§ 354. Certification of assessors. 1. Any person appointed to the office of chief or inferior assessor or city assessor shall be certified by the commissioner pursuant to this section within a maximum of three years after he or she commences his or her appointment or by April first, two thousand nine whichever date is later, unless he or she has been previously certified by the commissioner and his or her certification has not expired.

2. An assessor shall be certified upon successful completion of the basic course of training and such examinations as may be prescribed by the commissioner. The basic course of training shall be prescribed by the commissioner based upon one or more general characteristics of the assessing units as the commissioner shall determine.

3. (a) An assessor may be certified by the commissioner if such person satisfies the minimum qualification standards established by the commissioner for assessors and passes a comprehensive examination conducted by the commissioner. The commissioner shall annually conduct examinations for such purpose. Examinations shall be of such character as to fairly test and determine knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the duties of assessor with respect to appraisal and assessment procedures, applicable laws, rules, and regulations and the size and complexity of assessing units. The number of courses, course credit hours and their complexity shall be no greater than the requirements established for other jurisdictions under section three hundred eighteen of this article. When applicable the basic course of training and examinations shall be consistently similar to other jurisdictions throughout the state.

(b) The commissioner may, in its discretion, waive any of the courses of training or may certify without examination any assessor, provided that such person is:

(i) an active member of the institute of assessing officers of the New York state assessor's association or is a member of the American institute of real estate appraisers; or

(ii) designated as a senior real property appraiser by the society of real estate appraisers; or

(iii) designated a certified assessment evaluator or an accredited

assessment evaluator by the international association of assessing officers.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of this subdivision or any other law, the travel and other actual and necessary expenses incurred by an assessor, in satisfactorily completing courses of training as required by this title or as approved by the commissioner, including continuing education courses prescribed by the commissioner which are satisfactorily completed by any assessor, shall be a state charge upon audit by the comptroller. Candidates for certification as eligible for the position of assessor, other than assessors, shall be charged for the cost of training materials and shall be responsible for all other costs incurred by them in connection with such training.

5. In a city subject to this title, the travel and other actual and necessary expenses incurred by appraisal personnel employed in the office of such assessor in attending courses of training as required by this subdivision shall be a state charge upon audit by the comptroller.

6. To the extent funds are appropriated, all payments pursuant to this section shall be made from the local assistance account.