



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Diana Sciancalepore,
Bergen County Board of Social
Services

CSC Docket No. 2025-2212

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE CHAIR/
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

Classification Appeal

ISSUED: June 9, 2025 (SLK)

Diana Sciancalepore appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that the proper classification of her position with the Bergen County Board of Social Services is Human Services Aide (HSA). The appellant seeks a Human Services Specialist 2 (HSS2) classification.

The record in the present matter establishes that the appellant's permanent title is HSA. The appellant sought reclassification of her position, alleging that her duties were more closely aligned with the duties of a HSS2. In support of her request, the appellant submitted a Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ) detailing the duties that she performs as a HSA. Agency Services reviewed and analyzed the PCQ, conducted phone interviews with the appellant and her supervisors, a Human Services Specialist 4 (HSS4) and an Administrative Supervisor of Income Maintenance, and reviewed other submitted information and documentation.

Agency Services found that the appellant's primary duties and responsibilities entailed, among other things, processing intake and recertification applications for clients seeking General Assistance and SNAP program benefits; preparing the intake and recertifications for submission in final determination and systematics release; reviewing the application, recorded interview information, and verifications to establish the case record and make initial assessment on client eligibility for cash assistance; requesting additional information or actions from clients for further case assessment when needed; updating medical deferral dates and coding per

determination and directive approval, and calculating and adjusting budgets based on client information and sources. In its decision, Agency Services determined that the duties performed by the appellant were consistent with the definition and examples of work included in the job specification for HSA.

On appeal, the appellant presents that in her unit, HSAs, Human Services Specialist 1s (HSS1) and HSS2s are each assigned to a Human Services Specialist 3 (HSS3) who reviews and releases work.¹ The appellant claims that during the classification review process, her unit supervisor made the misstatement indicating that some HSS2s made their own determinations when they do not. She submits statements from three HSS2s who confirm that they cannot release their own work. Additionally, the appellant provides emails from the unit supervisor confirming that HSS2s are assigned reviewers of their work.

The appellant describes the organization of her unit and how it fits within the agency and asserts that most HSS2s, regardless of their unit, cannot release their own cases and all are under close supervision due to the precautions needed for their work. Therefore, the appellant argues that position classification should be based on factors other than the authority to make final financial determinations and asserts that her duties are no different than any other HSS2 in her unit as her work is reviewed and released in the same manner as the HSS2s. She notes that she is the only HSA in her unit that processes General Assistance benefit claims, and the only other employee who processes General Assistance claims was awarded the HSS2 title after a classification appeal. Therefore, she questions why her work was not classified as HSS2 duties, especially since she knows how to process action types that others do not. The appellant claims that only 13 of the 33 HSS2s within the processing units can release their own work. Consequently, she reiterates that she does not believe that the ability to release one's own work should be the determining factor in deciding whether she is performing HSS2 duties. Instead, the appellant contends that other factors such as the type of unit work (intake vs. redetermination); the type of program that one processes (Food Stamps, General Assistance, TANF, Family Care, ABD Medicaid, and Institutional Medicaid); and one's program knowledge should be used to determine her position's classification.

Additionally, the appellant believes that her unit supervisor and the appointing authority have made various inaccurate statements in response to her classification position review request. She attaches documentation, including examples of work completed by the appellant, to support her contention.

In response, the appointing authority states that it agrees with Agency Services' determination including its findings regarding the appellant's primary duties, her lack of supervisory responsibility, her work under close supervision, and

¹ HSS3 is a lead worker-level title and incumbents in this title are not considered to be formal supervisors.

her lack of authority to make a final determination on cases. It presents that some of its HSS2s do release their own work and such responsibility is not specific to the appellant's unit. The appointing authority provides that, as staff progresses from HSA to HSS1 and HSS2, incumbents in these titles are expected to develop greater program and systems knowledge, enabling them to work more independently. It notes that HSAs are currently involved in all agency programs and are not restricted to specific areas. The appointing authority highlights that it has the discretion to authorize employees to release their own work and make final case determinations. It states that it limits this authority to employees at the HSS2 level and above. However, the appointing authority emphasizes that not all HSS2s are granted this authority as such decisions are based on merit, error rates, experience, and departmental needs.

Further, the appointing authority indicates that it does not dispute the appellant's statement that HSAs, HSS1s, and HSS2s are assigned to a HSS3 as this structure ensures timely completion of work and provides each employee with designated support. It presents that all HSS3s may review the assignments of HSAs, HSS1s, and HSS2s. Moreover, the appointing authority notes that the HSS2s that are authorized to release their own work still have at least five cases per week that are reviewed by an HSS3 or HSS4 as part of internal quality control. It states that given the volume of existing caseloads and unit sizes, HSS3s are advised to closely review the work of new employees and HSAs, while submissions from HSS1s and HSS2s may receive less intensive scrutiny.

Additionally, the appointing authority submits documentation to demonstrate that all the appellant's work was reviewed by a HSS3, who made the final determinations. The appointing authority emphasizes that intake workers are not permitted to release their own work to protect against potential accusations of improperly approving a case, such as one involving a known acquaintance. Regarding any statements that the appellant made concerning her assisting other staff, it notes that these employees are assigned a designated HSS3 who they should seek for support.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e) states that in classification appeals, the appellant shall provide copies of all materials submitted, the determination received from the lower level, statements as to which portions of the determination are being disputed, and the basis for appeal. Information and/or argument which was not presented at the prior level of appeal shall not be considered.

The definition section of the HSA job specification states:

Under direct supervision of a HSS4 or other supervisor in a County Welfare Agency, while receiving formal and in-service training, assists the HSSs in the performance of specific duties on a paraprofessional level which includes determination of eligibility for financial assistance in accord with rules and regulations promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Human Services; does other related duties as well.

The definition section of the HSS2 job specification states:

Under the supervision of a designated supervisor in a welfare agency, does the field and office work involved in the collection, recording, analysis, and evaluation of data, to include the employability, the medical status and the physical or mental health of applicants/clients, for the purpose of determining applicants'/clients' eligibility for program services; analyzes information on forms, applications and other financial assistance documents for completeness and accuracy; negotiates with absent parent to arrange a voluntary consent support agreement; conducts initial assessment of applicants employability and makes appropriate referrals; provides information to families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency through employment opportunities and/or child support services; duties performed involves more discretion and independent judgment than those performed by the HSS1; does other related work.

In this matter, a review of the definition sections for the job specifications for HSA and HSS2 indicates that the key difference between the two titles is that HSAs **assist** higher-level HSSs in the performance of specific duties which includes determination of eligibility for financial assistance while HSS2s perform specific duties which includes determination of eligibility for financial assistance. On appeal, the appellant acknowledges that she does not make final determinations of eligibility for financial assistance as her work is always reviewed by a HSS3 who also makes the final determination for financial assistance eligibility. Therefore, the record indicates that Agency Services correctly found that the appellant was performing HSA duties.

Regarding the appellant's argument that her position should be classified as a HSS2 because she claims that she performs the same duties as others whose titles are classified as HSS2 who have their work reviewed by a HSS3 and do not make final financial assistance eligibility determinations, a classification appeal cannot be based solely on a comparison to the duties of another position, especially if that position is misclassified. See *In the Matter of Carol Maita, Department of Labor* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided March 16, 1995); *In the Matter of Dennis Stover, Middletown Township* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided March 28, 1996). See also, *In the Matter of Lorraine Davis, Office of the Public*

Defender (Commissioner of Personnel, decided February 20, 1997), *affirmed*, Docket No. A-5011-96T1 (App. Div. October 3, 1998). Similarly, concerning the appellant's belief that the classification of her position should be based on factors such as her unit's type of work, the program that she processes, and her program knowledge, in making classification determinations, emphasis is placed on the definition section of a job specification to distinguish one class of positions from another. In other words, it is only this agency that determines the proper classification of a position. The appellant's position must be classified based on the criteria as indicated in the definition section of the job specification for a title and not based on the appellant's belief as to what should be the determining factors.

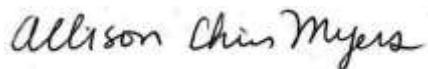
One other matter needs to be addressed. It appears that there may be some HSS2s who are misclassified by the appointing authority. Specifically, the appointing authority presents that it has the discretion to authorize employees to release their own work and make final case determinations. Further, it states that this authority is limited to employees at the HSS2 level and above. However, the appointing authority acknowledges that not all HSS2s are granted this responsibility as such decisions are based on merit, error rates, experience, and departmental needs. However, while it is appropriate for the appointing authority to determine who it is going to authorize to make a final determination and to have HSS3s review some of a HSS2's work for internal quality control, just like the appellant cannot dictate the factors in a determining a position's classification, neither can the appointing authority. As such, any HSS2 who is not afforded discretion to make eligibility financial determinations is not performing HSS2 duties. Therefore, the appointing authority is directed to ensure that its employees are assigned appropriate responsibilities to ensure they are classified in the appropriate titles.

ORDER

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
THE 9TH DAY OF JUNE, 2025



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