B-55



In the Matter of Stephanie Matheson, Senior Planner Emergency Management (S0132S), Statewide

CSC Docket No. 2014-2482

STATE OF NEW JERSEY FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: **JUL 1 6 2014**

(RE)

Stephanie Matheson appeals the determination of the Division of Selection Services (DSS) which found that she did not meet the experience requirements for the open-competitive examination for Senior Planner Emergency Management (S0132S), Statewide.

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The subject open-competitive examination had a closing date of February 20, 2014, and was open to residents of New Jersey who met the experience requirements. These requirements included possession of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, and two years of experience in planning at the municipal, regional, State, or federal level, one year of which shall have been in the area of emergency/disaster planning. Applicants who did not possess the required education could substitute additional experience as indicated on a year for year basis with 30 semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. The appellant was found to be below the minimum requirements in experience. Of the 26 applications received, 9 candidates appear on the eligible list, which has not yet been certified.

On her application, the appellant indicated that she possessed a Bachelor's degree, and she listed three positions: Senior Adjunct with Burlington County Community College (part-time, 10 hours per week); Staff Emergency Management Specialist with Applied Research Associates; and Clerk Typist with the Burlington County Office of Emergency Management. As none of this experience was accepted, the appellant was found to be lacking two years of qualifying experience.

On appeal, Ms. Matheson provides a lengthy description of her job duties as a Staff Emergency Management Specialist. In addition, she provides a further description of her position as a Clerk Typist. Ms. Matheson indicates that she possesses multiple college degrees and has completed numerous FEMA coursses in Emergency Management, and she believes that she meets the education and experience requirements for this examination.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.3(b) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the open competitive examination announcement by the closing date.

CONCLUSION

Qualifying experience has the announced experience as the primary focus. The amount of time, and the importance of the duty, determines if it is the primary focus. The experience requirement included experience in planning at the municipal, regional, State, or federal level, one year of which shall have been in the area of emergency/disaster planning. This is professional work requiring the application of professional knowledge and abilities, as distinguished from either the desirability of such application or the simple possession of professional knowledge and abilities. Thus, only professional experience gained after obtaining a Bachelor's degree would be acceptable experience.

Ms. Matheson's experience as a Senior Adjunct involves teaching and is clearly inapplicable. Next, the appellant was a Staff Emergency Management Specialist for five months. On her application, she indicated that she assisted in the collection of data for capabilities assessment, assisted in any activations/training "both EOC," exercises on scene and in and ALOHA/CAMEO/MARPLOT software. As this description did not involve planning, DSS determined that this was inapplicable. On appeal, the appellant provides a lengthy description, which includes some planning duties in the area of emergencies/disasters. Her planning duties are interspersed with other duties regarding emergency management programs, but not necessarily planning. In any event, even if this experience were to be accepted, it constitutes five months, and the appellant would still fall short by one year, seven months of required experience.

The appellant's experience as a Clerk Typist is clearly inapplicable. A Clerk Typist is a clerical title, the duties of which do not involve professional planning. There is a substitution clause for education, and candidates could substitute experience for education which they did not possess. However, there was no substitution clause for experience, and candidates cannot substitute additional college degrees for experience. As such, the appellant's additional degrees beyond a Bachelor's degree have no bearing on this determination. In sum, the appellant lacks two years of applicable experience as of the February 2014 closing date.

An independent review of all material presented indicates that the decision of DSS, that the appellant did not meet the announced requirements for eligibility by the closing date, is amply supported by the record. The appellant provides no basis to disturb this decision. Thus, the appellant has failed to support her burden of proof in this matter.

<u>ORDER</u>

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION THE 16th DAY OF JULY, 2014

Robert M. Czuk Robert M. Czech Chairperson

Civil Service Commission

Inquiries and

Correspondence

Henry Maurer

Director

Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs

Civil Service Commission Written Record Appeals Unit

P. O. Box 312

Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Stephanie Matheson Dan Hill Joseph Gambino