



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Donna Meredith and
Kerry Hallman, Office of Information
Technology

Classification Appeals

CSC Docket Nos. 2022-154 and 2022-
209

Corrected Decision

ISSUED: September 13, 2023

Donna Meredith and Kerry Hallman appeal the decisions of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that the proper classification of their positions with the Office of Information Technology is Technical Assistant, Management Information Systems (MIS). The appellants seek a classification of Technical Support Specialist 2. These matters have been consolidated due to common issues.

The appellants requested a classification review of their positions as a Technical Assistant, MIS. The positions are located in the Enterprise Service Desk, It Service Management Unit (ESD) and report to a Supervising Administrative Analyst. The positions have no supervisory responsibilities. The appellants sought reclassification of their positions, alleging that their duties are more closely aligned with the duties of a Technical Support Specialist 2. In support of their requests, the appellants submitted Position Classification Questionnaires (PCQ) and all other documentation. Based on its review of the information provided, Agency Services concluded that the appellants' position are properly classified as Technical Assistant, MIS.

On appeal, the appellants claim that the Computer Operator Assistant, Technical Assist, MIS, Technician, MIS, Technical Support Specialist 2, and Technical Support Specialist 1 titles are being used interchangeably at the ESD as the job duties assigned by the appointing authority to all of the incumbents are "99% the same." Both appellants state that, after the first three months, they worked a solo shift without a lead worker or supervisor, including weekends. They indicate that they have participated in change control meetings, bridges,

outages, and training others in higher titles. The appellants explain that the ESD monitors and provides resolution to all employees in the State, and each employee on every shift does the same level of technical support regardless of their title. Further, they maintain that the ePARS for employees in the five titles describe the same expectations for the positions. Additionally, the appellants contend that coworkers, both current and retired, can confirm and they would like to call them as witnesses in this matter. They also provide selected information from job specifications and from ePARS of these titles.

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 Technical Assistant, Management Information Systems states:

Under supervision assigned to a program or operational unit having responsibility for a specific, existing information processing system operation, performs technical functions in support of management information systems used to process varied types of financial, program, or other information unique to the unit; operates computer terminal or PC for information processing; installs, utilizes, maintains, and troubleshoots information processing systems and system software; organizes, inputs, processes, and outputs source materials, raw data, and processed data; sets up and maintains data bases and software files; performs file maintenance; provides technical information/assistance to other system users; does other related duties.

The definition section of the job specification for Technical Support Specialist 2 states:

Under general supervision, in a mainframe environment, provides direct hands on support to a work shift of the Data Processing Operations unit in resolving production problems from verbal or written problem reports; consults with Technical Support Specialist 1, and/or network management and systems programming staff for problem diagnosis, assistance, and resolution; monitors and allocates space or direct access storage devices; uses productivity aids in implementing and maintaining software, applications, and systems

libraries; **OR, in a client/server environment, provides hardware/software support to end users; installs hardware and software on servers and/or workstations; does other related duties.**

Initially, classification appeals are treated as reviews of the written record. *See N.J.S.A. 11A:2-6b.* Hearings are granted in those limited instances where the Civil Service Commission (Commission) determines that a material and controlling dispute of fact exists which can only be resolved through a hearing. *See N.J.A.C. 4A:2-1.1(d).* No material issue of disputed fact has been presented which would require a hearing. *See Belleville v. Department of Civil Service*, 155 N.J. Super. 517 (App. Div. 1978). Therefore, there is no basis on which to call witnesses in this matter.

It is also noted that the outcome of position classification is not to provide a career path to the incumbents, but rather is to ensure that the position is classified in the most appropriate title available within the state's classification plan. *See In the Matter of Patricia Lightsey* (MSB, decided June 8, 2005), *aff'd on reconsideration* (MSB, decided November 22, 2005). Further, how well or efficiently an employee does her or her job, their length of service, and their qualifications have no effect on the classification of a position currently occupied, as *positions*, not employees, are classified. Next, 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 are related to the examples of work found in a particular job specification, that title is deemed the appropriate title for the position.

In the present matter, the appellants' positions are classified as Technical Assistant, MIS. A review of the PCQs submitted in support of the position classification review requests indicate that Agency Services found that the primary responsibility of the positions under review was to provide support to end users of technology, including logging reported technical issues, generating tickets, providing triage, troubleshooting systems, and providing first level desktop support. It found that the majority of duties involved receiving, monitoring, and/or routing service tickets; troubleshooting and reporting network outages to vendors; and providing technical assistance via phone calls and emails. Agency Services' review found that **the focus of the positions on help desk tickets and desktop support were indicated as the primary role within the ESD.** It also noted that first level Help Desk duties are not considered out-of-title for a Technical Assistant, MIS. Thus, Help Desk responsibilities and what distinguishes their levels of responsibility to warrant differing levels of position classification is the issue in this matter.

Regarding Help Desk duties, it is noted that at least five other titles have these duties as part of the definition:

TITLE	SECOND OR THIRD DEFINITION	CLASS CODE
Technical Support Specialist 2	In a client/server environment, provides hardware/software support to end users; installs hardware and software on servers and/or workstations; does other related duties.	21
Technical Support Specialist 1	As a lead worker in a client/server environment, provides direct support to end users and/or guidance to help desk and/or desktop technical personnel in the provision of direct support; installs and guides the installation of hardware and software on servers and/or workstations; does other related duties.	25
Senior Technician, Management Information Systems	In a client/server environment, provides hardware/software support to end users; installs hardware and software on servers or workstations; does other related work.	18
Principal Technician, Management Information Systems	In a client/server environment, provides hardware/software support to end users; installs hardware and software on servers or workstations; does other related duties.	21
Technician, Management Information Systems	In a client/server environment, <u>updates</u> hardware/software support to end users; installs hardware and software on servers or workstations; does other related work.	16

As such, there appears to be little discernable difference in Help Desk activity levels for these various titles. Without further distinction, a position that performs these duties could theoretically be classified by any of the titles. The commonality of the definition portions of these titles is also problematic since their class codes range from 16 to 25,

The Civil Service Commission (Commission) recognizes that the Technical Support Specialist 1 is set off from the rest of the titles at issue as it is clearly a lead worker title. The appellants in this case have not provided sufficient evidence of lead worker duties. However, given that there are already four other non-lead worker titles that include Help Desk duties in their definitions, it is nebulous how the conclusion that first level Help Desk duties as the primary focus is the best fit

with the job definition from the specification for Technical Assistant, MIS. To state that the appellants' duties fall best within the scope of the definition of Technical Assistant, MIS requires an *assumption* that Help Desk duties fit into the sum of the responsibilities of the definition for the title. It is not clear from the definition section of the job specification for Technical Assistant, MIS if incumbents are primarily expected to perform first level Help Desk duties. Given this information, it is unclear if Technical Assistant, MIS is the best fit for the duties.

With respect to the appellants' assertion regarding the movement of other individuals to various positions is not germane to the classification of these positions, as position classification is not based on titles of other employees. In addition, a classification cannot be based on a comparison to the duties of other positions, especially if those positions are misclassified. *See in the Matter of Carol Maita, Department of Labor* (Commissioner of Personnel, Decided March 16, 1995); *In the Matter of Dennis Stover, Middletown Township* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided March 28, 1996); *In the Matter of Lorraine Davis, Office of the Public Defender* (Commissioner of Personnel, Decided February 20, 1997), *Affirmed*, Docket No. A-5011-96t1 (App. Div. October 3, 1998). The appellants' positions stand on their own and are classified based on the duties performed. The duties performed by other individuals, whether properly or improperly classified, are irrelevant in determining the proper classification of these positions. That is not to say that the positions are properly classified according to Agency Services' determination, but that the appellants cannot rely on the classification of other positions to classify their position. When an employee requests a classification review of his and her position, it is done based on the duties currently assigned and being performed in that position and not those of other positions.

The issue presented herein is the lack of clarity in the job definitions and the use of multiple titles for Help Desk duties. With that in mind, it is also noted that it appears that the Technical Assistant, MIS and Computer Operator Assistant titles are expected by the appointing authority to perform Help Desk duties. The definition section of the job specification for Computer Operator Assistant states:

Under close supervision in an information processing production unit, receives advanced technical on-the-job training in the operation of a large-scale multi-programmed computer and its peripheral devices; directly assigned; does related work as required.

It is noted that the Computer Operator Assistant job specification is dated October 28, 1994. Given the rapid changes in technology over the last 25 years, it is likely that the specific duties and responsibilities contained in the job specification are in need of review to determine if they are still current. Additionally, as noted earlier, it is unclear if the Technical Assistant, MIS has evolved and should be exclusively

assigned Help Desk duties when at least four other titles include this in their job definitions.

As there appears to be little discernable difference in Help Desk activity levels for these various titles, without further distinction, a position that performs these duties could theoretically be classified by any of the titles. Therefore, it is appropriate to refer the matter of these job specifications, as well as any other job specification which indicate help desk duties in its definition, to Agency Services for review and it should make any revisions it deems appropriate.

Since the matter of these job specifications has been referred to Agency Services for further review, the Commission is unable to review the merits of the current appeals. Accordingly, upon completion of Agency Services review of the above note job specifications, the appellants' position classification review request, as well as any other employee in the Enterprise Service Desk, It Service Management Unit who filed position classification review requests, should be re-evaluated in light of any revised job specifications, to determine their positions proper classification.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered the matter of the job specifications which indicate help desk duties in its definition be referred to Agency Services for review and it should make any revisions it deems appropriate. It is further ordered that these appeals be remanded to Agency Services to determine the positions, as well as any other employee in the Enterprise Service Desk, It Service Management Unit who filed position classification review requests, applicable titles after a review of the job specifications which require help desk duties.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review is to be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 15TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 2021

Deirdre L. Webster Cobb

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