



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of
Gloria Cologna-Opalecky,
Warren County

CSC Docket No. 2020-2656

Classification Appeal

ISSUED: JULY 2, 2020 (RE)

Gloria Cologna-Opalecky appeals the decision of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) which found that her position with Warren County is properly classified as Human Services Specialist 2. She seeks a Human Services Specialist 3 job classification in this proceeding.

The appellant requested a review of her position as a Human Services Specialist 2, the title to which she was regularly appointed on August 25, 2016. Her position, located in the Division of Temporary Assistance and Social Services in the Warren County Department of Human Services and Mental Health, reports to a Human Services Specialist 4, and has no supervisory responsibility. The appellant sought a reclassification of her position, alleging that her duties are more closely aligned with the duties of a Human Services Specialist 3. Agency Services performed a classification review including an analysis of the submitted Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ) and all other documentation. Based on its review of the information provided, Agency Services concluded that the appellant's position was properly classified as Human Services Specialist 2. Specifically, Agency Services stated that the Human Services Specialist 3 title is a lead worker title, and the position has no lead worker responsibilities.

On appeal to the Civil Service Commission (Commission), the appellant argues that she instructs and provides direction to a Human Services Aide, provides training and direction to her supervisor and "administration," provides data and eligibility to outside agencies and makes valid decisions, trained and educated the former Human Services Specialist 3, performed a training session and created the steps of a

procedure for the program, provides procedures to higher-level employees, guides Human Services Specialist 3s on referrals to the Department of Labor, and is responsible for 90% of her coworkers' caseload in addition to her own. She states that she handles the more complex cases, and takes the lead with lower level employees, as well as Human Services Specialist 3s and 4s. She maintains that she trained and assisted her supervisor, a Human Services Specialist 4.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e) states that in classification appeals, the appellant shall provide copies of all materials submitted, the determination received from the lower level, statements as to which portions of the determination are being disputed, and the basis for appeal. Information and/or argument which was not presented at the prior level of appeal shall not be considered.

The definition section of the job specification for Human Services Specialist 2 states:

Under the supervision of a designated supervisor in a welfare agency, does the field and office work involved in the collection, recording, analysis, and evaluation of data, to include the employability, the medical status and the physical or mental health of applicants/clients, for the purpose of determining applicants'/clients' eligibility for program services; analyzes information on forms, applications and other financial assistance documents for completeness and accuracy; negotiates with absent parent to arrange a voluntary consent support agreement; conducts initial assessment of applicants employability and makes appropriate referrals; provides information to families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency through employment opportunities and/or child support services; duties performed involves more discretion and independent judgment than those performed by the Human Services Specialist 1; does other related work.

The definition section of the job specification for Human Services Specialist 3 states:

Under direction in a welfare agency, performs office and field work pertaining to the review/analysis and evaluation of cases to determine clients' eligibility for program services and/or the validity of decisions made regarding program assistance; does the field and office work involved in the collection, recording, analysis and evaluation of data for the purpose of determining eligibility, the employability, the medical status and the physical or mental health of clients; as a lead worker, instructs and guides lower level employees in the work of collecting,

recording, analyzing and evaluation of data; assists supervisory personnel in the operation of their duties; does related work.

It is noted that classification determinations list only those duties which are considered to be the primary focus of appellant's duties and responsibilities that are performed on a regular, recurring basis. *See In the Matter of David Baldasari* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided August 22, 2006). It is long-standing policy that upon review of a request for position classification, when it is found that the majority of an incumbent's duties and responsibilities correspond to the examples of work found in a particular job specification, that title is deemed the appropriate title for the position.

There is no dispute that the appellant's duties involve performing the required the field and office work. This position was classified as a Human Services Specialist 2 on the basis that the appellant does not take the lead over assigned employees. So long as an incumbent functions as a lead worker and meets the other criteria found in the job definition, a Human Services Specialist 3 the classification is permitted. A leadership role refers to those persons whose titles are non-supervisory in nature, but are required to act as a leader of a group of employees in titles at the same or a lower level than themselves and perform the same kind of work as that performed by the group being led. *See In the Matter of Catherine Santangelo* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided December 5, 2005). Duties and responsibilities would include training, assigning and reviewing work of other employees on a regular and recurring basis, such that the lead worker has contact with other employees in an advisory position, mentoring others in work of the title series.

In this case, the majority of the duties for which the appellant argues that she was a lead worker, involved training individuals in higher titles in the title series on procedures. Aside from the fact that the appellant is referring to training individuals in higher titles, the Commission has found that training duties, without the responsibility of assigning and reviewing work of other employees on a regular and recurring basis, did not establish a lead worker classification. *See In the Matter of Loretta Creggett* (CSC, decided August 1, 2018). Additionally, the supervisor of the position states that the position is not responsible for instructing and guiding lower level employees, monitoring staff to see if they follow regulations and procedures, checking the work of others for accuracy, and a completing spot checks of the work of others. The Division Director adds that the appellant has not been tasked with instructing and guiding lower level employees, or in training higher level employees in the operation of duties. Further, the supervisor of the position states that the appellant does not formulate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and is not responsible for sharing contract agreement information. The supervisor states that she discusses procedures and regulations daily with the appellant, as she is responsible for final decisions, but that her direct supervisor provides necessary training to her, not the appellant. The supervisor stated that peer sharing is

encouraged between units and the appellant has shown daily paperwork procedures to her supervisor. While she shared approaches to team management with another Human Services Specialist 2, that employee also shared her knowledge with the appellant, and either would come to the supervisor when clarification was needed. As such, they had a peer relationship, not a mentor-mentee relationship. The Human Services Aide provides clerical services to the unit and is not performing work of the title series. Based on the above, the appellant is clearly not performing the duties of a Human Services Specialist 3, and her primary duties can be adequately described by the definition for Human Services Specialist 2.

A thorough review of the information presented in the record establishes that the appellant's position is properly classified as Human Services Specialist 2, and she has not presented a sufficient basis to establish that her position is improperly classified.

ORDER

Therefore, the position of the Gloria Cologna-Opalecky is properly classified as a Human Services Specialist 2.

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 1ST DAY OF JULY, 2020

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