

**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS TESTIMONY  
BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
IT NON-COMPETITIVE CLASS TITLES PROPOSAL  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2015**

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Good morning, my name is Evan Hines and I am First Deputy Commissioner at the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, or DoITT. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in favor of the City's IT Non-Competitive Class Titles Proposal.

DoITT provides for the sustained, efficient, and effective delivery of IT services, infrastructure, and telecommunications to enhance service delivery to New York City's residents, businesses, employees, and visitors. The services provided by DoITT are critical to many of the applications and systems that make the City run, and keeping pace with emerging IT trends is vital to ensuring we maintain and improve the ways in which the City serves the public.

I would now like to describe for the Commission why we believe the seven newly proposed IT titles are best classified as Non-Competitive.

The **IT Project Specialist** title includes roles that require a unique set of interpersonal, creative and analytical skills in order to ensure that the solutions we deliver to our customers meet their business needs – skills which cannot easily be tested for.

IT Project Specialists can be highly technical but do not necessarily have a computer background. They are not required to perform computer programming which makes them very different from positions in the existing competitive Computer titles. They fit into a separate category that has an emphasis on analysis, process, methodology and IT delivery. Accordingly, we believe non-competitive classification of this title is appropriate.

A Designer, for example, understands how to marry technology to user needs using content strategy and usability best practices. The talent of any Designer can best be determined by the quality of their portfolio of work, which cannot adequately be assessed using a multiple choice or education and experience test.

Business analysts are often the first to face clients and users, and the soft skills needed for these client interactions are something you cannot test for.

Taking another example, the Quality Assurance Tester, needs skills to test and troubleshoot applications that are best acquired through practical experience specific to the needs of the City. They include tools that are both obsolete for legacy applications and others for brand new, cutting-edge technologies. It is impossible to ascertain through testing whether or not QA Testers have the skills necessary to use the plethora of testing products available as well as those no longer widely available.

The **Senior IT Architect** title is being requested for positions responsible for architecting enterprise applications and infrastructure solutions. DoITT's ability to provide agencies with shared services, enterprise solutions, and IT expertise is predicated on having experienced architects who design and implement solutions requiring deep and broad technical knowledge that can only be gained from hands-on architectural experience on complex IT assessments and implementations. The associated tasks are design-related and creative/innovative in nature, and cannot be adequately tested for. DoITT therefore requires the ability to hire a select number of highly-skilled, knowledgeable senior IT architects to ensure the City remains on the cutting edge of technology – as well as retains its existing in-house subject matter experts.

The **IT Infrastructure Engineer** title includes roles that oversee the City's mission-critical systems. These positions design and manage the City's data centers as well as CityNet, the City's proprietary fiber network and the backbone for secure connectivity. A competitive test lifecycle may take between 1-3 years before candidates can be hired; within that timeframe, this industry's technology may cycle through 1-5 generations of product development. Since the civil service testing lifecycle cannot keep pace with the rapidly-evolving changes in technologies and tools used within the Infrastructure Engineering discipline, we believe these positions are best classified as non-competitive.

**IT Security** disciplines are the most highly-specialized, hardest-to-fill positions in today's IT industry. In light of recent global cybersecurity threats and attacks, that are evolving at an accelerated pace, it is of great importance on having tools and methods of defense that evolve at the same rate and we need the ability to hire staff with skills in these new areas as this evolution occurs. Requiring testing for these positions will result in candidates that may have outdated or antiquated skillsets, which can leave the City vulnerable to the changing threat landscape.

The **IT Automation and Monitoring Engineer** title is being requested for roles in IT operations and service management, and new hires will play major roles in defining, creating, implementing and supporting the monitoring and automation platforms and tools for DoITT, the Citywide Data Centers, and City agencies. They will have exposure to a broad set of technologies and be constantly challenged to create innovative monitoring solutions. As a rapidly-evolving discipline within the industry, it is difficult to accurately and timely test for these skills.

Fulfilling a significant role in delivery of critical IT services, the **IT Service Management Specialist** positions will be critical to ensuring IT service management and operations remain at the cutting edge of technology. These positions are responsible for the development and management of ITSM policies and procedures that govern IT operations throughout DoITT and provide guidance to all City agencies' ITSM framework. The IT Service Management Specialist title will enable the City to fill critical operational subject matter expert roles, such as Change Management, and Compliance. Due to the complex nature of the tasks, and domain knowledge and experience necessary to execute them, it is extremely difficult to adequately assess through testing whether or not candidates can successfully fill these positions. In addition, the tools and systems used by these positions changes so rapidly that timely testing for these skills is not currently feasible.

Finally, the **Deputy Commissioner (IT)** role requires a high level of competency and a record of technical and executive experience across infrastructure, IT architecture, technology, and application development, and telecommunications disciplines, which cannot be identified through a competitive examination process. The Deputy Commissioner role is a managerial, senior executive level position with responsibility as a leader of day-to-day operations, strategic planning and must be a dynamic leader of both innovation as well as human capital. This unique and broad level of responsibility makes it impractical to test for these positions. Additionally, based on the agency head's strategic direction for operating his or her agency, the IT needs will vary greatly and therefore the specific skills needed for these positions are unknown until that executive decides their agency direction. This further complicates the ability to use testing to determine if the Deputy Commissioner (IT) has the requisite skillset need to do their job.

For these reasons, DoITT supports the Department of Citywide Administrative Services' proposal to classify the City of New York's seven (7) new Computer titles as Non-Competitive Civil Service positions. Our support for this proposal may be summarized broadly as follows:

**Technology is constantly changing and evolving** – and doing so as rapidly as ever. In hiring technical staff, the challenge has been, and remains, reconciling this reality with the competitive test lifecycle that can take multiple years from exam to placement. This process can result in new hires – that performed well on a civil service exam – coming into work without the knowledge of technology that has evolved in the time since they tested. Knowledge today may be deemed unnecessary tomorrow and we need the ability to hire staff with skills in these new areas as this evolution occurs. The same can be said of methodologies used to deploy these new technologies which are constantly evolving to allow us to deliver them before they are already obsolete. We cannot stop technology from changing, and in fact we do not want to because these changes allow the city to deliver services to its constituencies better, faster, and more efficiently. Having these roles caught up in testing cycles will have the opposite effect on our service delivery. Testing for these positions is also not the optimum way to choose candidates, especially with the rate of technological advancement. The skills required for a number of positions under these titles require knowledge and practical experience that is very difficult to adequately test using a traditional multiple-choice exam for merit and fitness.

**Classifying these titles as competitive may increase reliance on consultants** – contrary to the Administration's aims. Consultants are not City employees and are often paid at much higher rates than City employees. Short of being able to hire qualified candidates with specialized skills in a timely manner, the City's dependence on a consultant may require a longer than desired engagement in order to adequately complete or maintain a system. And after the consultant's engagement is completed, the knowledge associated with that consultant often leaves as well. The ability to hire an employee through non-competitive selection instead of contracting with consultants will facilitate the City's ability to retain the required technical professional and support staff during and after project implementation. In addition, retaining these technical professionals as City employees enables other employees to learn and benefit from their knowledge and expertise, increasing the knowledgebase and skills of the entire organization.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Serving more than 8.4 million New Yorkers every day across the full range of City operations requires a top-notch technological underpinning capable of adapting to the rapid pace of innovation. It also requires the City retain the flexibility to bring on new employees to work in these disciplines in a timeframe that closely tracks to this pace, which is why we support each of these new titles being proposed for non-competitive classification.

Thank you.