

Robert C. Eustace
Vice President, Uniformed Firefighters Association
Ladder Company 27

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Civil service jobs remain some of the most critical positions within government at all levels, not solely because of the invaluable services that they provide to citizens, but largely due to the myriad opportunities they provide to those citizens hired therein. Historically, civil service is **the** pathway to the middle class for large swaths of our population. The benefits tied to these jobs are numerous, attractive, and long-term: job security, competitive salaries, and pension plans immediately come to mind.

However, like many job sectors in the post-pandemic world, the civil service sector is facing growing obstacles to attracting and retaining employees. As cost of living and inflation rates skyrocket, salaries that used to be highly competitive are now resulting in a tale of two cities: civil servants who simply cannot afford to live and raise families within the municipalities they serve and protect. Additionally, the increasing gap between testing and hiring for competitive class positions, which make up roughly 80% of civil service positions within New York City, leaves potential hires in limbo—with some potential employees waiting upwards of seven years to be hired. With most positions in the private sector, a jobseeker can interview and be hired within a matter of days. This is not so for civil service positions as mounting bureaucracy impedes the speed with which applicants can be hired. Currently, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services is averaging roughly 190 days just to get the results of the competitive exams. This is an egregiously long wait time even before one factors in the time necessary to formulate the lists and conduct the investigation into the applicant's background. There are few benefits that can offset that type of lag time.

We are at a critical juncture for civil service positions statewide, but particularly in New York City. It is my hope that my testimony today can provide insight into some of the obstacles we face for retention and that these challenges can be addressed and remedied effectively, so that potential applicants can continue to look to civil service as the gateway for improving not just the quality of life within our city, but his or her own quality of life.