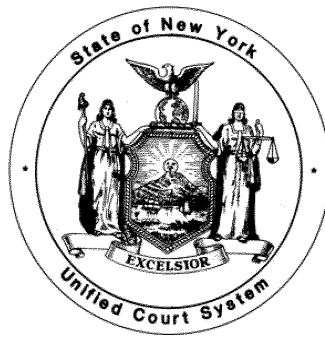


Career Opportunities in the New York State Unified Court System

Court Assistant Examination No.45-799

Job Orientation Guide and Examination Information

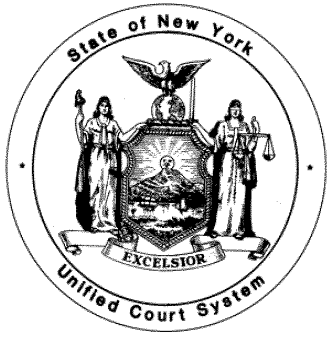


Test Date: Saturday, October 7, 2017

Applications will be available online June of 2017

This orientation guide for the Court Assistant examination,
including the application form and job description will be available online in June 2017:

www.nycourts.gov/careers/



Job Orientation Guide and Examination Information for Court Assistant

The guide provides important information on:

- ▶ the type of work performed by Court Assistants
- ▶ the minimum qualifications required for appointment to the position
- ▶ the application process to participate in the written examination
- ▶ preparing for the written examination and sample questions

Use this guide to familiarize yourself with the content and format of the examination to help you perform to the best of your ability.

The following pages contain the information about the job of Court Assistant and basic information you need to apply for and take the written examination. This guide, the application form, and other useful information about becoming a Court Assistant can be accessed on our website: www.nycourts.gov/careers/

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THE COURT ASSISTANT JOB

Court Assistants perform essential functions in Supreme Courts, County and District level courts, City Courts with three or more full-time judges; and the Civil Court of the City of New York. Under the supervision of Chief Clerks, Commissioners of Jurors, or County Clerks they function as Part Clerks performing various clerical tasks directly related to court proceedings. Court Assistants may also work outside of the courtroom providing procedural information, supervising other clerical support staff engaged in court support activities such as intake of papers or docketing. They may be designated to act in the absence of the Chief Clerk or Commissioner of Jurors, and may perform duties related to arbitration and the disposition of actions by means of arbitration, and perform other related duties.

PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Court Assistants are eligible to participate in promotional examinations for positions such as the Court Clerk (JG-18) and Senior Court Clerk (JG-21). These jobs involve working in courtrooms and in back-office operations handling and processing court documents. Many current court managers advance to their positions from these entry level titles. Individuals in these positions can also advance to managerial positions such as Deputy Chief Clerk and Chief Clerk.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Court Assistants must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- ▶ High school diploma or its educational equivalent and two (2) years of clerical experience, or
- ▶ Four (4) years of clerical experience, or
- ▶ Thirty (30) college level credits may be substituted for each year of work experience.

THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION:

The written examination will be administered on **Saturday, October 7, 2017** in test centers throughout New York State. **Be prepared to spend at least four (4) hours at the test center.** This includes both the time needed to register at the test center and the time allocated for the examination. Information on preparing to take the written examination and sample examination questions can be found beginning on the next page of this guide.

SUBJECT OF WRITTEN EXAMINATION

This is a multiple-choice, written examination and is designed to assess the following:

1. **CLERICAL CHECKING**

These questions assess applicants' ability to distinguish between different sets of names, numbers, letters and/or codes which are almost exactly alike. Material will be presented in three columns, and applicants will be asked to compare the information in the three sets.

2. **UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING WRITTEN MATERIAL**

These questions assess applicants' ability to understand brief written passages. Applicants will be provided with short written passages from which words or phrases have been removed. Applicants will be required to select, among four alternatives, the word or phrase that best fits in each of the spaces. Applicants will not be required to have any prior knowledge relating to the content areas covered in the selections.

3. **APPLYING FACTS AND INFORMATION TO GIVEN SITUATIONS**

These questions assess applicants' ability to use the information provided and apply it to a specific situation defined by a given set of facts. Applicants are presented with a regulation, policy or procedure similar to what a Court Assistant may encounter on the job. Applicants must use this information to answer questions about specific situations. All of the information required to answer the questions is contained in the passages and in the description of the situation.

4. **COURT RECORD KEEPING**

These questions assess applicants' ability to read, combine, and manipulate written information organized from several sources. Applicants will be presented with different types of tables, which contain names, numbers, codes and other information, and must combine and reorganize the information to answer specific questions.

5. **PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL**

Format A: These questions assess applicants' ability to present information clearly and accurately, and to organize written information logically and comprehensibly. Applicants will be presented with several sentences and must select the sequence that effectively organizes them into a coherent and logical paragraph.

Format B: These questions assess applicants' ability to apply the rules of English grammar and usage, punctuation and sentence structure. Applicants are presented with a series of sentences and must select the sentence that best conforms to standard English grammar, usage, punctuation and sentence structure.

6. **LEGAL TERMINOLOGY**

These questions assess applicants' knowledge of basic legal terminology that Court Assistants encounter in their daily work.

SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

The questions shown below are for **illustrative purposes only**. They are examples of the different question types and formats that applicants may encounter on the written multiple-choice examination. Questions that appear on the actual examination vary in difficulty and may be easier or more difficult than the questions illustrated below.

I. CLERICAL CHECKING

This section of the examination assesses applicants' ability to determine whether different sets of words, numbers, names and/or codes are similar. No matter what the form of the item, you are required to scan the sets of information, identify where the sets differ, and use the directions to determine the correct answer.

Directions: The following two questions, numbered 1 and 2, consist of three sets of information. Compare the information in the three sets presented in each question. On your answer sheet, mark:

- Choice A: if all **three** sets are exactly alike
Choice B: if only the **first** and **third** sets are exactly alike
Choice C: if only the **first** and **second** sets are exactly alike
Choice D: if **none** of the sets are exactly alike.

Question 1. (Note: In this format the information is on the same line in each set.)

564738292009	564738292009	564738282009
Criminal Court	Criminal Court	Criminal Court
Martin L. Abel	Martin L. Able	<i>Martin L. Abel</i>
Criminal Mischief	Criminal Mischief	<i>Criminal Mischief</i>

Solution to Question 1.

Answer D. All the sets are different. In the third set, the eighth digit is "8", but it is "9" in the other two sets. In the second set, the man's last named is spelled "Able", but it is spelled "Abel" in the other two sets. Therefore, the correct answer is D.

Question 2.

<i>Cummings, Richard</i>	Cummings, Richard	Cummings, Richard
<i>5480 Main St.</i>	5480 Main St.	5480 Main St.
<i>White Plains, NY 10604</i>	White Plains, NY 10604	White Plains, NY 10604
<i>(914) 655-4590</i>	(914) 655-4590	(914) 655-4590

Solution to Question 2.

Answer A. The information in each of these sets is the same, even though the type face may be different in each set.

II. UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING WRITTEN MATERIAL

This section assesses applicants' ability to understand brief written passages. A short, written passage is presented from which some words have been omitted. Select one word from the four alternatives that best completes the passage.

Directions: The passage below contains five numbered blanks. Read the passage once quickly to get the overall idea of the passage. Read it a second time, this time thinking of words that might fit in the blanks. Below the passage are listed sets of words numbered to match the blanks. Pick the word from each set which seems to make the most sense both in the sentence and the total paragraph.

Adoption records are not public. You have to get _____ ③ _____ court order to open them after they are sealed _____ ④ _____ the time of the adoption. Ask the Adoptions Clerk of the Surrogate's Court in the county where you _____ ⑤ _____ the adoption happened. Please be aware that requesting the unsealing of an adoption record is a _____ ⑥ _____ of case _____ ⑦ _____ the advice and other help of a lawyer may be needed for success.

Question 3

- A. that
- B. another
- C. this
- D. a

Question 4

- A. at
- B. for
- C. into
- D. behind

Question 5

- A. accept
- B. tell
- C. believe
- D. suggest

Question 6

- A. special
- B. kind
- C. reason
- D. offer

Question 7

- A. where
- B. what
- C. whether
- D. with

Solution to Question 3

Answer D. Answer A is not correct because you would not normally say "that court order" unless the paragraph indicated that you were talking about a specific order. Answer B is not correct because "another court order" would suggest that you had already filed one, and there is no indication of that in the paragraph. Answer C is not correct because you would only say "this court order" if it had been referred to earlier in the paragraph. Answer D is correct because "a court order" fits the general paragraph as well as the specific sentence in which the blank appears.

Answers:

Q4. A; Q5. C; Q6. B; Q7. A

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

III. APPLYING FACTS AND INFORMATION TO GIVEN SITUATIONS

This section of the written exam assesses applicants' ability to take information which they have read and apply it to a specific situation defined by a given set of facts. Each question contains a brief paragraph which describes a regulation, procedure, policy, guideline or law. The selection is followed by a description of a specific situation. Then a question is asked which requires them to apply the law, regulation, policy, guideline or procedure described in the paragraph to the specific situation. All of the information needed to answer the question is contained in the paragraph and in the description of the situation. Applicants need to read and understand **both** before they attempt to answer the question.

Directions: Use the information preceding each question to answer the question. Only that information should be used in answering the questions. Do not use any prior knowledge you may have on the subject. Choose the alternative that best answers the question.

Procedure:

A department has the following rules for submitting "Preferred Payment Vouchers" (PPV's): All Preferred Payment Vouchers (PPV) must have a unique index number which is assigned at the time of submission of the PPV. All vouchers which have a total amount over \$100 or which are for food/beverages must have a pre-approval memo signed by a supervisor. PPV's are never for an amount more than \$250.00. They are never for wages. Any staff member may submit a PPV, but not more than two from any employee in any one calendar month. All incorrectly submitted PPV's are returned to the employee.

The types of PPV's are:

- BLUE** -- for purchasing books, reference manuals and professional journals. Computer manuals, however, cannot be purchased using PPVs.
- PINK** -- for food and/or beverages served at meetings or conferences held at the office.
- GREEN** -- for printing and duplication material. One of three approved local companies must be used.
- YELLOW** -- for office supplies. There must be an attached memo stating that the item(s) needed are not available through the regular standing order for basic supplies such as paperclips, staples and/or notepads.

Question 8.

Situation: Mary Gaumont submitted a Pink PPV. It was returned to her for being incorrect. Which of the following would be a reason(s) for having it returned?

1. There was not a pre-approval memo signed by a supervisor.
 2. She had already submitted one Pink PPV that calendar month.
 3. It was an order for a subscription to an Accounting Journal.
 4. The PPV did not have an index number.
-
- A. 1 only, but not 2, 3 or 4
 - B. 2 only, but not 1, 3 or 4
 - C. 1 and 3, but not 2 or 4
 - D. 1, 3, and 4, but not 2.

Solution to Question 8.

Answer D. Answer A wrong because although it is a reason for the PPV to be returned, food and beverage Pink PPV's must have a memo attached, which is not the only reason. Answer B is wrong because an employee is permitted to submit two PPV's in a month and would not be a reason for it to be returned. Answer C is wrong because again, although 1 is a reason for it to be returned, 3 is also a reason for it to be returned because if it was an order for an Accounting Journal, she should have used a Blue PPV, but again, they are not the only reasons. **Answer D** is the correct solution because 1, 3 and 4 are all reasons for the PPV to be returned. All PPV's must also have an index number and 4 states that the PPV did not have one.

Question 9.

Which one of the following statements is true regarding a PPV?

- A. A Blue PPV would never need a pre-approval memo signed by a supervisor.
- B. A Pink PPV may be used for food/beverage at a conference at a local university.
- C. For a calendar month an employee cannot submit PPV's which amount to more than \$500.
- D. Basic office supplies, such as paper clips and note pads, must be ordered with a Yellow PPV.

Solution to Question 9.

Answer C. Answer A is wrong because any voucher over \$100 would need a memo so it is not true that a Blue PPV would never need a memo signed by a supervisor. Answer B is wrong because a Pink PPV must be used for food/beverages for meetings or conferences held only at the office, not at a local university. Answer D is wrong because a Yellow PPV is needed for office supplies not available through the standing order for basic office supplies such as paperclips, staples, and/or note pads. **Answer C** is correct because an employee can submit two PPVs in a month each totalling \$250 each for a total of \$500 but not more.

Question 10.

Which of the following reasons would always cause a Green PPV to be incorrect?

- A. It is for an out-of-state company.
- B. It is for an amount over \$100.
- C. It is for the cost of photocopying an annual departmental report.
- D. It did not have an pre-approval memo signed by a supervisor.

Solution to Question 10

Answer A. Answer B is wrong because any voucher over \$100 would need a supervisory memo but this option doesn't indicate that is supervisory memo isn't attached. Answer C is wrong because Green PPVs **are** used for photocopying. Answer D is wrong because only PPVs over \$100 need to have a pre-approved memo and there is no amount mentioned in the answer. **Answer A** is correct because a Green PPV is used for printing and duplicating materials but a local company must be used.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE

IV. COURT RECORD KEEPING

This section of the exam assesses applicants’ ability to read, combine, and manipulate written information organized from several sources. Applicants will be presented with different types of tables, which contain names, numbers, codes and other information, and must combine and reorganize the information to answer specific questions. On the following pages is a simplified version of the type of record keeping exercise that will be included in the written examination. Knowledge of the subject matter areas is not necessary. Rather, the question assesses your ability to find and use information.

Directions: Answer the four questions based on the information contained in the following tables. Remember, all of the information needed to answer the questions correctly can be found in the tables. Complete the “Daily Breakdown of Cases” and “Summary of Cases” tables before you attempt to answer any of the questions.

Daily Log of Cases Thursday			
Judge	Date Filed	Status	Money Award
Abrams	11/08/14	Adjourned	X
Carter	11/15/14	Adjourned	X
Jones	02/12/16	Dismissed	X
Evans	03/27/15	Adjourned	X
Jones	08/23/14	Dismissed	X

Daily Log of Cases Friday			
Judge	Date Filed	Status	Money Award
D’Amico	07/13/14	Settled	X
Evans	05/09/15	Settled	\$11,400
Jones	01/06/16	Settled	\$15,444
Abrams	06/27/15	Dismissed	X
Evans	10/05/14	Defaulted	X
D’Amico	06/08/14	Adjourned	X
Abrams	07/18/15	Settled	\$760
Jones	09/26/15	Settled	X

Some of the information in the table below has already been filled in. You must fill in the remaining cells of the table to answer the questions.

Daily Breakdown of Cases (Thursday and Friday)			
CASE STATUS	Thursday	Friday	Total Cases
Dismissed	2	1	3
Adjourned			
Defaulted			
Settled-No Money Award			
Settled-Money Award			
Total Cases			
Cases Filed by Year			
2014	3	3	6
2015			
2016			
Total Cases			

Summary of Cases (Thursday and Friday)						
Judge	Status			Settled No Money Award	Settled Money Award	Total Cases
	Dismissed	Defaulted	Adjourned			
Abrams						
D'Amico						
Evans						
Carter						
Jones						

Question 11. What was the total number of adjourned cases on Thursday?

- A. 2
- B. 3
- C. 5
- D. 8

Solution to Question 12: Answer B. You could have answered this question by counting up all the cases in Thursday’s “Daily Log of Cases” that said “Adjourned” in the “Status” column. Alternatively, you could have looked in your completed “Daily Breakdown of Cases” table under “Thursday” and across from “Adjourned.”

Question 12. How many settled cases on Thursday and Friday, for which there was a monetary award, was the award less than \$5,000?

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3

Solution to Question 12: Answer B. To answer this question you need to refer directly to Friday’s “Daily Log of Cases.” Since money awards are only made for settled cases, you need to look only in the “Money Award” column and count the number of times an award of less than \$5,000 appears.

Question 13. How many cases before Judge Jones on Thursday and Friday were dismissed?

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3

Solution to Question 13: Answer C. The easiest way to answer this question is to refer to your completed “Summary of Cases” table which includes cases from Thursday and Friday. Look across the name from “Jones” and down the column marked “Dismissed.”

V. PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL

Format A: This section of the examination assesses applicants’ ability to present information clearly and accurately, and to organize written information logically and comprehensibly. Candidates will be presented with several sentences and must effectively organize them in a coherent and logical order.

Format B: These questions assess candidates’ ability to apply rules of English grammar, usage, punctuation, and sentence structure. Candidates will be presented with a series of sentences and must select the sentence that best conforms to standard English grammar, usage, punctuation, and sentence structure.

Format A: For questions **14** and **15**, read the following sentences and decide which answer offers the best organization of these sentences into a complete paragraph.

Question 14.

1. Many cases are now being tried with six jurors rather than the usual 12.
2. America is firmly committed to the concept of trial by jury.
3. Yet every year the outcry against the present jury system is mounting.
4. Critics say that too much time is spent in jury selection and too many prospective jurors are called but do not serve.
5. Fortunately, a way has been found to cut some expenses and speed up civil cases without eliminating jury trials.

Continued on next page

- A. 2-3-4-5-1
- B. 2-3-5-1-4
- C. 4-5-3-2-1
- D. 4-5-2-3-1

Question 15.

1. Prosecution of wrong-doers was a haphazard affair in the early part of his reign, although punishment was swift and sure.
 2. All inhabitants of the locale would then give chase until the deed was avenged.
 3. Prosecution was often initiated in vigilante fashion.
 4. The modern jury appears to have had its beginning during the reign of Henry II in the twelfth century.
 5. A crime might be observed, or imagined, and a "hue and cry" would be heard.
- A. 4-2-3-1-5
 - B. 4-1-3-2-5
 - C. 4-1-3-5-2
 - D. 4-3-5-1-2

Answers: **Q14.** A; **Q15.** C

Format B: Questions numbered **16** through **20** should be answered by selecting the best option which conforms to the rules of standard English grammar and usage, punctuation and sentence structure.

Question 16.

- A. While the victim lay injured on the floor of the store, the police dispatcher counseled the shopkeeper on how to perform first aid.
- B. While the victim laid injured on the floor of the store, the police dispatcher concealed the shopkeeper on how to perform first aid.
- C. While the victim lay injured on the floor of the store, the police dispatcher counceled the shopkeeper on how to perform first aid.
- D. While the victim laid injured on the floor of the store, the police dispatcher cancelled the shopkeeper on how to perform first aid.

Question 17.

- A. Cable companies has expanded into the communications arena.
- B. The police department operator was unable to hear the caller due to static.
- C. Stunning advances in medicine are keeping people alive well into their nineties.
- D. She and I have never agree on anything of significant importance.

Question 18.

- A. I wonder how much costs that book.
- B. I wonder what of that book the price is.
- C. I wonder how much does that book cost.
- D. I wonder what that book costs.

Question 19.

- A. There is a reason why drivers and passengers should have seatbelts securely fastened.
- B. Seatbelt fastened is known to prevent injuries.
- C. Highway patrolman see many fatal accidents without seatbelts fastened.
- D. Speed limits and seatbelts fastened are their to reduce fatal injuries.

Question 20.

- A. If you do not have a lawyer, filing a claim which are complex can be intimidating.
- B. If you do not have a lawyer, filing a claim which is complex can be intimidating.
- C. If you do not have lawyers filing a claim which are complex, can be intimidating.
- D. If you do not have a lawyer filing a claim which is complex, can be intimidating.

Answers

Q16. A; Q17. C; Q18. D; Q19. A; Q20. B

VI. LEGAL TERMINOLOGY

This section of the examination assesses applicants' knowledge of basic legal terminology that Court Assistants encounter in their daily work.

Question 21.

The instructions that a judge gives to the jury before the jury begins deliberations is known as the:

- A. verdict
- B. closing argument
- C. judge's charge
- D. summation

Question 22.

A monetary amount for conditional pretrial release from custody is known as:

- A. lien
- B. bail
- C. fine
- D. surcharge

Answers:

Q21. C; Q22. B

HELPFUL HINTS TO PREPARE FOR THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION

A DAY OR TWO BEFORE...

- ✓ Briefly review the examination information contained in this guide, especially the subject of the examination and sample questions. Intense studying immediately preceding the exam may make you anxious. A brief review will refresh your memory and may help to reduce your anxiety.
- ✓ Check your Admission Notice to determine where the test center location is and your report time. Know how to get to the test center and allow yourself enough time to get there on time. If possible, plan to arrive a little early.
- ✓ **Bring the following materials to the test center:**
 - **Admission Notice**
 - **Two sharpened No. 2 pencils. Bring extra pencils and a sharpener.**
 - **Two forms of identification including one photo ID such as a driver's license or passport**
 - **A wristwatch (applicants are responsible for keeping track of their time).**

THE DAY OF...

- ✓ Plan your arrival at the test center about 15 minutes before the scheduled time listed on your Admission Notice.
- ✓ Please note that the following materials/actions are **not** permitted at the test center:
 - Use of cell phone or any other electronic device
 - Smoking, eating or drinking in the testing room
 - Use of reference books or calculators
 - Removing exam materials from the testing center
 - Copying test questions or answers during the examination (You may **not** leave with a record of your answers.)
 - Giving or receiving help during the examination
- ✓ Prior to the examination, you will be asked to complete the Equal Employment Opportunity Data Collection Form. Although completion of this form is voluntary, we encourage you to complete this form as it helps us to assess our recruitment efforts.
- ✓ Follow all instructions provided by the examination proctor for filling in the computerized answer sheet. Use only No. 2 pencils and make your marks heavy and dark and completely fill in all of the required sections of the answer sheet as instructed by the examination proctors and in accordance with the instructions on the back of the answer sheet. Ask your room proctor for assistance if necessary.
- ✓ Read the general directions on the cover of the test booklet when it is passed on to you. Ask the proctor for help if you don't understand any of the instructions.

DURING THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION

- ✓ Remember to carefully read the directions before each part of the written exam. Each section of the exam has its own directions for you to read and follow.
- ✓ Budget your time. The time allowed for the exam is provided on the exam booklet's front page. Time yourself so that you do not spend too much time on one question and run out of time to answer the remaining questions.
- ✓ Read each question or problem carefully. Read each possible answer choice before selecting your answer. DO NOT LEAVE ANY QUESTION UNANSWERED. There is no penalty for guessing.
- ✓ Use a strategy for answering questions. You might wish to first answer all the questions that are easy for you, then go back to questions where you could eliminate one or more alternatives as definitely wrong and select the best answer out of the remaining alternatives.
- ✓ Constantly check to make sure you are marking your answer next to the appropriate question number on the answer sheet. If you skip a question, make sure you skip that answer space on the answer sheet.
- ✓ **Remember**, only answers on the answer sheet are scored and no additional time is allowed to transfer your answers from your test booklet to your answer sheet when the test is over. You cannot get credit if you put your answers in the wrong spaces or only marked them in the test booklet.
- ✓ **Review your test and answer sheet and make sure that:**
 - A. **answers are in the appropriate space on the answer sheet**
 - B. **every section of the exam is answered, and no answer is left blank**
 - C. **answers are filled in completely and darkly**
 - D. **erasures are clean. Erase old answers completely if you change an answer.**
 - E. **no question has more than one answer. The scanning machine reads double answers as wrong.**
 - F. **stray marks on the answer sheet have been erased**
- ✓ Go back and review your answers. Answer any questions you skipped the first time through. If you reread a question and have a good reason to think you should change your answer, then change it. If you do change an answer, make certain to erase the first answer carefully and completely.
- ✓ Follow the proctor's instructions about turning in your test materials. Make sure you turn in all test materials. Try not to disturb other candidates if you leave before the time limit is up. Leave the testing center quietly so as not to disturb other test takers.

GOOD LUCK!