personnel for the purpose of this mandate as "all persons employed or affiliated with a covered entity, whether paid or unpaid, including but not limited to employees, members of the medical and nursing staff, contract staff, students, and volunteers, who engage in activities such that if they were infected with COVID-19, they could potentially expose other covered personnel, patients or residents to the disease." All personnel within this definition were required to receive their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine by October 7, 2021. New York State Immunization Information System confirmation was required to be submitted to the HR Director as proof of vaccination by the deadline.

The HR Director assisted the County Administrator in clarifying the terms of the mandate and drafting his September 9, 2021 memo to the affected staff, as well as his September 30, 2021 reminder letters to those staff members who had not yet received the required first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally the HR Director developed the "Request for Accommodation: Medical Exemption from Vaccination" form for use by staff seeking a medical exemption from this mandate (this mandate did not provide for those covered by the mandate to seek a religious exemption). Although there were staff who requested the form, no medical exemptions were submitted for this mandate.

#### ***Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff***

***Vaccination Interim Final Rule:*** On November 4, 2021, CMS issued an emergency regulation mandating the COVID-19 vaccination for Medicare- and Medicaid-certified providers' staff. CMS defined staff for the purpose of this mandate as "all current staff as well as any new staff, who provide any care, treatment, or other services for the facility and/or its patients: facility employees; licensed practitioners; students, trainees, and volunteers; and individuals who provide care, treatment, or other services for the facility and/or its patients, under contract or other arrangement." CMS further stated that it was "necessary to require vaccination for all staff that interact with other staff, patients, residents, clients, or PACE program participants in any location, beyond those that physically enter facilities, clinics, homes, or other sites of care." Pursuant to this definition of staff, the HR Director assisted the County Administrator in drafting his November 9, 2021 memo to "All staff in or assigned to work with or at Greene County Mental Health" and his November 12, 2021 memo to the Executive Director of Greene County Soil and Water who is a tenant in the building housing Greene County Mental Health. These memos explained the terms of the CMS mandate stating that all staff, as defined by CMS, were required to receive their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine by December 5, 2021 and needed to complete the vaccination series by January 4, 2022.

The HR Director developed a medical exemption request form and a religious exemption request form specific to this mandate for use by affected staff. Five affected employees submitted requests for religious exemption to the mandate. While the exemption requests were being reviewed by the HR Director and the County Attorney, Greene County received notification from the NYSDOH and NYS

Office of Mental Hygiene that the CMS mandate **did not apply** to the staff of Greene County Mental Health. As a result, the HR Director assisted the County Administrator in drafting his November 29, 2021 memos to “All staff in or assigned to work with or at Greene County Mental Health” and the Executive Director of Greene County Soil and Water stating that the mandate was not applicable. Additionally, the County Attorney notified those employee that had submitted religious exemption requests that the mandate was not applicable to them and, therefore, a determination did not need to be issued in response to their requests.

Although many hours of work were spent on research and preparation to implement this mandate, the HR Director was relieved that action did not need to be taken.

***Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS):***  
On November 4, 2021, OSHA issued an ETS requiring private employers (with 100 employees or more) to implement and enforce a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination program for its employees or adopt a policy that requires at least weekly testing and masking for employees who choose not to get vaccinated. While OSHA does not have jurisdiction over public employers, New York State administers an OSHA state plan in accordance with the Public Employees Safety and Health (PESH) Act. Pursuant to this act, PESH is required to adopt a rule that is either identical to the OSHA ETS or one that is at least as protective as the OSHA ETS.

In anticipation of PESH adopting the OSHA ETS, the HR Director assisted the County Administrator in drafting his November 10, 2021 memo to “All Greene County employees” requesting that all vaccinated employees, both fully and partially vaccinated, submit proof of COVID-19 vaccination directly to the HR Director. The information was requested to assist the HR Director in developing certain procedures that would be needed to produce a policy for testing unvaccinated employees. The thought was that the HR team could not determine what kind of procedures would be necessary until we could determine how many employees would require testing.

While the HR team was working diligently to develop a fair testing policy that fulfilled the requirements of the OSHA ETS, the ETS was challenged in a number of Courts of Appeals and the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit of the Federal Court implemented a stay on enforcement of the ETS. Ultimately the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court lifted the stay allowing enforcement of the ETS. A challenge was submitted to the United States Supreme Court seeking emergency relief, with the challengers arguing that OSHA exceeded its statutory authority with the ETS. Although the Supreme Court’s decision wasn’t issued in 2021, I’ll provide you with the spoiler that the justices blocked the ETS. Therefore, Greene County did not have to finalize a testing policy for those employees who choose not to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

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

Pursuant to the need to track vaccination status due to the NYSDOH mandate, the employer paid leave for COVID-19 vaccination, and the potential mandates we began to prepare for, the HR team developed a system and began recording all COVID-19 vaccination records for employees and non-employees from outside agencies who volunteered to submit their immunization record to our department. This consisted of 31 departments and 15 satellite locations; accounting for approximately 564 employees. In addition we tracked approximately 43 non-employees from outside agencies. In total we collected and entered data for 358 immunization records received.

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

***Masking/Face Coverings:*** Throughout the pandemic, directives and guidelines for masking/face coverings was an ever-changing and controversial topic. The HR Director continued to track all changes and ensure that our employees were informed and adhering to the updates.

- Assisted the County Administrator with his May 18, 2021 memo to all staff with updated guidance from the Governor regarding lifting the masking requirement for those employees who were fully vaccinated (with the exception of those employed in Public Health, Mental Health and the Jail). The memo explained that while not requiring proof of vaccine status, the County expected employees who were not fully vaccinated to adhere to the requirement to continue to wear a mask.
- Assisted the County Administrator with his December 10, 2021 memo to all staff regarding NYSDOH's updated guidelines requiring all employees and members of the public to wear a mask or face covering in all County owned facilities and vehicles.

**Travel Guidelines:** The HR Director continued to monitor the travel guidelines issued by the New York State Department of Health for travel outside of New York State and assisted the County Administrator in keeping employees up-to-date on any changes to the requirements for domestic or foreign travel. Additionally, the Director received the documentation required when an employee did travel outside of New York and provided verification to Department Heads as to when an employee could return to work.

- Memos issued by the County Administrator on February 10 & 11, 2021 advising that travel to all states, excluding states contiguous to New York, and CDC assigned Level 2 countries required certain quarantine periods. The memo also informed employees that while not normally required, travel plans needed to be reported to their department heads and required documentation upon return from travel needed to be submitted to the HR Director.
- Memo from the County Administrator on April 1, 2021 advising all employees of the lifting of the required quarantine period for domestic travel. The memo also advised of the continued CDC restrictions for international travel.

**Waiver of Filing Period for Retirement.** In 2020, the Governor issued an Executive Order waiving the required 15-day filing period for retirement applications to NYS Local Retirement System (LRS). Under the Executive Order, employees were required to have their application on file one day prior to the effective date of retirement. The Employee Benefits Manager continued to be in contact with NYSLRS to stay updated on when the Executive Order was extended and the HR Director sent memos to departments for posting each time an extension was issued. The Executive Order was extended on a biweekly basis through June 28, 2021 when it was rescinded and the 15-day filing period took effect again. The HR Director sent a final memo on this topic on the same date informing employees of the update to the filing period.

As in 2020, COVID-19 presented challenges to all Greene County departments and employees, requiring an enormous amount of time and attention from the HR team. However, our team was thrilled to get back to the work we love and take pride in; assisting employees, retirees and the public with personnel, benefit related and civil service matters. As you will see in the next sections, we were busy but successful in our mission.

## **CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

### **Commission Meetings**

The Greene County Civil Service Commission historically has met on the fourth Thursday of every month at 10:00 a.m. Due to scheduling conflicts for the Executive Secretary to the Commission, the Commission changed the meeting dates to the fourth Wednesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. beginning with the September 2021 Commission meeting.



The Commissioners conducted 12 regular monthly commission meetings. As outlined below, many actions take place during the Commission meetings such as: 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 her/him 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. The following chart reflects this Commission's actions on position classification over the last three years:

	2021	2020	2019
<b>Positions Created</b>	12	9	18
<b>Positions Revised</b>	33	31	16

The significant increase in the number of positions revised in 2020 and 2021 is a result of the ongoing review of all active job descriptions. This review is part of the HR team's goal of having all job descriptions available on our website.

### **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 of your 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 reported by appointing authorities, resulted in a number of requests for examinations in 2021. Scheduling of exams was impacted by the reduced capacity and limited availability of testing facilities due to COVID-19. Additionally, new screening protocols were put in place for the Greene County testing site to ensure safe administration of the exams amidst COVID-19.

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

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

2021	2020	2019
53	37	53

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

Exam Type	2021	2020* Scheduled for Administration	2020* Actually Administered	2019
Open-Competitive	20	20	12	35
Promotion	13	7	4	14
ATAP (Library Series)	4	1	1	3

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

<b>Exam Type</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Open-Competitive	2	3	5
Continuous Recruitment: Caseworker/Caseworker Trainee*	4	4 (2 postponed due to COVID-19)	N/A
Information Technology Training & Experience	1	0	0
Continuous Recruitment Training & Experience	2	2	3

\*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, 2021, 52 exams requested from NYS Civil Service had yet to be administered. Of those, 20 have been assigned exam dates in 2022 by NYS Civil Service. NYS Civil Service reduced the number of exams scheduled for the 2021-2022 exam season due to a continued reduction in their staff working on-site and reduced capacity and availability of testing facilities at the local civil service level. We are hopeful that the 2022-2023 testing season is a return to a pre-pandemic level.

#### **Candidate Information**

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

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Total Candidates (all exams)</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>455</b>
<b>Total: Centralized (Open-Competitive &amp; Promotion)</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>415</b>
Centralized – Passed	103	56	343
Centralized – Failed	15	5	16
Centralized – Disqualified/Withdrew	7	8	31
Centralized – Failed to Appear	33	13	25
<b>Total: Decentralized</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>
Decentralized – Passed	15	27	23
Decentralized – Failed	2	6	3
Decentralized – Disqualified/Withdrew	1	1	2
Decentralized – Failed to Appear	4	6	9
<b>Total: Continuous Recruitment</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>
Continuous Recruitment - Passed	12	15	3
Continuous Recruitment – Failed	0	2	0
Continuous Recruitment – Disqualified/Withdrew	1	1	0
Continuous Recruitment – Failed to Appear	1	2	0
Continuous Recruitment – Postponed to 2022 Exam Date	1	N/A	N/A
<b>Information Technology Training &amp; Experience</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The number of candidates participating in Civil Service exams has dropped dramatically across New York State. NYS Civil Service and the local Civil Service agencies are working together on recruitment

strategies such as on-line testing and more Training & Experience evaluations. The NYS Civil Service staff returned to work on-site early in 2022 and has a new staff member directing Testing Services. The Commission is hoping to collaborate with NYS Civil Service staff and increase the number of candidates participating in Greene County Civil Service exams in 2022.

### **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 a 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 2021 Exam Fee Billing Report to NYS Civil Service on February 2, 2022. NYS Civil Service certified the report on February 10, 2022 and a check in the amount of \$1,460.00 was submitted to NYS Civil Service on February 11, 2022. 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>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019*</b>
<b>Total Exam Fees Collected</b>	<b>\$3,015.00</b>	<b>\$2,600.00</b>	<b>\$8,570.00</b>
Uniformed Exam Fees Collected	\$1,075.00	\$950.00	\$4,500.00
Uniformed Exam Fee Waivers	0	1	4
Non-uniform Exam Fees Collected	\$1,940.00	\$1,650.00	\$4,070.00
Non-uniform Exam Fee Waivers	3	5	8

\*The large increase in fees collected for 2019 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 has ordered the exams for 2022. NYS Civil Service has tentatively scheduled an early September 2022 date for these exams.

### **Eligible Lists**

Every candidate who attains a passing mark on a Greene County Civil Service examination is eligible for appointment to the position for which s/he was examined and his/her name shall be entered on the eligible list in order of his/her 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.

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>2021*</b>	<b>2020*</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Total Eligible Lists Established</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>57</b>
- Open-Competitive	21	25	43
- Promotion	7	4	7
- Non-Competitive Promotion	6	7	7
<b>Eligible Lists Extended</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>

\*The numbers for 2020 and 2021 are significantly lower pursuant to the number of exams that were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **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 his/her willingness to accept such appointment within five business days of the date of the canvass letter, s/he is considered ineligible for selection for appointment. When a candidate fails to respond to two successive canvass letters, his/her name is restricted from consideration from the eligible list. The candidate may request that his/her 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 2021, the Commission conducted the canvassing process for 41 vacancies within the appointing authorities served and issued 36 certifications of names. The discrepancy in the number of certification of names and the number of canvassings is a result of some canvassings not resulting in any candidates to issue a certification of names.

### **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 instances 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.

During 2021, the Commission was able to certify the payroll for all appointing authorities that fall under its jurisdiction. This is the first time that has happened in over 10 years.

### **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 11, 2022, Greene County's 2021 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, 2021.

	Greene County Departments	Public Libraries & Special Districts (7)	School Districts (6)	Towns (14)	Villages (5)
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>144</b>
Permanent Competitive	321	27	92	26	28
Provisional	39	5	17	4	4
Non-Competitive	121	24	281	207	76
Exempt	20	1	17	49	6
Labor	18	1	148	65	30
Temporary	2	0	0	0	0

As you can see from the table above, the Greene County Civil Service Commission has jurisdiction over **1,629 employees, an increase of 3.43%** over the 1,575 employees in 2020.

### **STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT**

#### **Personnel Changes**

The HR team continued to fulfill one of our most significant responsibilities; personnel changes. These changes include, but are not limited to processing employment applications, completing the onboarding process and paperwork for new hires, and processing retirements, promotions, inter-departmental transfers, appointments of current County employees to different titles in different departments, resignations, and terminations.

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. One change implemented in 2021 was to send the 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 change was made to work towards a paperless notification 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.

Typically, vacancies are filled from a Civil Service eligible list or an internal posting at a higher rate than those filled as a result of advertising. 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 are encouraged to wait for an eligible list to be established rather than appointing provisionally.

During 2020, the County Administrator issued a hiring “freeze” that coincided with the reduction of in-person staffing and rotating scheduled on-site work for many County Departments. Appointments to all non-essential vacancies were put on hold. The hiring “freeze” was modified to a hiring “chill” early in the fall of 2020 allowing Department Heads to move forward with filling outstanding vacancies for needed positions as employees returned on-site in larger percentages.

The hiring “freeze” and “chill” resulted in a lower number of “New Hires” for 2020. Starting midway through 2021 the hiring “chill” was lifted and it was time to start filling vacancies that had been put on hold. The chart below demonstrates a return to business as usual for us regarding processing personnel changes:

	New Hires	Change in Title*	Rehired	Resigned	Retired	Terminated	Deceased	Total
2019	66		12	41	17	9	0	145
2020	39		3	27	10	10	1	90
2021	60	32	9	39	3	5	0	148

\*This is a new category being tracked by the HR team for 2021 consisting of promotional and non-promotional changes in title for existing employees.

### **Pre-employment Screenings**

Once a conditional offer of employment has been made to a candidate, HR orders a background check, 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 him/her 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 began being conducted in 2021 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 collaborated with Department Heads, the County Administrator and the Civil Service Commission on promotional staffing needs as the County backfilled vacancies that had been put on hold. As part of this process the HR Director continued to evaluate 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 22 promotional appointments during 2021.

### **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. One member from each department was scheduled to participate in the annual "Adult Skills Day" at Cossackie-Athens High School (C-A HS) in March. Unfortunately, the school district had to conduct this event virtually due to the COVID pandemic. The HR Director participated in virtual events with four different classes at C-A HS to provide information and answer questions. The HR team has been invited to the C-A HS Adult Skills Day for 2022 and will attend this event in person. We look forward to expanding our outreach to additional local school districts.

### **Reclassifications/Reallocations**

In 2020 the Greene County Legislature passed a resolution to update the Administrative Manual regarding the Reclassification/Reallocation process to comply with NYS Civil Service Law Section 22 and Greene County Civil Service Rule XXIII providing the Civil Service Commission with the authority to reclassify or reallocate positions/titles. In 2021, three 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 to approve two of the requests and deny one of the requests. The County Administrator acted upon the recommendations of the Commission.

Additionally, in 2021 one request was submitted to the Commission for reclassification of a position. Upon review of the supporting documentation, the Commission recommended reclassification of the position to a new title 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 create a new title, which was adopted by the Commission, and assign the corresponding pay grade.

By comparison, there were no requests for Reclassification/Reallocation submitted for consideration in 2020.

### **Salary Analysis**

The HR director works very closely with the County Administrator with regard to 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 comparison of salary, duties and qualifications of similar titles used by the County or may require comparison 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 2021, the HR Director conducted 15 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. With the changes to the salary rates contained in the CBAs that were settled in 2020, there were a number of encroachment issues that needed to be addressed. The HR Director worked with the County Administrator to correct these issues by the end of January 2021.

### **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 1/1/2020. During 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the contractor who performs our random drug screening for these groups of employees from coming on site. The HR Director has been in contact with the vendor to resume these services during 2022. 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.

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

The Senior 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. 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**

HR continued to send out quarterly reminders and to monitor the completion of employee performance appraisals by department managers and supervisors. HR encourages completion of performance appraisals to assist employees in addressing deficiencies in the performance of their duties, and to assist departments with performance needs.

In 2021, 109 performance appraisals were submitted to HR, almost a 13% decrease from the 125 that were submitted in 2020. The HR team continues to convey the importance of completed performance evaluations via the quarterly email reminders to Department Heads and during the monthly Department Head meetings in the hopes of increasing the number submitted in 2022.

### **Employee Exit Survey**

HR provides employees the opportunity to complete a survey upon retirement or voluntary separation from employment. In 2020, the survey was completely redesigned, including changing the name from Employee Exit Questionnaire to Employee Exit Survey and emphasizing the confidential nature of the survey. The procedure for distribution was updated 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 s/he completely "checks 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 provided 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.

Due to low response rates in previous years, the HR team set a goal for 2021 to increase the return rate 10% for 2021. In 2020, 54 surveys were distributed to 15 employees at retirement, 30 employees who resigned and 9 employees who were terminated. Of the 54 surveys, 8 were returned to HR, a return rate of 14.81% for 2020. In 2021, 44 surveys were distributed; 3 to employees at retirement, 36 to employees upon resignation and 5 to terminated employees. **Of the 44 surveys distributed, 14 were returned providing a return rate of almost 32% and a 75% increase in the number returned from 2020 to**

**2021!** The HR team did a great job of smashing our goal for 2021 but will continue to think creatively about ways to generate an even higher return rate.

### **Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for Greene County**

Pursuant to NYS legislation (S8617B/A10832) signed into law on September 7, 2020, Greene County was required to create a Public Employer Health Emergency Plan, which was similar to a Continuation of Operations Plan but had additional information that was required for each Greene County Department. A draft had to be provided to our bargaining units within 150 days of signature of the legislation (approximately February 1, 2021) and the final plan had to be provided to employees and the public by April 1, 2021. The HR Director collected required information from Department Heads, the Safety Officer, the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and the Emergency Planner Coordinator to draft the required plan and submitted a draft to all of the bargaining units on February 2, 2021 as required by the legislation.

Once the HR Director incorporated the suggested revisions from the bargaining units, Department Heads, County Administrator, County Legislature Chairman, County Attorney, and Labor Relations Attorney the final version was submitted to the County Legislature Chairman on March 31, 2021 for signature. A copy of the signed document was then placed on the employee portal for reference, sent to the bargaining units and sent to Department Heads.

### **HR Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) As Annexed to the Greene County (COOP)**

Late in June 2021, the County Administrator and the Emergency Planner Coordinator announced to all Department Heads that Greene County would be creating a COOP and that each individual department's COOP would be annexed to the larger County COOP. The vendor used to create the new COOP worked with the HR Director to review and update the information from the 2020 HR COOP. The updated document is much more detailed and provides information gleaned from operation during the COVID-19 pandemic. On October 22, 2021 the HR COOP was finalized for inclusion in the Greene County COOP.

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

The HR Director responded to a request in May 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 2021 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. Historically, the report is due by September 30<sup>th</sup> of the survey year. Due to the pandemic, the deadlines for all EEO reporting were pushed back and the on-line site to complete the reporting was not opened to the reporting agencies until November 2, 2021. HR generated the data necessary to complete the EEO-4 survey instrument on-line, then submitted it to the federal government electronically on December 28, 2021 in advance of the January 4, 2022 deadline.

### **Miscellaneous Policies and Forms**

In 2021, the HR team developed and/or amended the following policies and forms:

1. Created a Telecommuting Policy and a Telecommuting Agreement Form for those employees needing to work from home. Both documents were placed on the Employee Portal for convenient access. Approval of each request to telecommute is at the sole discretion of the

County Administrator. In 2021, four agreements were approved while two requests were denied.

2. Created the Special Accommodations Request Form to allow candidates applying for a Greene County Civil Service exam to request special accommodations. All requests must have supporting documentation. Requests are then forwarded to NYS Civil Service for a final determination.
3. Drafted the revision to the Greene County Administrative Manual regarding Military Leave for Management/Confidential employees. The revision was adopted by the Greene County Legislature on August 18, 2021.
4. Revised approval memos for Family Medical Leave Act requests to remove unnecessary information and to clarify the actual dates of leave.
5. Updated new hire “welcome” letters to clarify if the employee had taken the County’s health insurance or the buyout.
6. Created Medical Exemption Request forms for the NYSDOH and CMS COVID-19 vaccine mandates and the Religious Exemption Request form for the CMS COVID-19 vaccine mandate.
7. Implemented use of the Request for Emergency Paid Sick Leave under NYS COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Law for use by employees to request employer paid leave due to COVID-19 pursuant to state legislation upon the expiration of the leave granted under FFCRA.

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

The HR Director collected data for the County Attorney in response to a number of 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 the Sheriff’s Office. In 2021, the HR Director responded to 21 such requests from the DA’s Office.

### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

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

Greene County’s self-insured health insurance plan, resulted in many ACA reporting/tracking changes. HR 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 2021 for **approximately 1450 Greene County employees, retirees and dependents:**

- 1) Medicare Advantage Plan
- 2) Non-deductible PPO and EPO
- 3) Deductible PPO and EPO

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, however there were plan changes effective 1/1/2021. Prescription drugs which consisted of a 3 tier interval changed to \$10/ \$30/ \$45. Formerly the rates were \$5/ \$15/ \$25. Mandatory mail order was also implemented effective 1/1/2021 unless a member preferred to use CVS Pharmacy for their maintenance medications and have medications prescribed as a 90 day refill. Additionally, office visit copays for Primary Care Physician and Specialist copays changed effective 1/1/2021 from \$15 to \$20 per office visit. Approximately 142 members (including dependents) were issued new ID cards in addition to new vision cards.

***Medicare Advantage Plan (MAP):*** The carrier for our MAP plan, Empire BlueCross BlueShield MediBlue Freedom PPO with Senior Rx remained the same. However there were plan changes effective 1/1/2021. This included copays for prescription drugs which consisted of a 4 tier interval. In 2020 the copays were \$0/ \$5/ \$10/ \$10 while effective 1/1/2021, rates changed to \$0/ \$5/ \$10/ \$30. Approximately 371 members were issued new ID cards in addition to new vision cards.

HR continues to monitor when benefit eligible retirees and their benefit eligible dependents become qualified for Medicare Part B in order to appropriately transfer 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.

***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 486 mailings by 10/9/2020 for the 2021 plan year. The HR Department also fulfilled the on-line 2021 Notice of Disclosure to CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) requirement by 2/3/2022.

***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 employees enrolled for 1/1/2021 were 113, but with dependent tracking added, the total number of enrollees in the County Health Insurance Buyout was 333. A buyout cap continued to be set for all bargaining units except AFSCME. 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 2021. The only modification effective 7/1/2021 was to the management dental subgroup. The changes consisted of fillings on all teeth

for composite and amalgam type fillings. Notification and updated Dental Plan Documents were sent out to approximately 102 members on 6/28/2021. Dental rates remained the same.

### **Vision Insurance**

The Vision insurance carrier changed effective 1/1/2021 to BlueView Vision, formerly Vision Service Plan (VSP). New cards were issued to all active employees and retirees enrolled in the vision plan along with a vision benefit summary through postal mail. Communication was also sent out through payroll stuffers to all active employees. Transfer of information from one carrier to another included much data entry between carriers as well as changes made to each employees payroll screen for benefit changes. Approximately 720 entry changes had to be made to close out the old VSP benefit and an additional 720 new entries had to be made to create the new BlueView Vision benefit information.

### **Open Enrollment**

HR developed, coordinated and successfully implemented our 2nd Virtual Employee Benefits Fair during the annual Open Enrollment Period in 2021. In years past, our open enrollment period ran the whole month of November, with an in-person event including outside insurance vendors and employee engagement. With ongoing changing circumstances resulting from COVID-19, HR continued to quickly and efficiently continue our benefits fair virtually. With this being said HR wanted to ensure employees had ample time to receive the announcements, distribution of information and overall changes again from years past. HR continued to provide an even longer open enrollment period in 2021 beginning the end of August 2021. Our team sent advance notice to employees by email and through payroll, notifying them of our Virtual Benefits fair and what to expect. We then began sending 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 employee portal as another method of outreach.

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

### **Life Insurance**

HR continued to oversee the life insurance plan through, TheHartford, for members of the Management/Confidential (M/C) group, including generating COBRA notices for those terminating employment. Our carrier remained the same, however a retirement benefit was added and introduced effective 1/1/2021. The enrichment of benefit included an extension to basic life coverage in retirement for 10 full years after retirement with a flat/fixed rate of \$17,500, no further age reduction throughout the 10 years and no cost to the retiree. Communication was sent out to approximately 95 members notifying them of this added benefit.

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

HR continued to administer the FSA in 2021. Enrollees enjoyed an approved increase in the 2021 annual medical FSA designation to \$2,750 from \$2,700. There was a total of 129 initial enrollments in 2021, a slight increase from 127 in 2020. COBRA notices continued to be administered by HR, as applicable.

**NEW** for our Dependent Care FSA 2021 plan year was a special Open Enrollment period caused by Legislative changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic (considered to be a qualifying event), which permitted for a dependent care limit increase to \$10,500 if single or if married and filing jointly; \$5,250 if married and filing separately. Formerly the dependent care allowances were \$5,000 if single or if married and filing jointly; \$2,500 if married and filing separately. Notification was sent to all employees enrolled in the dependent care account, alerting them of the option to increase their annual election amount. Payroll deductions were adjusted accordingly based upon the new election amounts and remaining payroll periods for the year if an employee opted for a change. Out of 4 employees eligible and who were previously

enrolled, 2 opted for the higher increase. Throughout the remainder of 2021 we had 1 new hire who also opted in for the higher dependent care amount.

The increase to the dependent care account was a tremendous added benefit due to the fact that the limit had been set at \$5,000 since the account's inception in the 1980's. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 affected the limit for dependent care FSAs. This increase expired on 12/31/2021 and was reduced to the initial limit of \$5,000.

### **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, TheHartford, remained the same for the 2021 year. **A total of 13 claims were filed in 2021, versus 12 claims filed in 2020.**

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

As co-ADA Coordinators, the HR Director and County Attorney processed 7 requests for accommodation in 2021, which was a decrease of almost 42% over the previous year's 12 requests.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) celebrated its fifth year of operation in 2021. The 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 2021 plan year revealed utilization declined 2021.

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Greene Co. Employees Utilization	2.1%	2.1%	1%

Note: 3% is slightly above the national average.

The HR team has reached out to our service provider for updated informational material to be distributed during the onboarding process. Monthly email blasts with the updated information are a revised goal for 2022 to increase use of EAP benefits by employees and their immediate family members.

### **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 56 new requests for leave under the FMLA in 2021, which was a decrease of 5% from the 59 requests the previous year. As in 2020, **all** requests in 2021 met the criteria for the leave and were approved.

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Percentage + or -</b>
Total FMLA Requests Approved	56	59	-5.08%
- Full-time	26	31	-16.13%
- Intermittent	30	28	+7.14%
FMLA Military Leave	0	0	0%

The length of the full-time leaves averaged 2 – 4 weeks for most individuals. In 2021, eight employees were out for 12 weeks or more, which is the same number as in 2020.

### **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 2022, HR completed the SH900 and SH900.1 forms for 2021, 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 2021 calendar year. In 2021, Greene County had the following experience:

- **0 deaths (no change from 2020)**
- **59 cases of missed work (22 cases reported in 2020)**
- **0 job transfer or restriction cases (no change from 2020)**
- **9 other reportable cases (12 cases reported in 2020)**



**These occurrences resulted in 69 total incidents reported for 2021, versus 34 reported in 2020. Due to the national pandemic, 53 of the 69 incidents reported were related to COVID-19 (raising the number of incidents significantly).** It should be noted that although the number of incidents rose related to COVID-19, no claims filed related to COVID-19 were approved for payment.

### **Unemployment Claims**

HR and the County Attorney's office processed all claims for unemployment insurance benefits in 2021. A continued result of the pandemic was the huge increase in the number of fraudulent claims received by the County, and in some cases notifications to the employees directly.

	2021	2020	Percentage + or -
Total Unemployment Claims Received	66	28	+136%
- Legitimate	13	18	-28%
- Fraudulent	53	10	+430%

Fraudulent claims are processed collectively by HR, the County Attorney's office and the Investigative Unit of the Sheriff's Office. The last quarter of 2021 did see a drastic reduction in the number of fraudulent claims received and we hope that continues to be the trend for 2022.

### **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 7/1/13 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 account. 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 2021, there was (1) employee who elected to participate in this alternative program.**

### **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 set a goal for 2021 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:** COVID-19 continued to affect the number of Wellness programs and activities that were offered to County employees. Unfortunately, the Wellness Committee's meeting schedule continued to be on hold due to prioritization of staff addressing the pandemic. HR is hopeful that the Wellness Committee can begin to meet again in 2022 and offer new programs to County employees.

**Be Well Incentive Program:** The *Be Well Incentive* program was in full effect throughout the 2021 year. This incentive program allows for 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 2021, there were **167** employees who participated in the program, a **12% increase** over the 149 participants in 2020. HR anticipated a larger group of participants in 2021 as medical facilities and offices reopened for all functions after being closed for part of 2020 due to COVID-19. We hope the number of participants will continue to increase through 2022.

**Operation Affirmation:** A new Wellness program was developed by the HR team for the second half of 2021. *Operation Affirmation* was presented to all Greene County staff via email in July. This 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@discovergreene.com](mailto:hr@discovergreene.com) 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. Another way to be entered into our monthly raffle drawing will be to submit a guess of who from the Human Resources/Civil Service team created the theme for the board that month. 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.

- July – 11 acknowledgements
- August – 17 acknowledgements
- September – 14 acknowledgements
- October – 14 acknowledgements
- November – 31 acknowledgements
- December – 18 acknowledgements

Thank you to the amazing Greene County employees who have shown their appreciation for each other. The HR team has truly enjoyed kicking off this program. Our only complaint is that we should have gotten a bigger bulletin board and what a wonderful problem that is to have! For 2022, HR will be implementing new components to this program so stay tuned.

**Miscellaneous:** Finally, assistance enrolling in the telemedicine program was offered, and travel size first aid kits were dispersed to all new employees participating in the County's primary health insurance plans during 2021.

### **Blood Borne Pathogens**

As with other committees in 2021, the Blood Borne Pathogens committee meeting schedule continued to be on hold due to prioritization of staff addressing the pandemic. HR has been notified that the meetings will begin again in 2022 and HR will continue to work with the Public Health Department to coordinate and track training for County employees in 2022.

## **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 development of the County's proposals and analyzing the proposals of each union. The Director is also responsible for 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, 2023.

- MOA – A Memorandum of Agreement was signed on January 27, 2021 providing each employee of the bargaining unit a one-time payment of \$230.00 in exchange for the union agreeing that through 2023 the County will not institute the second shift.

**Corrections Unit (Council 82):** The negotiating teams for this bargaining unit began meeting in December 2021 during which the parties exchanged proposals. No agreement was reached prior to the December 31, 2021 expiration date of the current contract. Additional meetings are scheduled for early 2022.

**CSEA Dispatch and Probation Unit 7002:** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2023.

- MOA – A Memorandum of Agreement was signed on January 20, 2021 establishing an “on-call” shift for employees in the Probation Department to monitor specific probationers during non-work hours. The initial MOA was in effect for 90 days so the terms could be reviewed and modified if necessary. The terms of the MOA were renewed on May 5, 2021 for a period of six months. Due to a thorough review of the program being monitored during the “on-call” shift, the terms of the MOA were revised and the MOA was renewed on November 12, 2021 for a period of 120 days.

**CSEA General Unit 7000:** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2023.

**Deputy Sheriff's (Council 82):** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2022.

**Teamsters (Solid Waste Management):** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2023.

**UPSEU (Nurses):** The current CBA is not due to expire until December 31, 2022.

### **Contract Grievances**

The HR Director was present at all of the Step 2 grievance meetings at the request of the County Administrator. A total of 4 on-going or new grievances were processed in 2021, **representing no change to the number of actions in 2020**. The actions resulted in the following outcomes:

- Denied at Step 2. Demand for Arbitration by union – 1 (on-going due to delays resulting from COVID-19)
- Denied at Step 2. Demand for Arbitration by union – 1 (no arbitration date set as of the filing of this report)
- Settled at Step 2 – 1
- Withdrawn by Union – settled with an MOA – 1

### **Labor-Management Meetings**

The HR Director participated with the County Administrator and several department heads in labor-management meetings to discuss a number of department-specific policy development issues and grievance-related matters. Changes to practices and procedures due to COVID-19 increased the number

of labor-management meetings necessary in 2021. 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 2021 as we all navigated the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic while trying to maintain the provision of essential services to Greene County residents.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

The HR Director assisted department heads in processing **9** new or continuing disciplinary actions in 2021. This represents a **59% decrease** in disciplines from the 22 in 2020. The following is a breakdown of 2021's actions:

- Stipulation of Settlement – 10 days unpaid suspension, loss of 5 vacation days, 5 days unpaid suspension held in abeyance for 6 months – 1
- Stipulation of Settlement – Letter of Reprimand and loss of 24 hours vacation – 1
- Stipulation of Settlement – Letter of Reprimand and loss of 12 hours vacation – 1
- Stipulation of Settlement – Letter of Reprimand – 2
- Resignation in lieu of termination – 2
- Termination – 2

### **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**

HR produced the annual employee awards event on behalf of the Legislature in collaboration with the County Administrator's office. Pins and certificates were conferred within the departments and a ceremony was held prior to the June Legislature meeting to announce the Employees of the Year and Chairman's Award Winners. In 2021, two employees shared the Employee of the Year recognition and the Chairman's Award was given to a department in recognition of their effort in combatting COVID-19. HR ensured that "Employee of the Year" signs were placed in designated parking spaces for the winners and worked with the Department Head of the Chairman's Award winners regarding purchasing lunch for the employees in recognition of their award.

## **STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

HR coordinated the following classes in 2021, 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, etc.) and other training:

### **Sexual Harassment Prevention**

In 2021, 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 2020 HR provided the mandated training in an on-line format for all Greene County staff members and elected officials in 2021. 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.

Early in March 2021, HR began the process of notifying all employees of their credentials to login and complete the on-line training utilizing the platform used in 2020. That platform changed in May 2020 and the HR team had to send another round of notifications to all employees with new credentials to login and complete training. The change in platform caused a lot of confusion but the HR team member coordinating trainings did a great job to work through the confusion and guide our employees.

*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**

An HR team member took over coordination of the mandated Workplace Violence Prevention Training from the County Attorney's office. 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.

Through persistence and guidance to liaisons in each Greene County Department, the following rates of completion were achieved in 2021 for the 552 employees enrolled in the mandated trainings:

- NYS Discrimination and Harassment Training: 526 completed = **95.29%**
- Discrimination and Harassment Policy Acknowledgement: 527 completed = **95.47%**
- Sexual Harassment Policy Acknowledgement: 527 completed = **95.47%**
- Workplace Violence Prevention Training: 523 completed = **94.75%**
- Workplace Violence Policy Acknowledgement: 527 = **95.47%**

HR's goal was to achieve 100% completion rate for these mandated trainings in 2021. Although we fell just short of that goal, we will continue to strive for a 100% completion rate in 2022.

### **New York State Association of Personnel and Civil Service Officers (NYSAPCSO) 2021 Annual Conference**

The HR Director attended her first NYSAPCSO Annual Conference held in Clayton, NY from October 17-20, 2021. This conference had not been held in 28 months due to COVID-19. The topics covered during the conference were:

- Updates from NYS Civil Service: Civil Service Administration, Special Projects/Initiatives
- Implicit Bias
- Maximizing the Use of Decentralized Exam Programs
- Laws, Rules, and Regulations that Impact Civil Service
- Working after Retirement: The 211 Waiver Process & What You Need to Know as a Civil Service Administrator
- NYS Civil Service Testing Services Update
- The Marijuana Regulation & Taxation Act: What does it Mean for Personnel Officers
- Police Reform & Civil Service Administration
- FOIL in the Age of Police Reform Practical Implications of the Repeal of 50-a of the Civil Rights Law and other Practical Matters under the FOIL Involving Law Enforcement Officers
- Lessons Learned from COVID
- Hot Labor Topics

In addition to the valuable information obtained from the various sessions held, the HR Director was able to network with her peers, which is invaluable 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 2021. Topics included:

- COVID-19
  - COVID-19 Vaccine in the Workplace: Employment Law, Benefits & Well-being
  - What to expect from OSHA on COVID-19 vaccine & testing rules
  - OSHA calls on Employers to protect workers from COVID-19
  - OSHA issues worker safety guidance for coronavirus protection programs
  - Workers Compensation liability for COVID-19 vaccine side effects may be limited
  - OSHA withdraws most of temporary COVID-19 Health Care Safety Rules
  - How to get Employee Appreciation Right Amid COVID-19
  - Countering Vaccine Skepticism & Building Confidence
  - American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)
    - How does the ARPA affect employees
    - ARPA and the COBRA Premium Assistance Provisions
    - ARPA 2021: What Employers Need to Know
- HR Strategies
  - Human Resources Law 101: A New York Guide
  - 6 Ways to be Successful with ThinkHR
  - Evaluating Your Workplace Behavior
  - The Impact of Working in HR
  - Self-care for HR Professionals
  - HR Ethical Dilemmas
  - 14 key HR lessons learned in 2021
  - The Human Connection
  - Managing Workplace Negativity
  - Coaching for Improved Performance
  - Creating a Climate of Workplace Respect
- Cannabis
  - Coverage of Marijuana as a Health Benefit: What Employers Need to Know
  - New York State Legalized Cannabis: Now What?
- PERMA
  - NYS Municipal Employers Health Emergency Plan
  - DOT Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse
- Training
  - Administrator Webinar for implementation of new platform
- Employee Benefits
  - How to Manage ADA- and FMLA-Related Leave
  - ACA reporting
    - Employers must continue to comply with ACA in light of high court ruling
    - IRS extends deadline for distributing ACA forms to employees
  - Benefits Administration
    - New York State Local Retirement System training
    - Are your benefit plans ready for 2022
    - Last minute tips for open enrollment communications

- 2022 benefit plan limits and thresh hold charts
- Medicare's 6 months look back for HAS contributions
- Mental Health Parity & Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA)
- Flexible Spending Account
  - Help your employees “use, no lose, FSA savings”

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The HR team is always striving to improve the services provided to Greene County's employees, retirees and members of the public. Looking ahead to 2022, our team has set the following goals:

**1. Digitization:**

- a. The HR team has completed the task of converting roster records from paper to digital records for all employees who fall under the Civil Service Commission.
- b. Late in December 2021, the HR team met with a vendor who will create and maintain a 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.
- c. Continuing review and updating of all active job specifications with the end goal of having them available on HR's webpage.
- d. 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.
- e. Working with the Records Management Director towards Greene County's common goal of the digitization of all records.

**2. Training:**

- a. 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.
- b. Provide entry-level supervisory training as well as mediation/conflict resolution training to higher level manager/directors.
- c. Work with the Safety Officer to coordinate mandatory Occupational Safety & Health - Mandated Training - Active Shooter.
- d. Attendance by the Human Resources & Civil Service Aide at the 2022 NYS Civil Service Institute – NYS Civil Service will be providing this training throughout the year in a virtual but interactive platform.

**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. Exit Interview:** Continue utilization of the new form and procedure to provide employees the opportunity to complete a survey upon retirement or voluntary separation from employment. The return rate increase by 35% from 2020 to 2021 was a great achievement and crushed out our 10% goal. However, our team would like to see an additional 10% increase in the return rate for 2022.

**5. Wellness Activities:** Due to the prioritization of resources towards COVID-19, HR had to extend into 2022 our goal of working with the County Administrator, the County's insurance broker and the Wellness Committee on overhauling the program, focusing on an effort to provide activities that appeal to a wider variety of employees.

As the HR Director, I am extremely proud of and grateful to the HR team. This was an extraordinary year with more unprecedented issues. As was the case with all of our Greene County employees, we continued to provide needed services to the residents of Greene County. We look forward to what may be a challenging 2022 but we know we will handle those challenges while improving on our success through innovative thinking and improved efficiency.