



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Yovana Ramirez,
Social Work Supervisor (PC4939C),
Union County

CSC Docket No. 2022-1879

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: May 2, 2022 (RE)

Yovana Ramirez appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services which found that she did not meet the experience requirements for the promotional examination for Social Work Supervisor (PC4939C), Union County.

The subject examination was announced with a closing date of November 22, 2021. The examination was open to employees in the competitive division who had an aggregate of one year of continuous permanent service as of the closing date in the title Social Work Specialist or Social Work Specialist Bilingual in Spanish and English **OR** to employees in the competitive division who had an aggregate of one year of continuous permanent service as of the closing date in the title Social Worker or Social Worker Bilingual in Spanish and English and who met the open competitive requirements. These requirements included graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree supplemented by a Master's degree in Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Guidance and Counseling or other field related to social work or social services, and two years of social work experience involving gathering social information from clients, determining their needs, and planning and carrying out treatment plans and/or service plans geared to individual client needs. Applicants who did not possess the Bachelor's degree could substitute additional experience as indicated below on a year-for-year basis with thirty semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. Applicants who did not possess the required Master's degree could substitute one additional year of experience. The appellant was found to be below the minimum experience requirements. Fourteen candidates were admitted to the examination which has not yet been held.

The appellant listed two positions on her application and resume; Social Worker/Community Liaison, and Social Worker. She included a resume with additional positions, however, none of them involved social work. It is noted that the appellant's Master's degree is not in one of the specific fields, nor is it a related field, and therefore she was required to possess an additional year of experience. None of her experience was credited and she was found to be lacking three years of experience.

On appeal, the appellant states that she has been a Social Worker since September 2014, and she possesses a Master's degree in Public Administration.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.6(a) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the promotional examination announcement by the closing date. *N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.1(g)* provides that the Civil Service Commission may request clarifying information from an applicant.

Initially, the appellant was correctly deemed to be ineligible for the subject examination since she lacked the minimum requirements in experience, specifically, three years of social work experience involving gathering social information from clients, determining their needs, and planning and carrying out treatment plans and/or service plans geared to individual client needs. On her application, the appellant described her duties for the first position as:

Advocate for clients to obtain the necessary help to live decently. Interview and help clients in every way possible to avoid homelessness. Spoke to different vendors and organizations from non-profits, to state entities to assist clients from obtaining a travel document up to attending a fair hearing when a client was denied a benefit. Have made different decisions and stand by them, following state rules and regulations. I have worked as a team player with other co-workers and supervisors for the better of the client. Established relationships with other organizations to assist our community in the best way possible, from sharing a resource to attending fairs and delivering information.

The appellant described her duties for the second position as:

Interview, review, and determine eligibility for Emergency Assistance services. Attend Fair hearings representing our agency, based on denials, prepare cases to be contested in front of a state judge. Attend to the need of the person/family seeking assistance, then advocate to

the family, landlord, or any other entity on behalf of the client(s) to look for a reasonable solution to problems or emergencies.

Agency Services found that the appellant did not indicate that her experience included planning and carrying out treatment plans and/or service plans geared to individual client needs. Nonetheless, the appellant has applied for previous examinations for this title, and her experience as a Social Worker was accepted. For an examination closing in June 2017, the appellant listed her experience as a Social Worker as:

Meets with clients at the office and/or clients' homes, asks questions regarding their social, economic, and emotional situation, records their responses, and when possible observes their home environment and family interactions to gain understanding of their problems to determine factors contributing to these problems and steps that can be taken to alleviate them and/or to determine their eligibility for social services. • Based on assessment of client's problems, formulates a service plan with the client which specifies long and short term goals and methods and resources to be utilized to achieve these goals to ensure that the best possible course of action will be followed to meet client's needs. • Refers clients to appropriate service providers for medical care and treatment, drug or alcohol rehabilitation, housing, employment, training, counseling, and so forth. Refer client through proper channels, to get assistance needed with Substance Abuse initiative/Behavioral Health Initiative, and follow ups for compliance of programs. • Evaluate eligibility of Emergency, what cause the emergency and provide information that will help avoid any future emergency housing problems. • Assist eligible recipients, WFNJ-TANF/GA and/or SSI recipients with voucher in order to avoid homelessness. • Evaluate eligibility for shelter placement and/or TRA-Temporary Rental Assistance. • Discusses clients' problems with them and provides advice and information regarding family planning, budgeting, parenting skills, personal problems, and so forth. • Coordinates services for the client by arranging for in service delivery with other agencies, internal units, or other members of the social service staff. • Acts as client's advocate in such ways as securing emergency payments when electrical or other services are discontinued, when checks are lost or stolen, or when eviction is eminent and/or by providing protective services to ensure their well-being.

While the appellant did not, on the current application, describe this position in the same way, the record indicates that from September 2014 to May 2019 she was performing social work which included planning and carrying out

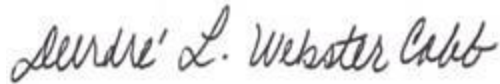
treatment plans and/or service plans geared to individual client needs. Under these circumstances, based on the totality of her experience and the clarifying information in the record, she should be admitted to the subject examination. However, the appellant is cautioned to properly complete all future applications and include all relevant duties to the announced requirements. Clarifying information is accepted per *N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.1(g)*; however, in such a situation, it is longstanding practice that an applicant's name will be added to the eligible list for prospective employment opportunities only.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be granted, and the appellant be admitted to the examination for prospective appointment only.

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 27TH DAY OF APRIL 2022



Deirdré L. Webster Cobb
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries
and
Correspondence

Allison Chris Myers
Director
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs
Civil Service Commission
Written Record Appeals Unit
P. O. Box 312
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Yovanna Ramirez
Division of Agency Services
Records Center