

B-48



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Examination Appeal

In the Matter of Katelynn Wintz,
Senior Planning Aide (C0752S),
Cape May County

CSC Docket No. 2015-2400

ISSUED: **MAY 08 2015** (RE)

Katelynn Wintz appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (DAS) which found that she did not meet the experience requirements for the open competitive examination for Senior Planning Aide (C0752S), Cape May County.

The subject examination announcement was issued with a closing date of October 7, 2014. The examination was open to residents of Cape May County who met the announced requirements of one year of experience in performing field and office tasks involved in preparing and conducting planning surveys, collecting and compiling data, and transposing statistical data into visual form. Satisfactory completion of 30 semester hour credits in planning coursework at an accredited college or university could be substituted for the required experience. The appellant was found to be below minimum requirements in experience. It is noted that one candidate appears on the eligible list, which has been certified once, but no appointments have yet been made.

On her application, the appellant indicated that she possessed a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies, and was working towards a Master's degree in Geography and Planning. She also provided her transcripts. She listed four positions on her application: provisional Senior Planning Aide, Research Assistant (part-time, 5 hours per week), Volunteer Green Team Member (part-time, 5 hours per week), and Education Facilitator (part-time, 20 hours per week). DAS determined that she possessed 13 semester hour credits in planning coursework. As this was less than 30 semester hour credits, the appellant was required to possess one year of applicable experience. She was credited with 4 months of qualifying

experience in her provisional position. Thus, she was found to be lacking 8 months of qualifying experience.

On appeal, the appellant maintains that she possesses over 53 credit hours of planning-related coursework in pursuit of her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees, and she resubmits her transcripts. She also encloses course descriptions. She maintains that she will have 12 more credits in planning-related courses by May 2015. The appellant maintains that planning involves the individual's ability to develop and analyze community specific goals which can manifest themselves across many disciplines. A Planner's knowledge of resources, social constructions, economic systems and public policy are essential components to effectively carry out job responsibilities.

In support of this appeal, the County Planning Director states that while the overwhelming majority of courses do not have the word "Planning" in their title, the field of Planning is by nature, interdisciplinary and broad in scope drawing from a wide range of subject matter and specialties to create a holistic approach to land use decision making. His review of Ms. Wintz's transcripts and course descriptions shows that all of the courses that she has listed contribute to her knowledge and have trained her to be active in the field of Planning. He states that he has been a licensed Professional Planner in the State of New Jersey, as well as a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners since 1998. He is completely confident in the educational credentials of Ms. Wintz and is certain that she both meets and exceeds the 30 credit hour requirement.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.3(b)2 requires applicants to possess all the requirements specified in an announcement for an open competitive examination by the closing date. Further, *N.J.A.C. 4A:1-1.2(c)* states that the Civil Service Commission (Commission) may relax a rule for good cause in order to effectuate the purposes of Title 11A, New Jersey Statutes.

CONCLUSION

A review of the appellant's application reveals that she did not meet the announced requirements as of the October 2014 closing date. The appellant possesses a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies. It is noted that the substitution clause for experience specifically requires planning coursework. Although there is a Bachelor's of Planning degree, usually, a Planner requires a Master's degree, and many Master's programs accept students with a wide range of undergraduate backgrounds. The appellant is in the process of obtaining a Master's degree in Geography and Planning and expects to graduate in May 2015. DAS accepted 4 credits from her undergraduate degree and 9 credits from her Master's degree. Transcripts that she submitted on appeal show that she will have completed at least 30 credits in planning coursework by May 2015. She also

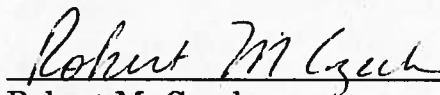
remains in her provisional position and has accrued an additional seven months of experience since the October 2014 closing date. As this is not a competitive situation, with only one admit, the Commission finds good cause to accept the appellant's coursework after the closing date to admit her to the examination for prospective appointment only. It is noted that this remedy is limited to the particular circumstances of this matter and does not set a precedent in any other matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be granted and the appellant's application be processed for prospective employment opportunities.

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 6th DAY OF MAY, 2015


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