

ACTIVITY PROGRAM AIDE I—40501



HOW TO PREPARE GUIDE

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NOTE

YOUR APPLICATION FOR
ACTIVITY PROGRAM AIDE I (40501)
HAS BEEN ACCEPTED, AND YOU ARE
SCHEDULED TO TAKE THE EXAMINATION.
YOU WILL RECEIVE A TEST CARD
APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE TEST.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Your application for Activity Program Aide I has been accepted. To be placed on the register, you must complete a written examination. Your performance on the examination will comprise 100% of your final score on the employment register.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXAM

The examination for this classification is a multiple-choice exam. A multiple-choice exam is designed to measure specific knowledges and abilities. As an applicant for the Activity Program Aide I job, you are expected to have some of the knowledges and abilities necessary to carry out the duties of the job. The purpose of the exam is to measure those knowledges and abilities necessary for an applicant to possess before employment. The specific knowledges and abilities that will be measured on this exam include:

- ✓ **Ability to follow written instructions as needed to conduct an approved program of individually prescribed activities.**
- ✓ **Ability to read and comprehend written materials such as behavioral management plans, departmental policies and procedures, file records, and equipment operation instructions as needed to implement and coordinate program activities.**
- ✓ **Ability to plan group activities to include selecting location, determining required materials, and determining number of participants as needed to organize and conduct activity programs.**

Each of the sections will measure one of the abilities listed above. You will be presented with a test question and four possible responses to that question. You will then select the most appropriate response to the question.

You will have 3 hours to complete the exam.

III. WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU COME TO TAKE THE EXAM

- ✓ Be well-rested. Get a good night's sleep for several nights before the exam.
- ✓ Allow plenty of time to get to the exam location. If you are rushed and late, you may be upset when you get there. Plan to get there 20 minutes before the scheduled time.
- ✓ Come to the exam dressed comfortably.
- ✓ Read this booklet. You may want to practice using the example items.
- ✓ Do not bring this booklet or any other study materials to the exam location. You will not be permitted to bring them into the testing room.
- ✓ You must bring several sharpened #2 pencils with good erasers. It is also recommended that you bring at least one (1) highlighter pen.
- ✓ You must bring the **NOTIFICATION CARD** that you received from the State Personnel Department. This card lists the examination title, location of exam, and date and time of the examination.
- ✓ You must also bring a form of **PICTURE IDENTIFICATION** to the exam location. This may be your driver's license, military identification card, or passport. You will not be allowed into the testing location without your **NOTIFICATION CARD** and **PICTURE IDENTIFICATION**.

IV. DURING THE EXAM

When you report to the exam, a test monitor will check you in and provide specific instructions on where to sit for the exam. The test monitor will be in the testing room and will be available to assist you if you have any problems; however, the monitor **will not interpret exam questions for you.**

V. HOW TO TAKE THE EXAM

- ✓ Use your time efficiently. The exam is not a test of how quickly you can answer questions; however, you should pace yourself to ensure that you have enough time to complete it. In the section(s) of the test that may require reading, try to keep a steady pace. Try to finish as much of the test as you can.
- ✓ As on most tests, you will find some of the exam items to be harder than others. Even if you do not know an answer, it will be to your advantage to guess since your score will be based on the number of correct answers. It is suggested that you first work through the test without spending too much time on any one item. After you have gone through the test once, go back to those items you may have skipped or of which you were unsure. Remember, it is to your advantage to answer every item.
- ✓ When you take the exam, you will be given an exam booklet and a separate answer sheet. The exam monitor will explain how to complete the answer sheet and how to mark your answers. The most important thing to remember is that you should always be sure the item number in the exam booklet is the same as the number you are marking on the answer sheet, and that you mark only one answer per item. Items with more than one answer will be counted as incorrect.

Strategies for Answering Questions

By following the suggestions listed below, you can do your best.

- ◆ *Read the questions carefully.*
Be sure you know what the questions ask and what the choices say before you try to answer the question. On every test, people choose wrong answers simply because they fail to pay attention to part of the question or fail to read all of the answer.
- ◆ *Choose the answer that is generally best.*
To keep questions short, they cannot have a lot of detail. You should give the answer that would be considered to be generally the best.
- ◆ *Mark some response to each question.*
 - You may decide you know the answer. Mark your answer on the answer sheet and spend no more time on that question.
 - You may decide that you are fairly sure of the answer but want to think more about it. Make a note in the test booklet so it will be easy to find later.
 - You may decide one or two answers are definitely not the best. Eliminate the answers you know are wrong, then direct your attention to those choices that could be correct.
 - You may decide that figuring out the answer is possible but will take you a lot of time. Do not mark any answer at that time. Note the question in your test booklet so you can find it when you are ready to come back to it. Make sure you finish the test in enough time to go back to answer the question.

- You may decide you do not know the answer, and all you can do is make a guess. Make the guess. Mark the answer sheet to show your answer. Do not waste any more time on that question. There is no penalty for guessing, and sometimes you may guess right.
- ◆ *Do not change answers unless you have a good reason.*
When people change their answers, they more often change from a right answer to a wrong one rather than from a wrong answer to a right one. The reason seems to be that they start thinking about some specific case, which results in choosing an answer on the basis of facts that are not given in the question. Or, people start to think about what some part of a question says and forget about what the rest of the question said.

VI. SCORING

Your education and experience have already been reviewed to determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for this position. You will not receive additional credit for your education and experience. Your score on the multiple-choice exam will make up 100% of your final score. Approximately six weeks after you take the exam, you will receive a score.

When the written exam for Activity Program Aide I is graded, the scores will be grouped into bands. When you receive notification of how you performed on the exam, you will not be given a numerical score (i.e., 67 out of 80, 93 out of 100). Rather, you will be informed into which band (i.e., 1, 3, 6, 10) your score fell. The following information is provided to help you understand the banding procedure.

What is banding?

Banding is one way to reduce the impact of fluctuations in test scores that do not provide meaningful information about differences in the ability to perform the job. One important purpose of testing is to identify the differences in test scores that reflect real differences among candidates. Banded scoring is a statistical procedure for grouping raw test scores that statistically are not meaningfully different from one another. In banded scoring, bands are set objectively and statistically. They are not manipulated arbitrarily.

Misconceptions about banding

There are many misconceptions about banding and the use of banded scores. Some of the most common misconceptions are listed below. Each misconception is followed by a clarification.

1) Misconception: Each band should have the same number of people.

We do not force bands to be a certain size. The people in a band are similar to each other in that statistically there is no meaningful difference in their scores. Sometimes Band 1 may be very large, and at other times it may be small. People's scores determine the size of the bands. We never know how many people will be in each band until we receive the test scores.

2) Misconception: Band numbers have no meaning. I don't have a score.

Band numbers do have meaning. Think of a band as a group of tied scores. Consider that in school two students with average grades of 94.5 and 94.3 would both be grouped into the same band. Just because one student made a 94.5 and one student made a 94.3, the teacher cannot be sure that 0.2 of a point means that

the student who scored 94.5 is smarter or is a better student. The scores are so close to each other that they are basically the same.

For example, think of the achievement tests that children take in school. The fine print on these tests always informs you not to focus on the numerical score but rather on the comparative score, which uses some type of grouping technique such as percentiles, standard deviations, grade levels, etc. These grouping techniques are considered forms of banding. Banding compares your performance on the test to the other test takers' performance and groups your score with others that are statistically the same.

3) Misconception: Band numbers are the same as letter grades.

Band numbers are not the same as letter grades. Band 1 does not equate to an "A," Band 2 to a "B," and so on. In school, a predetermined numerical range of scores (i.e., 90-100, 80-90, 70-80) equals an alphabetical value (i.e., A, B, C). This grading system is a form of banding. In this case, unlike grade school, the width of bands is not set in advance. Scores are banded only in relation to one another, so you compete against other test takers. The scores of all test takers determine the width of the bands, and your score is set in relation to the scores of your peers.

4) Misconception: A banded score on one test has the same value as a banded score on another test.

Banded scores are test specific and cannot be compared from test to test. Consider that a test taker scored 88 on one test, and the highest score of all test takers was 89. It is likely for this exam that the test taker who scored 88 would be in Band 1. However, if the same person scored the same grade on another test, and the highest score of all test takers was 100, he/she may be in Band 2 or Band 3. Candidates' scores vary on each test, and since candidate scores determine the width of bands and into which band test takers fall, the value of a banded score varies from test to test.

5) Misconception: People with the most seniority who have been on the job longest should be in the top bands.

People with the most experience do not always fall into the top bands. Time spent in a job may not be the same as possessing a knowledge, skill, or ability needed to perform the job. The people with the strongest knowledges, skills, and abilities (or who did best on the exam) will be in the top bands. Some of the people in the top bands will have been in similar jobs for a long period of time, and others will have been in similar jobs for a short period of time. Years of service do not always equal proficiency. Candidates with seniority or experience do not automatically perform best on the test. Regardless of seniority, candidates who display the appropriate knowledges, skills, and abilities perform best on the test.

6) Misconception: A standing in Band 4 or below automatically indicates failure or ineligibility for jobs.

A band number of 4 or lower is not automatically equated with failure. For one test, there may only be 4 bands, and for another test, there may be 14 bands. So, your success on the test based on your position in a band varies from test to test. Your standing in a band does not indicate whether or not you pass or fail the test. The true test of success in your employment opportunities is whether or not you can be certified and considered for a job vacancy.

7) Misconception: Banding replaced the "Rule of 10."

Banding did not replace the "Rule of 10." The "Rule of 10" determines the number of bands to be certified. In the past, tied scores referred to an actual numerical score (e.g., two candidates with a score of 98.98 were considered tied) while now all of the scores within a band are considered tied.

8) Misconception: People in a band do not differ.

When several people are placed in the same band, it does not mean that those people do not differ at all. Instead, it means that their scores on the exam do not differ enough to be separate scores.

VII. STUDY SUGGESTIONS

In preparing for the exam, you may wish to employ some of the following strategies to help you study:

- ✓ Practice following instructions. Read sections of how-to books or instruction manuals you may have at home and practice taking notes or highlighting important aspects of the sections.
- ✓ Study the Sample Test Items in this How to Prepare Guide.
- ✓ Pretend that you are in a real testing situation and try not to talk to anyone else while you are answering the sample test items.

Other strategies that you have used in the past may also be helpful in preparation for the exam.

VIII. GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EXAM

If you have any questions about the exam or how to prepare for it, you should contact the State Personnel Department at (334) 242-3389. Exam administrators are not allowed to provide specific information about the content of the exam.

Reasonable Accommodation

If you would like to request special testing accommodations or have any questions concerning the test site or testing conditions, please contact the State Personnel Department at the number above.

Administrative Questions

You may contact us if you have any other administrative questions or concerns about the exam or questions about any of the information presented in this booklet.

This exam should be graded approximately four to six weeks after the exam is administered. You should receive notification of your score by mail within this time frame.

IX. SAMPLE TEST ITEMS

ABILITY TO PLAN

INSTRUCTIONS: As an activity coordinator, you are tasked with assigning students to the correct area based on the questions asked in the scenario. Use the table below to complete the questions.

<u>Activity Area</u>	<u>Details</u>
Gym	Students will be able to play indoor activities such as basketball and tennis.
Art Room	Students will be able to use their creative skills to paint, draw and make handmade art.
Outdoor field	Students will be able to play activities such as baseball and soccer.
Library	Students will be able to read books as well as get help with homework from tutors.

- 1) Alex has a baseball tournament this upcoming weekend and was trying to practice his skills as much as possible. Which activity area would you plan to send him for most of the week?
 - A. Gym
 - B. Outdoor field
 - C. Library
 - D. Art Room

- 2) It is the week before Christmas and there are a couple of students who would like to handcraft an ornament to put on the Christmas tree. Where would you plan to send these students?
 - A. Art Room
 - B. Gym
 - C. Library
 - D. Outdoor field

- 3) Emily is having a difficult time with Math and wants to improve her grade. Which area would you plan to send her to get help?
 - A. Art Room
 - B. Outdoor field
 - C. Library
 - D. Gym

ABILITY TO READ AND COMPREHEND WRITTEN MATERIAL

Read the following passage. Answer each question basing your answers only on the information provided and not on any prior knowledge you may have of the subject.

OLD MAID

This children's game can be played by two or more players. From a standard 52 card pack, remove one queen leaving 51 cards. Deal and play clockwise.

The dealer deals out all the cards to the players (generally some will have one more card than others-this does not matter). The players all look at their cards and discard any pairs they have (a pair is two cards of equal rank, such as two sevens or two kings).

The dealer begins. At your turn, you must offer your cards spread face down to the player to your left. That player selects a card from your hand without seeing it and adds it to his/her hand. If it makes a pair in his/her hand he/she discards the pair. The player who just took a card then offers his/her hand to the next player to his/her left, and so on.

If you get rid of all your cards, you are safe—the turn passes to the next player, and you take no further part. Eventually, all the cards will have been discarded except one queen (the old maid) and the holder of this queen loses.

- 1) According to the passage, what should the players discard from their hands once all cards have been dealt?
 - A. sevens
 - B. Kings
 - C. any two cards of equal rank
 - D. the last card they were dealt

- 2) According to the passage, how many players are needed to play Old Maid?
 - A. four
 - B. at least three players
 - C. one or more players
 - D. two or more players

- 3) According to the passage, what does a player do once he/she has discarded all of his/her cards?
 - A. The player is considered safe and takes no further part.
 - B. The player has won the game and collects all the cards so he/she can deal out another game.
 - C. The player must continue to play so he/she will select one card from each of the other players' hands.
 - D. The player does not continue to play because they have lost the game.

ABILITY TO FOLLOW WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS

HOW TO MAKE DROP EARRINGS

Drop earrings are made with head pins. These head pins, decorated with beads, hang freely from the earring findings to which they are attached.

1. Slide beads onto the head pin in the pattern you desire. Leave a 3/8-inch portion of the pin uncovered. If necessary, use your wire cutters to cut off the excess head pin.
2. Use your round-nose pliers to bend the exposed 3/8-inch portion of the head pin until it forms a right angle with the rest of the pin.
3. Grasp the very end of the bent portion of the head pin with the tips of the round-nose pliers. Carefully roll the bent portion of the head pin back onto itself to form a round loop, but do not close this loop entirely.
4. Attach the head pin to the earring finding you have chosen. The earring finding should have a jump ring soldered to it for this purpose.
5. Use the round nose pliers to close the loop. Make sure that the loop is entirely closed; otherwise, the head pin could slip off the earring finding. Also, try to make the loop as round as possible.

- 1) According to the instructions, what should be done once the beads are slid in the pattern?
 - A. Bend exposed portion of head pin until it forms a right angle.
 - B. Cut the head pin in half.
 - C. Close the round loop.
 - D. This information is not included in the instructions.
- 2) According to the instructions, what should be done after the bent portion of the head pin is bent back to form a round loop?
 - A. Close the round loop.
 - B. Attach the head pin in the earring finding.
 - C. Solder on the jump ring.
 - D. This information is not included in the instructions.

ANSWER KEY

ABILITY TO PLAN

- 1) B
- 2) A
- 3) C

ABILITY TO READ AND COMPREHEND WRITTEN MATERIAL

- 1) C
- 2) D
- 3) A

ABILITY TO FOLLOW WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) A
- 2) B

REMEMBER!

Be sure to bring your NOTIFICATION CARD and a form of PICTURE IDENTIFICATION when you come to the exam, as you will NOT be allowed into the testing location without them.