



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of Rachelle Adisson,
Director Community Development
Program (M0613A), Newark

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2020-1790

ISSUED: May 1, 2020 (RE)

Rachelle Adisson appeals the decision of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) which found that, per the substitution clause for education, she did not meet the experience requirements for the open-competitive examination for Director Community Development Program (M0613A), Newark.

The subject examination was announced with specific requirements that had to be met as of the August 21, 2019 closing date. These requirements included possession of a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university AND five years of supervisory and/or administrative experience in the organization, direction, planning, coordination, and control of community development projects or programs. Applicants who did not meet the above education requirement could substitute additional experience on a year-for-year basis with thirty semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. Two candidates appear 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 142 credits, and no Bachelor’s degree. She also indicated that she possessed a Master’s degree, but did not indicate that in the Education box. On appeal, the appellant sends a transcript proving she has a Bachelor’s degree, then says she’s currently enrolled in an MBA program at Rutgers. Nevertheless, incomplete degrees are only awarded eligibility and scoring credit for up to a maximum of 105 completed college credits, regardless of the level of the coursework. *See In the Matter of Jeffrey Booth and Jean Peterson* (MSB, decided August 11, 2004). As 105 college credits prorate to three years, six months of experience, the appellant was required to possess five

years, six months of qualifying experience per the substitution clause for education. The appellant listed three positions on her application, Program Administrator from August 2015 to the August 2019 closing date, a volunteer position as a Women's Group Committee Member (no hours given, no months given) with Temple of Unified Christians, and Enrollment Specialist with Newark (no hours given, no months given). Official records indicate that the appellant was hired as a Confidential Secretary, a title in the unclassified division, with the Mayor's office on July 1, 2014. The appellant was credited with four years, one month of experience in the first position. The description of duties for the remaining two positions did not have the announced requirements as the primary focus, and the appellant was found to be lacking one years, five months of qualifying experience.

On appeal, the appellant states that she was hired as a Confidential Secretary in 2014, and has participated in management training programs. She states that she is currently enrolled in a Master's degree program and is expected to graduate in May 2020. She provides a copy of her transcript showing that she obtained a Bachelor's degree in January 2019. She states that she recruits, trains, selects and trains employees; plans, coaches, mentors and disciplines employees; hosts training sessions with other cities; has created a municipal identification program and oversees the entire program in two locations; and coordinates an initiative entitled "Fair and Welcoming City."

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.3(b) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the open competitive examination announcement by the closing date.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-1.10(a) states that "[a]ll initial and subsequent appointments, promotions, and related personnel actions in the career, unclassified, or senior executive service are subject to the review and approval of the Chairperson [of the Commission] or designee."

As to education, the appellant indicated on this application that she had 142 college credits and that she had completed a Master's degree. Nonetheless, on appeal, the appellant clarified that she had a Bachelor's degree. As she has a completed degree instead of an incomplete degree, the appellant should be credited with an additional six months of experience, and be found to not meet the experience requirement.

Specifically, the appellant was credited for four years, one month of experience as a Program Administrator while in her Confidential Secretary title from August 2015 to the August 2019 closing date. It is noted that the appellant was working full-time while going to college full-time, and she completed her degree in January 2019. To that end, professional work requires the application of

professional knowledge and abilities, as distinguished from either the desirability of such application or the simple possession of professional knowledge and abilities. Thus, only experience gained after obtaining a Bachelor's degree would be acceptable experience. Therefore, the appellant should be credited with one year, eight months of professional experience from January 2019 to August 2019. Her remaining positions are inapplicable, and the appellant lacks three years, five months of applicable professional experience.

An independent review of all material presented indicates that the decision of Agency Services that the appellant did not meet the announced requirements for eligibility by the closing date is amply supported by the record. The appellant provides no basis to disturb this decision. Thus, the appellant has failed to support her burden of proof in this matter.

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 29TH DAY OF APRIL , 2020

Deirdre' L. Webster Cobb

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Chairperson
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