



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Horticulturist
(C0637W), Burlington County

CSC Docket No. 2020-466

Appointment Waiver

ISSUED: SEPTEMBER 26, 2019 (BW)

The County of Burlington requests permission not to make an appointment from the February 14, 2019 certification for Horticulturist (C0673W), Burlington County.

The record reveals that Burlington County provisionally appointed Katherine Wickel, pending open competitive examination procedures, to the subject title, effective March 12, 2018. An examination was announced with a closing date of May 21, 2018 that resulted in a list of six eligibles with an expiration date of February 6, 2022. A certification containing the names of the six eligibles was issued on February 14, 2019.

The appointing authority returned the certification indicating that a permanent appointment would not be made from the subject list because the provisional appointee was no longer serving.¹ Specifically, it explained that the job title is no longer needed as the position coordinates the Rutgers University Master Gardner Program, is supervised by Rutgers personnel at the Cooperative Extension Service and interacts with Rutgers employees. The Master Gardeners program is a science based educational program and the University felt that it was important that the Coordinator work under Rutgers supervision as an employee of the University. Therefore, it no longer needs to maintain an incumbent position in that title.

The appointing authority's request for an appointment waiver was acknowledged, and it was advised that if its request were granted, it could be

¹ Wickel resigned on July 12, 2019.

assessed for the costs of the selection process in the amount of \$2,048. However, the appointing authority did not provide any additional information for the Civil Service Commission (Commission) to review.

It is noted that there are currently no employees serving provisionally pending open competitive examination procedures in the subject title with the appointing authority.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with *N.J.S.A.* 11A:4-5, once the examination process has been initiated due to the appointment of a provisional employee or due to an appointing authority's request to fill a vacancy, the appointing authority must make an appointment from the resulting eligible list if there are three or more interested and eligible candidates. The only exception to this mandate may be made for a valid reason such as fiscal constraints.

In the instant matter, the examination for the subject title was generated as a result of the provisional appointment of Katherine Wickel, who is no longer serving in the subject title. However, after a complete certification was issued, the appointing authority requested an appointment waiver, explaining that the Horticulturist title was no longer necessary due to the fact that the position coordinates the Rutgers University Master Gardner Program, and is now under the University's jurisdiction. Accordingly, there is a sufficient justification for an appointment waiver.

Although an appointment waiver is granted in this matter, both *N.J.S.A.* 11A:4-5 and *N.J.A.C.* 4A:10-2.2(a)2 state that if an appointing authority receives permission not to make an appointment, it can be ordered to reimburse for the costs of the selection process. While administering examinations and providing the names of eligible job candidates to the jurisdictions under the civil service system are two of the primary activities of this agency, these costly efforts are thwarted when appointing authorities fail to utilize the resulting eligible lists to make appointments and candidates have needlessly expended their time, efforts and money to take these examinations in hopes of being considered for a permanent appointment. In this case, the appointing authority's determination that it no longer needs to maintain the position of Horticulturist after it appointed a provisional to that title which resulted in an examination does not provide a basis on which to waive the selection costs. Thus, although a waiver is granted, it is appropriate that the appointing authority be assessed \$2,048 for the costs of the selection process.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that a waiver of the appointment requirement be granted. Additionally, the Civil Service Commission orders that the appointing authority be assessed for the costs of the selection process in the amount of \$2,048 to be paid within 30 days of the issuance of this order.

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 25TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2019



Deirdre L. Webster Cobb
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries
and
Correspondence

Christopher S. 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: Richard Lombardo
Kelly Glenn
Beth Wood