If you currently have a Civil Service Online Account DO NOT create a new account to apply for this exam.

Utilize the Government Jobs Help & Support to access your account. Online Employment Application Guide | Massachusetts Civil Service Applications

Test takers with two accounts may cause delays with properly recording your application and notifications from civil service such as notices to appear, or job opportunities. If you have questions, please email civilservice@mass.gov.

2026 Correction Head Cook Examination

This examination is being administered by the Human Resources Division (HRD) to establish eligible lists from which to fill Head Cook vacancies in the Massachusetts Department of Correction.

Written Examination: February 21, 2026

Application Period Begins: December 8, 2025

Application Deadline: January 20, 2026

Examination Processing Fee: $75

Written examination locations: Various sites across the Commonwealth.

Examination Information

Application: All applications and examination processing fees must be received January 20, 2026, you will receive two confirmation emails when you have completed the process: one email confirming your application has been received, and one email confirming your payment has been received. Your application is not complete until you have received both confirmation emails. If you have not submitted payment of the examination processing fee on or before January 20, 2026, your application will not be accepted.

Note: Although the online application system allows candidates to elect to receive notification by email or regular mail, please be advised that HRD utilizes only email for all notices to candidates.

Fee Waiver: The examination processing fee may be waived for candidates who have received certain state or federal public assistance, or unemployment insurance during any portion of the twelve months

leading up to the original examination date, February 21, 2026. Fee Waiver Forms are available on our website (Fee Waiver Form). This form should be completed and supporting documentation must be scanned and attached to the application. All fee waiver forms must be submitted on or before January 20, 2026.

Current Military Personnel: All military personnel who, in connection with current service, have military orders that indicate their unavailability due to military service on the examination date, must submit an application and examination processing fee and request a makeup examination in writing, with a copy of your military orders attached on or before January 20, 2026. Please include in your request your email address, daytime base phone number and/or name and phone number of a friend or family member with whom you have regular contact and entrust with your personal communication. Requests filed after January 20, 2026, must be accompanied by a DD214 showing discharge within six months of the request and dates of active service that include the entire application period. For more information, visit Military Information.

Makeup Examination: With the exception of current military personnel, as described above, no candidate has a right to a makeup examination due to personal or professional conflicts on the testing date. Candidates are advised to consider this before applying for the examination. If you file an examination application by the application deadline but are unable to appear for the examination on the examination date due to an emergency or unanticipated hardship, you may request a makeup examination by filing a written request with verifiable documentation to the Human Resources Division (HRD) no later than seven calendar days from the examination date. HRD reserves the right to approve or deny your request. HRD may require an additional examination processing fee upon approval of your request.

Reasonable Accommodations: If you need reasonable accommodations due to a documented impairment, or medical condition, you must fill out the Testing Accommodations Request Form and submit supporting documentation as outlined on the form from a qualified professional detailing what type of accommodation you require at the examination site. The form and supporting documentation must be scanned and attached to the application or emailed to civilservice@mass.gov no later than four (4) weeks prior to the examination date. Without such a letter, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to grant your accommodation. This information is requested only to provide reasonable accommodation for examinations and will not be used for any other purposes. For information regarding reasonable accommodations and the required form please see: Testing Accommodations Request Form

Typical Qualifications

Examples of Essential Duties for a Head Cook: Under direct supervision of Chefs or other employees of higher grade: Searches and inspections, documentation and reports, emergency response, inmate

supervision human resource management, facility management and operations and food services. and performs related operational duties and performs related work as required.

Examination Subjects: The written examination will be designed to test, where practicable, the following knowledge, abilities and skills that have been established as qualifications for the position,

- Abilities: information ordering, written comprehension, Problem sensitivity, self-control, tough-mindedness, persistence, integrity, dependability, rule orientation, safety orientation, adaptability, and respect.
- Knowledge areas: Methods and techniques of food preparation in large quantities, basic knowledge of food storage, kitchen safety and sanitation, kitchen equipment and maintenance, kitchen weights and measurements, and quality control.

Working Conditions: Head Cooks may work in a correctional facility, alone in an isolated area; may work varied shifts, weekends, holidays, or nights and are subject to a standby (on call) work status; may be subjected to verbal and physical abuse from others; may be required to interact with people who are under physical and/or emotional stress; stand and walk for prolonged periods of time; are subject to injury from firearms; may work under exposure to adverse weather conditions; may travel for job-related purposes; and may be required to furnish private transportation for reimbursable job-related travel.

Examination Requirements:

Age Requirement: Pursuant to Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Ch. 125 § 4, candidates must be 19 years of age on or before February 21, 2026, to take the examination for Head Cook. Candidates are also required to be at least 21 years of age by the date of appointment as Head Cook.

Education Requirement: As of the date of appointment, candidates must have either a high school diploma or equivalency certificate approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or three years of experience in the armed forces of the United States with last release or discharge under honorable conditions.

Credit for Employment/Experience: Pursuant to the provisions of MGL Ch. 31, § 22, individuals may apply to receive credit for employment or experience in the position title of Head Cook. You must claim this credit by completing the applicable section of the application. All claims must be verified by supporting documentation, which must provide specific details of any employment or experience you have in the examination title as Head Cook, including dates of service and, if part-time, the total number of hours worked. The supporting documentation must be on original letterhead with an original signature from the hiring authority where the employment or experience occurred. Credit for employment or experience is applicable only to individuals who achieve a passing score on the

examination and cannot be added to a failing examination score. Claims must be submitted during the application period; supporting documentation must be scanned and attached to the application or sent to civilservice@mass.gov. Supporting documentation must be submitted no later than January 20, 2026.

Note: Resumes will not be accepted as sufficient supporting documentation.

Preference Claims for Head Cook:

Candidates can submit a claim for the following preferences.

- **Veterans' Preference:** Click on this link for further information- Veterans' Preference Eligibility.
- **Disabled Veteran Status**: Click on this link for further information- Disabled Veteran's Preference Eligibility.
- **Preference For the Children of Correction Officers**: The son or daughter of a Correction Officer employed in Massachusetts who was killed or died of injuries received in the performance of duty, or who was permanently disabled as a result of injuries received in the performance of duty, is entitled to certification preference under the provisions of Chapter 402 of the Acts of 1985. If you believe you are eligible for this preference, you must claim this credit by completing the applicable section of the application.

Additional Requirements for Head Cook candidates: Visit Careers | Mass.gov for more information.

Updating Information: Candidates are responsible for maintaining accurate contact information. Failure to keep your records current may jeopardize opportunities for employment. For information on how to update your information, visit Update Your Account.

Refunds: There will be no refund of the examination processing fee unless the examination is cancelled by HRD.

Private School or Service: HRD does not recommend or endorse any private school, service, or publisher offering preparation and/or publications for examinations and is not responsible for their advertising claims.

Salary: Inquiries concerning salary should be directed to the Municipality at the time of employment consideration.

Supplemental Information:

Women, minorities, veterans, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

For more information or inquiries about this and other civil service examinations, visit www.mass.gov/civilservice or email the Civil Service Unit at civilservice@mass.gov.

The Civil Service Unit's office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:45am – 5:00pm, except holidays. Inquiries may also be made to the Civil Service Unit during these hours at the following numbers.

Boston area: (617) 878-9895 or (617)-878-9700

Toll-Free Within Massachusetts: 1-800-392-6178

TTY Number: (617) 878-9762