



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of Eleanor Contreras,
Program Coordinator
Aging/Disabilities (PC2857W),
Bergen County

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2019-1902

ISSUED: MARCH 8, 2019 (SLK)

Eleanor Contreras appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that she did not meet the experience requirements for the promotional examination for Program Coordinator Aging/Disabilities (PC2857W), Bergen County.

The examination at issue was announced with specific requirements that had to be met as of the November 21, 2018 closing date. The education requirement was a Bachelor’s degree. The experience requirements were three years of experience in work involving counseling or assisting senior citizens or persons with disabilities with matters involving their welfare. Applicants who did not possess the required experience could substitute applicable experience on a year for year basis, with 30 semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. The appellant was the only employee that applied for the examination which was cancelled due to a lack of qualified applicants.

On her application, the appellant indicated that she possessed an Associate’s degree. Personnel records indicate that the appellant was provisionally serving in the subject title from May 2017 to the November 21, 2018 closing date, a Keyboarding Clerk 3 from March 2013 to May 2017, and a Keyboarding Clerk 1 from February 2005 to March 2013. Agency Services credited the appellant with three years and six months of experience based on her education (two years) and provisional service (one year and six months), but, per the substitution clause for

education, determined that she lacked three years and six months of the required experience of the required experience.

On appeal, the appellant presents that she has 14 years of experience working for the Division of Senior Services (Senior Services). She indicates that she maintained the Adult Day Care waitlist and assessed clients for eligibility. The appellant states that by being responsible for producing and updating printed materials, she has become very familiar with the Key Services Guide for Older Adults and Caregivers, which is a guide to all the programs and agencies that provide services to the elderly and disabled in Bergen County. Further, by contacting community agencies for information about their programs, she learned all about these agencies and their services. Additionally, the appellant received phone calls and conveyed information to elderly clients. As the event coordinator for the Bergen County Senior Picnic, the appellant indicates that she reached out to approximately 100 County agencies and service providers. Also, she states that she was responsible for the electronic equipment for Senior Services events, is proficient in Microsoft Office and is fluent in both English and Spanish. Finally, while serving provisionally in the subject title, the appellant develops monthly calendars that include educational opportunities, socialization and recreational events, and physical activities, as well as overseeing the Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs for the Bergenfield Senior Activity Center, which is a culturally diverse and dynamic place. She estimates that she has direct contact with approximately 40 clients per day.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.6(a) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the promotional announcement by the closing date. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.5(a) provides, in pertinent part, a professional title requires a Bachelor's degree, a para-professional title requires at least 60 college credits, and a non-professional title requires less than 60 college credits. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.3(b) provides that the appellant has the burden of proof in examination appeals.

In the instant matter, Agency Services correctly determined that the appellant is not eligible for the examination. The subject title is a professional-level title as it requires a Bachelor's degree or sufficient applicable service to substitute for this requirement. Accordingly, per the substitution clause, the appellant needed the equivalent of seven years of professional-level experience in work involving counseling or assisting senior citizens or persons with disabilities with matters involving their welfare. Agency Services correctly credited the appellant for her Associate's degree and provisional experience, and properly determined that she lacked three years and six months of experience. Specifically, while serving in various Keyboarding Clerk titles, the appellant's primary duties involved clerical work. In order for experience to be considered applicable, it must have as its

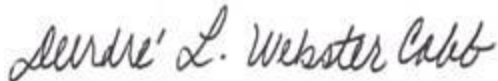
primary focus full-time responsibilities in the areas required in the announcement. *See In the Matter of Bashkim Vlashi* (MSB, decided June 9, 2004). Further, becoming familiar with programs is not the same as providing professional-level counseling or assistance. Similarly, the duties that the appellant highlights on appeal while serving in these clerical titles do not rise to the level of professional duties in the required areas.

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
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 6th DAY OF MARCH, 2019



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