

DIRECTOR OF CONSUMER PROTECTION AND PUBLIC ADVOCATE

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: This is technical, supervisory, and administrative work of a complex nature which involves the responsibility of verifying the accuracy and reliability of all measuring devices and standards within the County in accordance with the appropriate provisions of Agriculture and Markets Law, Rules and Regulations and heading an Office of Consumer Protection. The incumbent of this position shall be considered a Public Officer in accordance with Public Officer's Law. The incumbent also acts as a public advocate, as directed by the County Executive or his/her designee, primarily by evaluating and monitoring County government operations, especially as they affect the public and ensures the protection of the consuming public as required by local law or other applicable legislation which include services designed to aid and protect consumers. General direction is received from the County Executive or his/her designee and technical direction is received from the State Commissioner of Agriculture. Supervision is exercised over technical, professional, and clerical personnel. Does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

Plans and directs the investigative and technical activities of the Department of Weights and Measures and Consumer Protection;

Oversees and ensures the enforcement of the New York State and local laws pertaining to Weights and Measures and Consumer Protection;

Establishes procedures for testing scales, pumps, meters, balances, weights and other measuring devices;

Supervises and authorizes the sealing of pumps, metering devices and scales found to be accurate within allowable tolerances;

Reviews and makes determinations regarding the findings of a variety of investigations (e.g. complaints of consumer fraud, violations in the sale of commodities);

Advises staff in making decisions regarding the prosecution of violations and preparing to provide oral or written testimony;

Serves as hearing officer in matters relating to civil violation penalties;

Proposes revisions of laws pertaining to Consumer Protection laws and adoption of new ones, when appropriate;

Addresses the community and other groups in order to promote awareness of weights and measures/consumer protection issues and laws;

Prepares reports, as required;

Carries out the requirements of appropriate local legislation (e.g. Home Improvement licensing, towing, etc.);

Investigates and collects evidence in consumer fraud cases, as necessary;

Provides information, as necessary, to the County Executive, on behalf of the consuming public in order to facilitate the responsiveness of County government to its citizens;

Responds to County citizens' complaints about County government, as referred by the Office of the County Executive;

Responds to requests referred by the Office of the County Executive, for information or assistance in obtaining services from County departments, offices, or agencies;

Provides reports, as required, to the County Executive regarding the nature and frequency of complaints or other issues regarding County departments, offices, or agencies;

Provides assistance to County departments, offices, and agencies as directed by the County Executive in order to ensure the quality of services to the public by identifying service delivery problems, and recommend solutions, when appropriate;

(over)

Makes referrals and provides general information to government and private non-profit agencies; Provides referral assistance on behalf of the County government (e.g. information regarding County services and resources) to community groups, especially in order to support special community projects.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Thorough knowledge of laws, rules and regulations governing Weights and Measures programs; thorough knowledge of practices and procedures used to inspect, test and ascertain if weighing and measuring devices and systems are correct or being used correctly; thorough knowledge of appropriate consumer protection laws; thorough knowledge of County government and departmental operations; thorough knowledge of the construction and operation of commonly used weighing and measuring devices; thorough knowledge of common packaging problems and practices; good knowledge of principles and practices of modern administrative techniques and procedures, including budget preparation and administration; good knowledge of investigative techniques; ability to supervise and direct the work of others; ability to read and interpret complex written material, state laws and departmental regulations pertaining to consumer protection; ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

1. A Bachelor's degree or higher that included or was supplemented by at least twenty-four (24) credits in any one or combination of the following: Physical Sciences*, Engineering Science, Mechanical Technology, Mathematics** or related technical field and five (5) years of experience that substantially involved one or more of the following, two (2) years of which must have been in a supervisory, managerial, or administrative capacity:
 - a. enforcing weights and measures/consumer protection laws and regulations and inspecting and testing of devices and packaged commodities; or
 - b. inspecting, testing and repairing commercial and/or industrial weighing and/or measuring devices per manufacturer's specifications and tolerances; or
 - c. inspecting and testing both quality and quantity of packaged or manufactured goods using precision scale/balances and other precision measuring equipment, performing data reduction and assessing compliance of the results with appropriate specifications and tolerances; or
 - d. conducting chemical or physical analyses using precision scales/balances and other precision measuring equipment, performing data reduction, and assessing compliance of results with the appropriate specifications and tolerances; or
 - e. direct involvement in consumer protection (e.g. resolving consumer complaints and/or disputes through mediation and/or arbitration, investigating unfair practices or consumer fraud).
2. An Associate's degree that included or was supplemented by at least twenty-four (24) credit hours in any one or combination of the following: Physical Sciences, Engineering Science, Mechanical Technology, Mathematics or related technical field and seven (7) years of experience as described in (1) above.

NOTE: One (1) additional year of the required experience as defined in only (1a), (1b), (1c), or (1d) above (not 1e) may be substituted for the twenty-four (24) credit hours (e.g., Physical Sciences, Mathematics) specified in (1) and (2), above.

PROMOTION: Two (2) years of permanent status as a Deputy Director of Consumer Protection and Public Advocate.

*Physical Sciences include Chemistry (Inorganic Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Biochemistry), Earth Science (Meteorology, Astronomy, Geology) and Physics.

**Mathematics also includes course work in Accounting, Economics, etc., provided that the course substantially includes the manipulation of numbers.