



NJDOH Office of Local Public Health (OLPH) | New Jersey Public Health Licensure Examination

WHO IS A HEALTH OFFICER?

A Health Officer is generally the administrative officer of a municipal, regional, county, or contractual health agency. This individual is responsible for evaluating health problems, planning appropriate activities to address these health problems, developing necessary budget procedures to finance these activities, and directing staff to carry out these activities efficiently and economically.

PUBLIC HEALTH LICENSURE EXAMINATION FOR HEALTH OFFICER

The **minimum** qualifications to be admitted to the Health Officer examination in New Jersey are as follows:

- 1) hold a doctorate or a masters degree from an accredited college or university which is recognized by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education in a health-related field such as public health, environmental science, health administration, social work, nursing, health education or hold a doctor of medicine, a doctor of osteopathy, or a doctor of veterinary medicine from an accredited medical, osteopathic, or veterinary school, respectively. The core course work for the above-referenced degrees shall include or be supplemented by at least three (3) credit hours in each of the following areas: (a) planning; (b) administration; (c) environmental science; (d) social science; (e) biostatistics / statistics; and, (f) epidemiology at the undergraduate, junior or senior level. Examination applicants are not permitted to use one course to fulfill the requirements of more than one area, e.g., a course in epidemiology can not be used as both an epidemiology course and a statistics course. Courses with grades less than 2.0 ("C") shall not be considered; **AND**
- 2) satisfactory completion of two (2) years of full-time employment in a position which provides administrative experience in at least three of the five recognized public health activities, which include the following: (a) administration and support services; (b) environmental health; (c) communicable diseases; (d) maternal and child health; and, (e) chronic illness. "Administrative experience" means work which is performed under minimal supervision requiring initiative, decision-making, and independent judgment.

The New Jersey Health Officer examination is comprised of two parts – *Part I* (90 minutes) which is an inventory of content knowledge using a fixed response format and *Part II* (120 minutes) which is an assessment of conceptual, judgmental, and experiential skills using an open response format. The framework for *Part II* is *The Public Health Workforce: An Agenda for the 21st Century and Public Health Practice Standards of Performance for Local Boards of Health in New Jersey, N.J.A.C. 8:52*. Examinees must successfully complete *Part I* before proceeding to *Part II*.

Part I consists of 100 true/false items distributed evenly across the topic areas of management and administration, environmental and occupational health, chronic and disabling diseases, and communicable diseases. To pass *Part I*, examinees must have an overall score of 70 percent **and** must not score below 60 percent in any of the four topic areas. Part II consists of about 40 open-ended items that assess skills rather than factual knowledge alone. These skills include:

- a. Data analysis and assessment;
- b. Policy and program development;
- c. Communication;
- d. Cultural competency;
- e. Community dimensions of public health practice;
- f. Public health science;
- g. Financial management; and
- h. Leadership and systems thinking.

It should be noted that the sole purpose of a licensing examination is to identify persons who possess the minimum knowledge and experience necessary to perform tasks on the job safely and competently – not to select “top” candidates or ensure the success of licensed persons. Therefore, licensing examinations are very different from academic or employment examinations. Academic examinations assess how well a person can define and comprehend terms and concepts. Employment examinations aim to rank order candidates who possess qualifications for a job.

APPLICATION FOR HEALTH OFFICER EXAMINATION

Admission to the examination is dependent upon the information submitted in an application, which must be accompanied by documentary evidence in support of an applicant’s training, education, and experience. Letters verifying an applicant’s experience must list **in detail** all the duties, responsibilities, and length of time served in the particular field. These letters must be from supervisor(s) and must verify and evaluate an applicant’s employment experience. Documentation must be in narrative form and must be as detailed as possible to determine whether the applicant meets the experiential qualifications. An official transcript under seal must be submitted from an applicant’s college(s) or university(ies). Student copies are not acceptable. The application must also include a copy of the course catalogue description of the required courses. Copies of certificates, awards, or other similar documents are appropriate documentation in support of an applicant’s training qualifications. Incomplete applications are rejected, and the application fee is non-refundable.

Applicants must forward completed applications and supporting documentation along with a check or money order in the amount of \$50.00 to:

New Jersey Department of Health
Office of Local Public Health
Public Health Licensure
P.O. Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360

An applicant’s check or money order must be made payable to ***Treasurer, State of New Jersey***. All fees are non-refundable and non-transferable. The fee that accompanies an application covers the cost of reviewing and processing the application; it can not be refunded even if an applicant is found ineligible for the examination. Please note that if an applicant is found eligible to sit for the examination, an examination fee of \$100.00 is also collected.

Only applications which are complete and have been received by the published examination application closing date shall be reviewed by the New Jersey Department of Health’s (NJDOH) Office of Local Public Health (OLPH) and the New Jersey Public Health Licensing and Examination Board. The deadline for application submission is enforced according to the postmark on the packet. Applicants are notified of their eligibility approximately one month prior to the examination date for which they applied.

RESOURCES

Access the Health Officer examination application, application checklist, and the examination schedule at the following webpage:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/lh/professionals/licensing/>

The **Health Officer Orientation Packet (HOOP)**, a compendium of administrative resources for newly appointed health officers, seasoned health officers, and local public health employees in leadership or managerial positions, may also be obtained at the above link.

The [New Jersey Register – Free Public Access](#) website is maintained by LexisNexis®, the publisher of the **New Jersey Administrative Code**, and provides free public access to the public health licensure rules set forth at N.J.A.C. 8:7, Licensure of Persons for Public Health Positions.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LICENSURE PROCESS

Contact NJDOH OLPH's Public Health Licensure Program at OLPH.Licensure@doh.nj.gov.