

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families

Civil Service Exam Overview

October 24, 2023

**RHODE
ISLAND**

Civil Service Exams



Civil Service System Overview

The roots of the civil service system date back to the 1800s. The Civil Service Exam has become part of that system. It is used as a screening tool to determine whether an applicant has the baseline knowledge and skill set necessary for certain positions in the public sector.

A Child Protective Investigator (CPI) and a Social Caseworker II (SCWII) are two classifications that require an individual to sit for and pass the Civil Service Exam before being hired. Under the one-year pilot program passed by the General Assembly in 2023, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) changed the process to hire CPI and SCWII applicants. Pursuant to this new process, DCYF is now responsible for the following:

- Administering the Civil Service Exams
- Conducting in-person interviews
- Determining which applicants will be offered employment
- Determining the order in which applicants will be offered employment

While the revised statute required DCYF to start the pilot for the new hiring process on October 1, 2023, we were able to launch it on August 8, 2023 and it will remain in effect until September 30, 2024.

Civil Service Exam Process

Challenges under the original process:

- Filling vacant positions quickly.
- Receiving names one candidate at a time.
- Low turnout rate for exams since the onset of COVID-19

Challenges with the new process:

- Applicants taking exams with no intent to accept employment offer.
- Connecting with applicants via phone calls (and email) to schedule exams, interviews, or appeals.
- Continued low turnout rate for exams.
- Managing overlapping testing groups for candidates at the same time.
- Offering the exam three times per month

In Progress Short-term & Long-term Actions

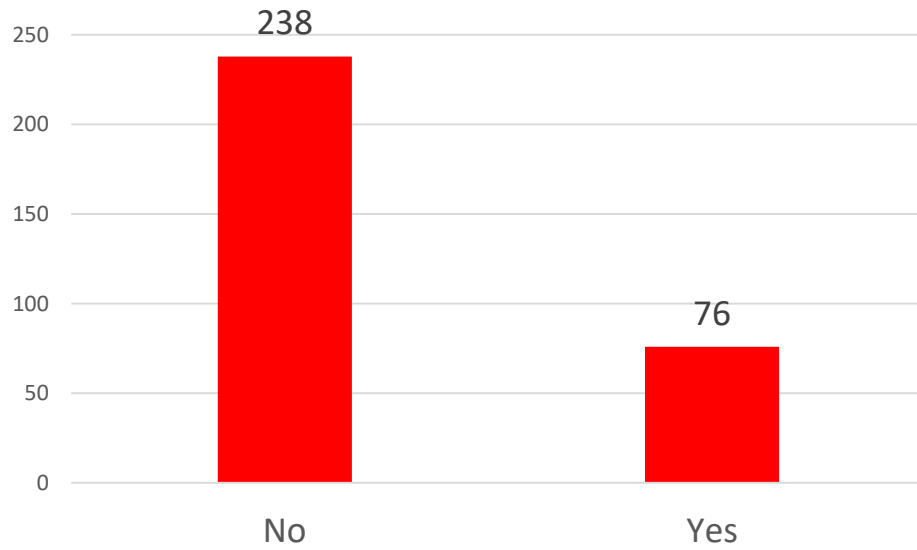
- Reviewing laws, rules, and protocols to identify ways to shorten the length of the hiring process.
- Accepting applicants continuously, instead of on a 14-day cycle until we have a pool of a minimum of 20 applicants who have passed the exam.
- Calling applicants to remind them of their exam date.
- Allowing applicants to reschedule their exam once before having to reapply for the position.
- Using email instead of mail for communicating with applicants.

Overview of Applicant Pool

Since the new pilot process began on August 8, 2023, DCYF has received 314 applications for CPIs and 242 for SCWIIIs.

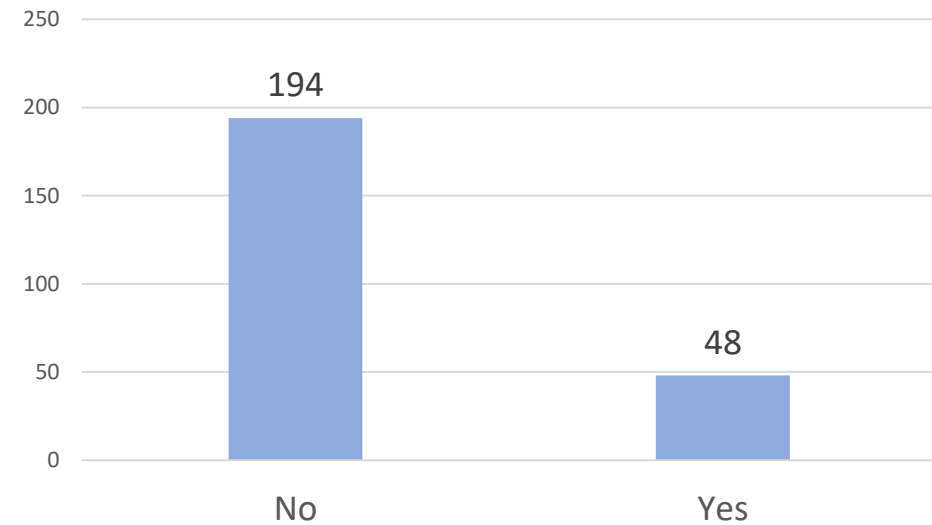
Approximately 78% of all applicants did not meet the minimum qualifications necessary to sit for the Civil Service Exam.

CPI Applicants



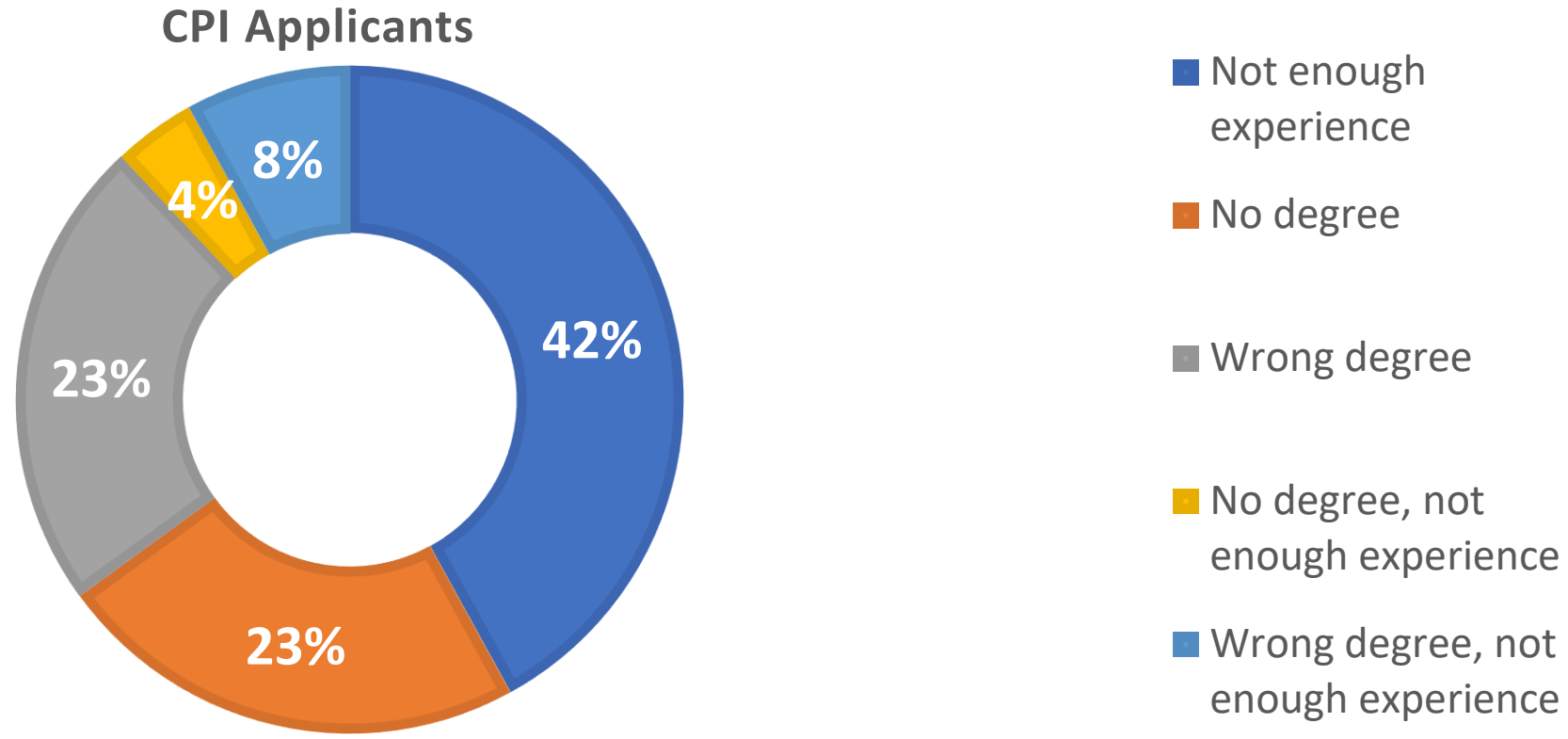
24% met minimum qualifications

SCWII Applicants



19% met minimum qualifications

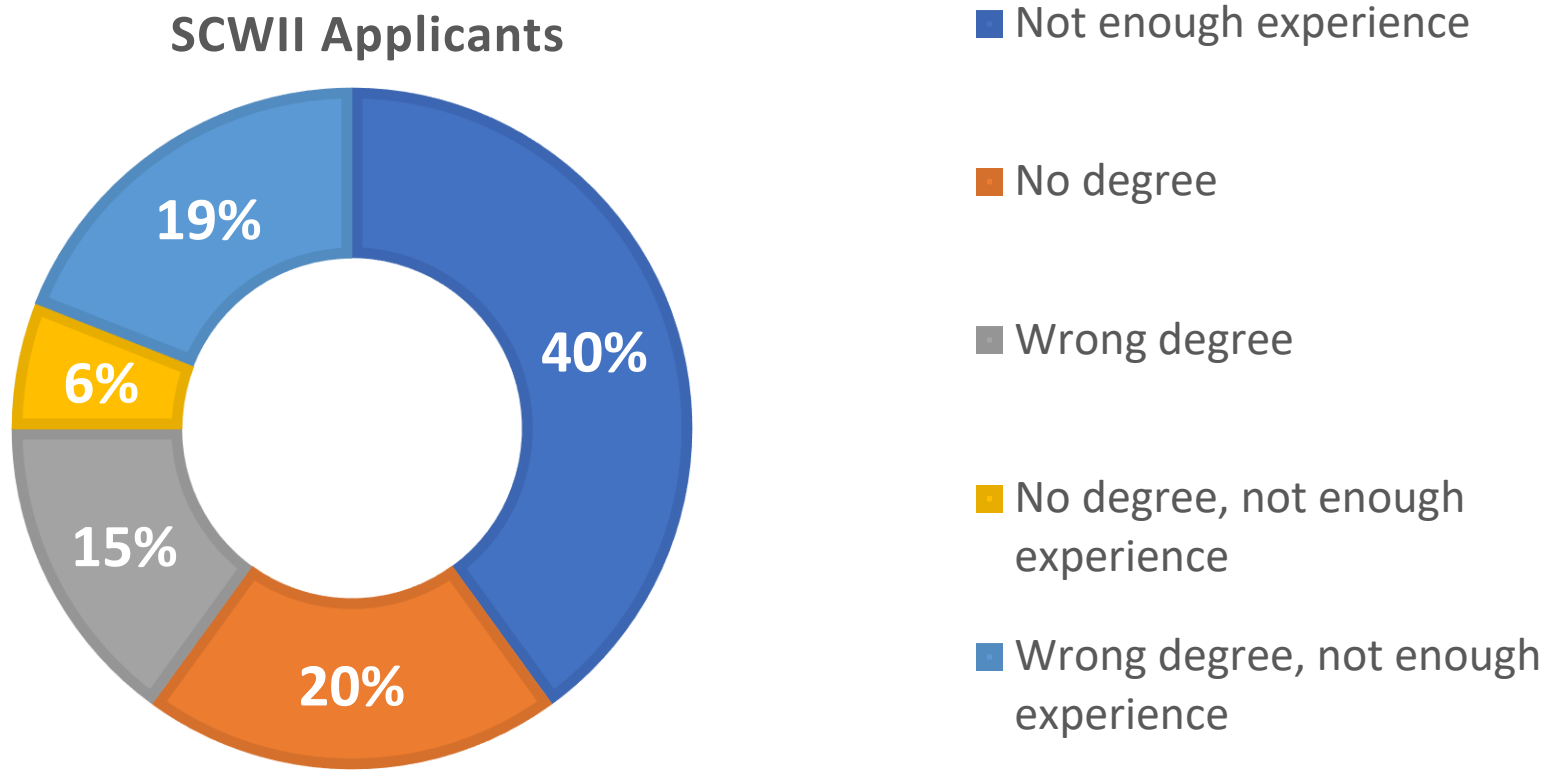
Breakdown of CPI applicants who did not meet the minimum qualifications to sit for the Civil Service Exam.



Minimum Qualifications:

- Education: Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Human Services, or Criminal Justice; and
- Experience: 2-3 years of human services casework; assessing/working with families and providing direct services related to child welfare, child safety, and child well-being.

Breakdown of SCWII applicants who did not meet the minimum qualifications to sit for the Civil Service Exam.



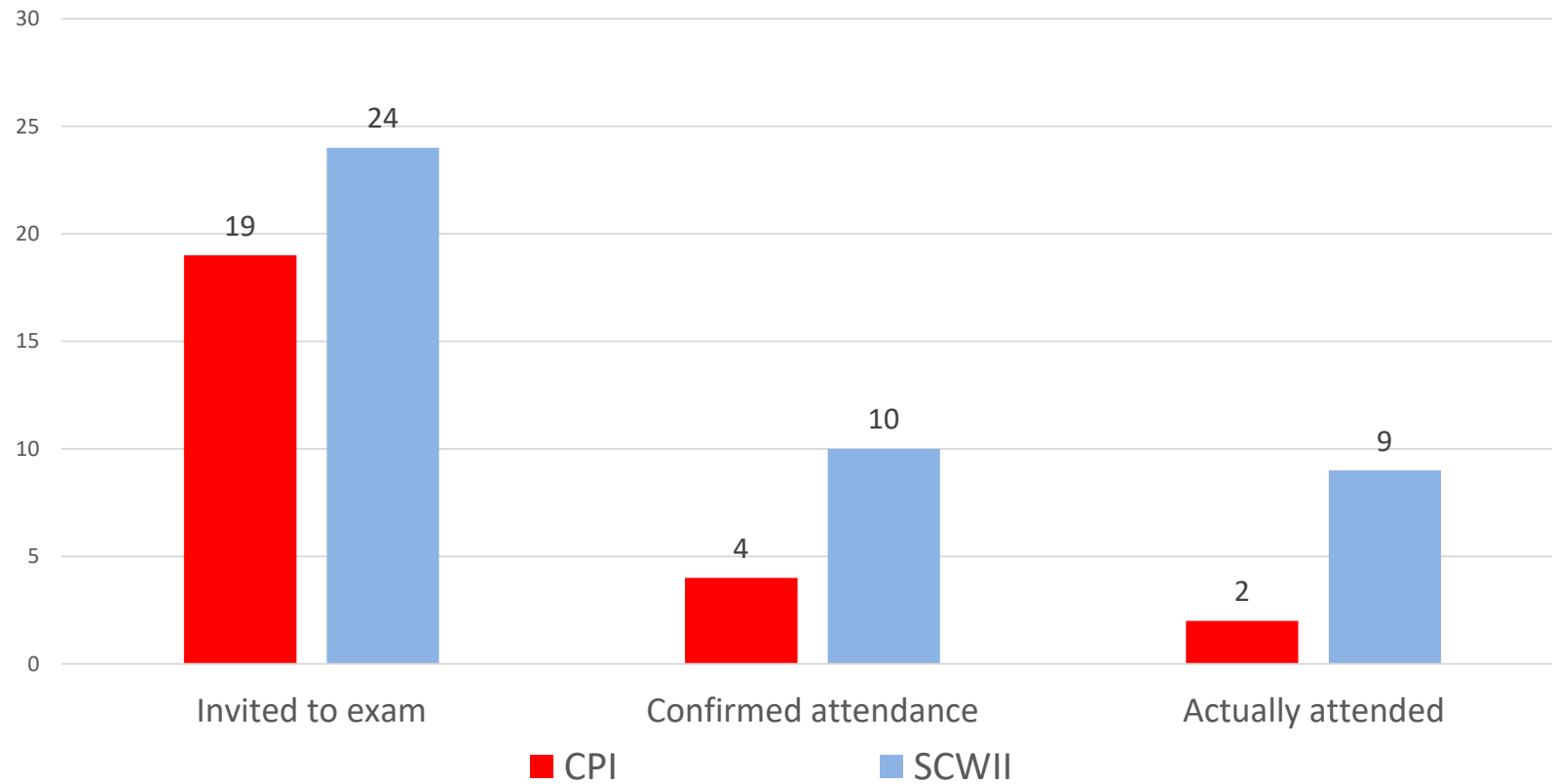
Minimum Qualifications:

- Education: Bachelor's Degree in Sociology, Psychology, Social Work, Child Development, or a related field; and
- Experience: Two years' experience in the field of family and children services. Must also maintain a valid driver's license.

Exam Attendance

In September, DCYF began calling applicants to remind them of their upcoming Civil Service Exam.

Exam participation

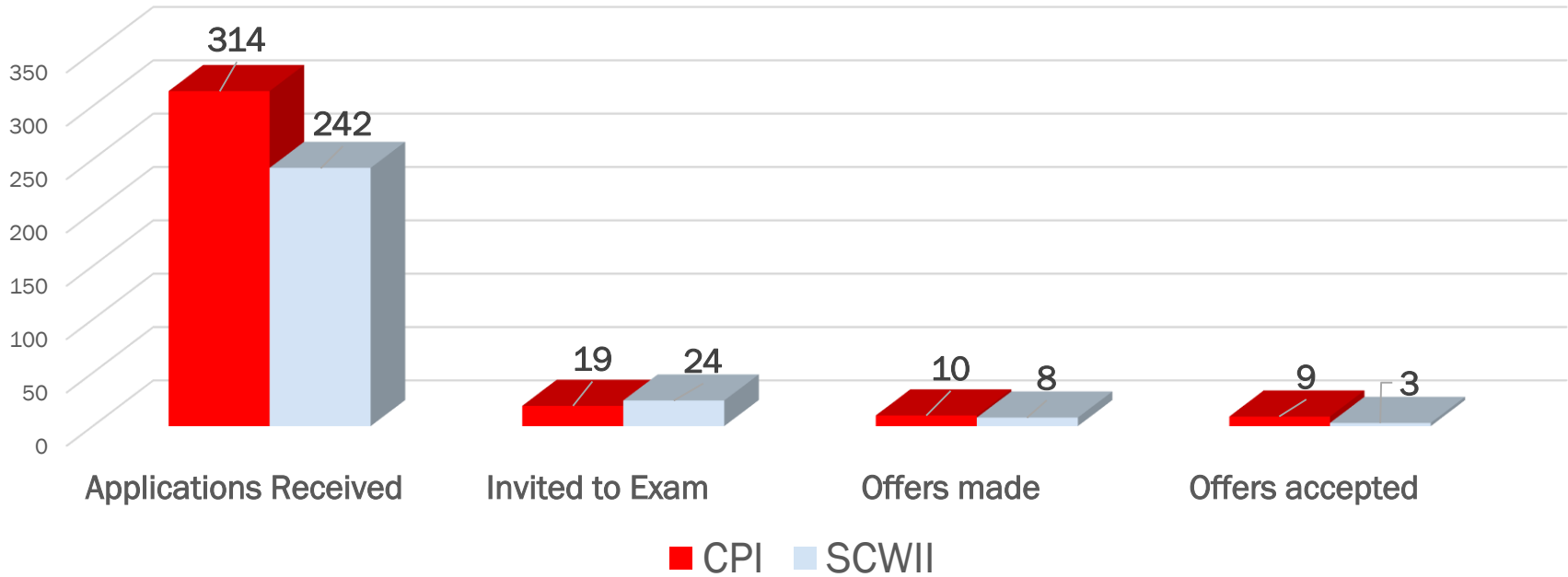


Onboarding

—
Examining the number of
applicants hired.

Since the pilot started on August 8, 2023, DCYF made offers of employment to approximately 3% of all applicants.

CPI and SCWII Offers made



General Process Information

DCYF Hiring Timeline Under the Pilot Program



Total: 41 business days

**Applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications to sit for the Civil Service Exam are notified and may file an appeal. If they choose to file an appeal, the process takes an additional 15 days.*

Budget approval process for DCYF positions:

- The state's process for approving job vacancy postings is called a Personnel Action Request (PAR).
- PARs involve various staff at DCYF, DOA, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) who coordinate to make sure funding is available for a position before posting the job vacancy notice.
- Based on the data between January of 2023 and August of 2023, PARs take under or about 2 weeks to process. This is in addition to the 41 days it takes to go through the hiring process explained on the previous slide.

Strategic Plan

The goal is to decrease the vacancy rate from 16% to under 10% by December 31, 2023 by:

- Increasing the pool of applicants:
 - Sending civil service exam announcements (“announcements”) to all New England colleges for posting on their job boards.
 - Posting announcements on websites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Indeed.
 - Sharing announcements with our partners at the Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (DEDI).
 - Posting announcements in places of worship.
 - Sharing announcements with community leaders.
- Streamlining the civil service exam process, where possible, to hire applicants more quickly.
- Calling applicants who are qualified to sit for the Civil Service Exam 1-2 nights before to remind them of the exam date.
- Purchasing recruiting materials to attend job fairs.

Additional Information Requested

- **Is there a budget for recruiting staff at DCYF?** Occasionally, DCYF's internal team handling Human Resources requests a reasonable amount of funding for job fair tents, storyboards, brochures, registration fees etc. The requests are made internally to DCYF management and budget office staff and have all been granted.
- **How are the questions on the Civil Service Exam determined?** The process was similar to what it was before the pilot. The questions for the CPI exam are developed by DCYF's Director of Child Protective Services in collaboration with human resources staff at DOA. The questions for the SCWII exam are developed by DCYF's Director of Family Services in collaboration with human resources staff at DOA.
- **Recent/Upcoming recruiting events:**
 - Bryant University – September 20, 2023
 - University of Rhode Island – October 24, 2023
 - Roger Williams University Virtual Job Fair – February 7, 2024

Additional Information Requested (con't)

Examples of pamphlets:

- An example of a handout will be provided to Task Force members.
- An example of an advertisement posted to social media may be found here →

DCYF is seeking qualified, dedicated, mission-driven staff to help support the children and families of RI

**Social Caseworker II
Child Protective Investigator**

Learn more and apply at www.apply.ri.gov

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IN THE LIVES OF RI FAMILIES**

DCYF
Rhode Island Department
of Children, Youth & Families

Questions?



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