



# **REEVALUATE COLLEGE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS TO EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND ADDRESS RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES**

**Department of Administrative Services  
Human Resources Administration Division**

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## Department of Administrative Services Human Resources Administration Division (or State of Georgia) to Reevaluate College Degree Requirements to Expand Job Opportunities and Address Recruitment Challenges

In response to the State of Georgia's ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining employees, and tasked by Georgia Senate Bill 3 (SB3), known as the "[Reducing Barriers to State Employment Act of 2023](#)," the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS), Human Resources Administration (HRA) undertook a significant initiative to reevaluate and potentially eliminate college degree requirements from certain state job positions. This strategic move aims to address the shrinking applicant pool and enhance the state's ability to attract and retain skilled professionals across various sectors.

SB3 requires the state to reevaluate the educational and training requirements for employment positions, identify jobs where these requirements can be reduced, determine when practical experience and training rather than a four-year college degree are the appropriate qualifications for a position and reduce the number of positions that require a four-year college degree.





# Background

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The need for this initiative arises from recent data indicating a substantial decrease in the number of applications received for state job openings. Based on Team Georgia Careers job postings in the fiscal years 2021 through 2023 and applications received for those postings, the State of Georgia continued to see a decline in the annual average number of applications per job opening from the pre-pandemic average of 57 in FY2019 to 20 in FY2023. This reduction in applicant volume is exacerbated by the increasingly tight labor market, where many employers competing for the same applicants are reconsidering the necessity of four-year college degrees for various roles.

Like Georgia, other states are adapting their hiring practices to align with current workforce realities. Maryland has successfully removed degree requirements in Administration, Customer Service, and Information Technology roles. Colorado is piloting a "Skills-Based Hiring" approach, and other states, including Arizona, South Dakota, and Utah, only mandate degrees for positions legally required to have them.



# Methodology

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As the focus of this initiative, DOAS HRA explored the removal of degree requirements for specific jobs within the Statewide Pay Plan (SWPP) and Law Enforcement Pay Plan (LEPP). These plans encompass 1,439 job titles and descriptions, with a significant portion requiring a bachelor's degree.



To complete the work, DOAS HRA collaborated with representatives from impacted state agencies. Subject matter experts within these state agencies who specialized within a targeted job family group, e.g., information technology and administration, were identified to assist with identifying affected jobs, and developing implementation and change management plans. Prior to finalizing requirements, recommended changes were shared with agencies to gather feedback.



# Results

In July 2024, HRA completed the review of the 1,439 job titles and descriptions with the SWPP and LEPP, some of which included varying levels of qualifications based on degree requirements combined with experience. Upon review, 791 degree requirements were removed, and/or experience requirements were reduced so that related work experience could substitute for formal education requirements from 643 jobs.

For example, for an Accountant 3 position, the old qualifications included the following combination of degree and experience:

- Master's degree in accounting from an accredited college or university and one year of professional accounting experience OR
- Bachelor's degree in accounting from an accredited college or university and two years of professional accounting experience OR
- Bachelor's degree in a business curriculum which included completion of introductory and intermediate accounting sequence from an accredited college or university and three years of professional accounting experience. Note: Some positions may require certifications.

The new entry qualifications for the Accountant 3 position have been modified to:

- Bachelor's degree in accounting and two years of professional accounting job-related experience OR
- Two years of experience at the lower-level Accountant 2 or equivalent position.

In the example above, the old qualifications included three degrees, a master's and two bachelor's degrees with varied experience, and the modified qualification included one bachelor's degree. For this position, the number of degrees removed is calculated as two for the one master's and one bachelor's degree removed.





A breakdown of the 791 degrees removed and/or modified by degree level included:

- Master's: **114**
- Bachelor's: **440**
- Associate: **163**
- Technical: **74**



Number of Jobs modified within the Top 5 Job Families

- Healthcare: **198**
- Law Enforcement: **181**
- Information Technology: **142**
- Regulatory: **121**
- Financial: **98**



Number of Jobs with Degrees Removed and/or Experience Requirements Reduced from Entry Qualifications

- Healthcare: **92**
- Law Enforcement: **15**
- Information Technology: **157**
- Regulatory: **63**
- Financial: **36**

Prior to reevaluation, there were 1,371 jobs, out of which, 1,021 (74.5%) required either a college degree or a college degree and/or equivalent experience requirement. Of the 1,021 jobs, 278 had a degree-only requirement and 743 jobs had a degree and/or equivalent experience requirement. In 2024, of 1,439 job titles and descriptions within Team GA Careers, the official State of Georgia online job board, 774 jobs (53.7%) were made more accessible to applicants by removing degree requirements and/or reducing experience requirements. These job titles and descriptions are available to state agencies for posting open positions.



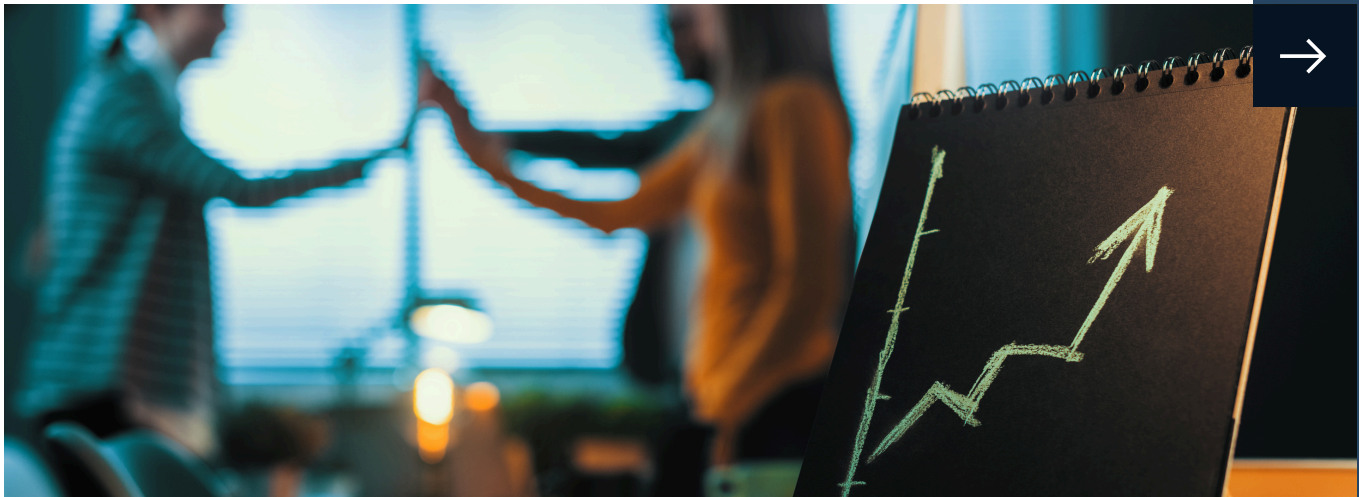
# Expected Outcomes

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 28.3% of Georgians over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher, and currently, 57.35% of state employees (Data in Teamworks, state enterprise resource system) do not hold a college degree. This initiative is expected to benefit approximately half of the existing workforce by aligning job qualifications with practical experience and skill sets rather than formal educational credentials alone.

By adjusting these requirements, Georgia aims to tap into a broader pool of talent and provide opportunities to individuals who have developed their skills through alternative routes such as military service, apprenticeships, technical training, and on-the-job experience.

**“This initiative will have a profound impact on expanding the state’s talent pool and fostering more inclusive hiring practices. By considering individuals who have developed relevant experience through non-traditional means, agencies will be able to broaden the scope of their search for talent. By focusing on skills rather than credentials, the state can reduce barriers to employment and promote workforce diversity. In addition, this shift can help improve retention by allowing individuals with strong practical skill development to gain access to employment opportunities,”** said Al Howell, Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources Administration.

This project is part of a broader strategy to address workforce shortages and enhance career opportunities for Georgians. HRA will collaborate with agency representatives to ensure a comprehensive and effective implementation.





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