



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of Vanessa Stephenson,
Customer Service Representative
(M1174A), East Orange

CSC Docket No. 2020-1972

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: JULY 2, 2020 (RE)

Vanessa Stephenson appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) which found that she did not meet the experience requirements for the open competitive examination for Customer Service Representative (M1174A), East Orange.

The subject examination announcement was issued with a closing date of December 5, 2019, and was open to residents of East Orange City who met the announced requirements of one year of experience in the receiving and handling of customer complaints and inquiries. The appellant was found to be below minimum requirements in experience as she did not enter any experience on her application. There are eight candidates on the eligible list, which has been certified once, but no appointments have yet been made.

The appellant listed no positions on her application, although official records indicate that the appellant was a provisional Customer Service Representative from February 2018 to the December 2019 closing date. The appellant was found be lacking one year of qualifying experience. On appeal, the appellant states that she has ten years as a Customer Service Representative, and she provides a copy of her resume with four positions. The appellant was advised that the online application process is automated and provides instructions to candidates on how to properly complete their applications. Eligibility for a given examination is determined based on the information provided on the application. The announcement states, "You must complete your application in detail. Your score may be based on a comparison of your

background with the job requirements. Failure to complete your application properly may lower your score or cause you to fail.” The Online Application System User Guide repeats, “Failure to complete your application properly may cause you to be declared ineligible or may lower your score if your application is your test paper.” The guide asks candidates to carefully review the application to ensure that it is complete and accurate before submitting, and states, if supplemental documents are required, they should be uploaded with the application or submitted within five business days of submitting the online application. To proceed to the payment section, candidates must certify that their application is complete and accurate.

The appellant was further informed that, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.1(f), any supplemental information received after the closing date cannot be considered, and that she submitted additional information on appeal that was not listed on her application. The appellant replied that she followed instructions in completing her application, but kept getting error messages. She states that she made the required changes, but may have deleted her experience. She states that she mailed in her resume and assumed it was received.

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.

In the instant matter, based on the information available to Agency Services, it appropriately found that the appellant was not qualified for the subject title based on her failure to meet the experience requirements. It is noted that no resume was received at the time of the filing of the application, and the appellant did not enter any experience on her application. Under *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.1(g), the Commission can accept clarifying information in eligibility appeals. However, *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.1(f) provides that an application may only be amended prior to the announced closing date. For example, information submitted on appeal pertaining to duties in each position that expands or enlarges information previously submitted is considered clarifying and is accepted. However, any documentation indicating work in a setting that was not previously listed on an application or resume cannot be considered after the closing date. Thus, the Commission can only consider information provided on appeal regarding the positions listed on the appellant’s original application. *See In the Matter of Diana Begley* (MSB, decided November 17, 2004).

As such, service in a title does not automatically establish that the applicant possesses the necessary qualifications for an examination. Applicants must demonstrate on their applications that the duties they perform provide them with the experience required for eligibility. *See In the Matter of Charles Klingberg* (Merit System Board, decided August 28, 2001). The Commission makes official determinations of eligibility for all prospective candidates for positions in State or

local Civil Service jurisdictions who are also required to pass a competitive examination and be certified in order to be considered for permanent employment in the competitive division of the career service. *See In the Matter of Jennifer Napoli* (MSB, decided February 24, 2004). Thus, the application is utilized to screen the candidate pool to ensure that applicants meet the minimum experience requirements for each position. The appellant did not provide any experience on her application and certified that her application was complete and accurate. Accordingly, there is no basis to accept the appellant's supplemental information after the closing date.

Secondly, the appellant maintains that she had problems filing an application and sent in a resume. On the announcement was the following note:

Customer Care and Technical Support: If you are having difficulty submitting your application online, customer care and support are available during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. EST, Monday-Friday, excluding holidays and emergency closings. ... Please note that application support requests received outside regular business hours on the closing date will not change the application filing deadline so PLEASE FILE EARLY.

The appellant filed her application on December 5, 2019 at 1:27 pm. The electronic record shows that the appellant did not attempt to complete the experience section, but entered information from contact information to education, and then skipped to payment. She does not indicate that she called for assistance, nor did she indicate that she had a problem with the computer until after she was informed that supplemental information would not be accepted. If the appellant had looked at her completed application, she would have seen the note at the bottom which reads, "During the application creation process, employment information was not entered into the Experience section." A resume was not received until the appellant filed an appeal of her ineligibility. The Online Application System User Guide provides instructions for submitting supporting documentation. It indicates a link to click to submit supporting documents which allows applicants to classify the documents and determine the method of submission (online or mail). It provides a cover page that should be printed and mailed with each document. The appellant did not provide that cover page or any other proof that she submitted a resume or experience in a timely manner.

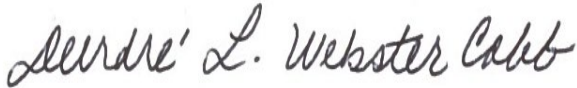
An independent review of all material presented indicates that the decision of Agency Services that the appellant did not meet the announced requirements for eligibility by the closing date is amply supported by the record. The appellant provides no basis to disturb this decision. Thus, the appellant 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 1ST DAY OF JULY, 2020



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