



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of Sara Williams,
Program Development Specialist
Community Services (C2255W),
Cumberland County

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2019-3588

ISSUED: September 12, 2019 (RE)

Sara Williams appeals the decision of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) which found that, per the substitution clause for education, she did not meet the experience requirements for the open-competitive examination for Program Development Specialist Community Services (C2255W), Cumberland County.

The subject examination was announced with specific requirements that had to be met as of the December 21, 2018 closing date. These requirements included Possession of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university AND one year of experience in the development of programs designed to solve socio-economic needs of residents of the state and/or local communities which shall have included responsibility for research, negotiation, and/or writing of proposals for community service programs. Applicants who did not meet the above education requirement could substitute additional experience on a year-for-year basis with thirty semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. Possession of a Master's degree from an accredited college or university with concentration in the field of human or social services could be substituted for the one year of experience. As there were no admitted applicants, the examination was cancelled on June 12, 2019.

On her application, the appellant indicated that she possessed 82 college credits which prorates to two years, eight months of experience. As such, she was required to possess two years, four months of qualifying experience. The appellant listed three positions on her application, Youth Services Worker from July 2016 to December 2018, Family Partner with Inspira Family Success Center, and Family

Advocate with Gateway Head Start. None of the description of duties had the announced requirements as the primary focus, and the appellant was found to be lacking two years, four months of qualifying experience.

On appeal, the appellant states that she has 60 college credits and a family development credential which is equivalent to nine college credits. Additionally, the appellant states that since July 11, 2016 she has been employed as a Community Youth Worker with Cumberland County, and therefore, has almost three years of experience as the Human Services Advisory Coordinator. The duties for this position include coordination, oversight and implementation of a strategic planning framework of community needs, the design of proposals for improvement, and overseeing the awards review which includes monitoring, fiscal oversight, and technical assistance to the awarded agencies, and timely submission of invoices and reports. She also states that she held positions as Family Partner and Family Advocate, where she served clients in a case management capacity serving specialized populations.

CONCLUSION

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.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-1.10(a) states that “[a]ll initial and subsequent appointments, promotions, and related personnel actions in the career, unclassified, or senior executive service are subject to the review and approval of the Chairperson [of the Commission] or designee.”

As to education, the appellant indicated on this application that she had 82 college credits and that she had completed a training course in Family Development Credential Certificate. On a prior application for Human Services Specialist 1 (C0787S), the appellant had indicated that she had 66 college credits from the same college, and nine college credits from the Rutgers School of Social Work with an FDC certificate. She indicated that she attended college to May 2003. On appeal, the appellant maintains that her certificate is equivalent to nine college credits. However, the announcement indicated that if the candidate did not have a Bachelor’s degree they could substitute experience. There was no substitution for college credits, and a certificate cannot be substituted for college credits. The appellant’s applications are inconsistent regarding the number of earned credits, with 66 on a prior one, and 82 on the current one. This is not a fluid number if an applicant is not currently attending college, and for future examinations, the appellant should supply a transcript which indicates the actual number of college credits earned.

As to experience, the appellant indicated that she worked for Cumberland County as a Youth Services Worker. On appeal, she changes that title to Community Youth Worker. A review of the official records indicated that Cumberland County and did not have the appellant listed in its employment. As a result, the appointing authority was contacted and in July 2019 it requested that Agency Services record the appellant as an employee in the title Community Youth Worker effective July 11, 2016. This request was rejected as there is a Special Reemployment List (SRL) in effect for Community Youth Worker with Cumberland County. Nevertheless, appointments of employees must be recorded for review and approval by this agency. *See N.J.A.C. 4A:4-1.10(a)*. Each position in the career and unclassified services shall be assigned by the Commission to a job title. *See N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.1(a)*. Accurate personnel records are essential to provide a fair and efficient human resource delivery system. Every facet of an employee's employment is affected by the accuracy of his or her personnel records, namely, whether the employee possesses career service tenure rights, is serving in the correct title, has advancement opportunities, or is entitled to protection under Civil Service law and rules, such as having the right to appeal major discipline or a layoff. Additionally, a person on a special reemployment list may be entitled to displace an employee whose position is not recorded. Thus, to not properly record an appointment of an individual in the correct title may have far reaching implications and consequences.

In this matter, the duties given on the application to not match those of Community Youth Worker. The definition section of the job specification for Community Youth Worker indicates that these incumbents visit the community to advise and guide youths with behavioral problems. On her application, the appellant described her duties as:

Serve as the County Coordinator for the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) and Children's Inter Agency Coordinating Council (CIACC). Prepare plans for the development and implementation of programs that provide support of services to children and families. Establish collaboration from agencies in the community. Plan and conduct meetings, prepare minutes and agendas, budgets, reports, grant applications, proposals and general correspondence as needed. Oversee funded programs through reporting, monitoring and communication with county, state and federal entities. Conduct needs assessments using collected data and census information. Liaison between families and agency providers seeking assistance from N.J. Children's System of Care and their partners. Manage time and resources, provide customer service and case management to individuals being served. Attend local and state meetings representing my agency and other duties required.

A program in State government is generally considered to involve a unit responsible for performing projects and activities which are necessary to carry out a purpose or goal set forth in regulations or by law, focusing on a definite activity, providing a service to a specific third party, and generally requiring allocated funding. Clearly, the appellant works in a program and the *main focus* of this position involves carrying out the function of the program, not the development of the program. If program development was the primary focus, then when a program was operating, the appellant would be assigned other programs to develop. Instead, while the appellant prepares plans for the development and implementation of programs, she performs a myriad of other duties that enable the program(s) to continue to function, *i.e.*, she administers programs. This experience does not match the duties of Community Youth Worker and does not appear to match Program Development Specialist Community Services.

At this point, it appears that the appellant's position requires a classification review so that an appropriate title can be determined for the position. Therefore, the appellant and appointing authority should complete the attached Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ) and submit it Agency Services within 30 days of the issuance date on this decision. If the appellant is found to be performing the duties of a Program Development Specialist Community Services, she should be admitted to the examination, the cancellation be rescinded, and the appellant's application be processed. The appointing authority is cautioned that it must record *any and all* employees in CAMPS upon hiring. If it cannot determine an appropriate title, it must contact Agency Services who will perform classification reviews and determine the appropriate title and appointment type for each position, regardless of the frequency and the nature of the position.

The appellant's prior experience as a Family Partner and Family Advocate are clearly inapplicable.

An independent review of all material presented indicates that the decision of Agency Services 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.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied, and the position undergo a classification review, and a personnel record be created for the appellant's position.

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 ON
THE 10th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2019



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Attachment

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