



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Shakemia Sanford,
Instructor Counselor (PS1000H), Ann
Klein Forensic Center

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

CSC Docket Nos. 2021-1392

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: MAY 24, 2021 (SLK)

Shakemia Sanford appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that she did not meet the requirements for the promotional examination for Instructor Counselor (PS1000H), Ann Klein Forensic Center.

The subject promotional examination had a closing date of February 21, 2020. The education requirement was a Bachelor’s degree. The experience requirements were one year of experience in counseling, teaching, and/or guidance in an organized educational program. Applicants who did not possess the required education could substitute additional experience as indicated on a year for year basis with 30 semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. A total of seven employees applied for the subject examination and five were found eligible. Certification PS1000H was issued and its disposition is due to be returned on July 21, 2021. The list expires on March 17, 2024.

On her application, the appellant indicated that she had 12 college credits. She also indicated that she was provisionally serving in the subject title from June 2019 to the February 21, 2020 closing date, a Senior Therapy Program Assistant from September 2017 to June 2019, and in various other titles from January 2003 to September 2017. Personnel records indicate that she was a provisionally serving in

the subject title from June 2019 to the February 21, 2020 closing date, a Senior Therapy Program Assistant from September 2017 to June 2019, a Therapy Program Assistant from April 2012 to September 2017, a Cottage Training Supervisor from November 2010 to April 2012, a Therapy Program Assistant from March 2008 to August 2010, a Cottage Training Supervisor from January 2008 to March 2008, a Recreation Aide from July 2006 to January 2008, and a Human Services Assistant from January 2003 to July 2006. Agency Services credited her with four months of experience based on her 12 college credits and two years and six months of experience based on her provisional service in the subject title and her experience as a Senior Therapy Program Assistant for a total of two years and 10 months of experience, but determined that she lacked two years and two months of experience.

On appeal, the appellant presents that she has 17 years of experience in various positions with the State and is currently provisionally serving in the subject title. She also presented that she completed a Careers Ladder Program certificate and has 12 college credits.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.6(a) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the promotional examination announcement by the closing date.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.6(c) provides that, except when permitted for good cause, applicants for promotional examinations with open-competitive requirements may not use experience gained as a result of out-of-title work to satisfy the requirements for admittance to the examination or for credit in the examination process.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-6.3(b) provides, in pertinent part, that the appellant shall have the burden of proof in examination appeals.

The appellant was initially deemed to be ineligible for the subject examination since she lacked two years, two months of required experience. A review of her application indicates that this determination is correct. At the outset, it is noted that titles are categorized as professional, para-professional or nonprofessional. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.5(a)1 states that professional titles require at least a Bachelor's or higher-level degree, with or without a clause to substitute experience. Thus, since the Instructor Counselor title requires completion of a Bachelor's degree with a substitution clause, which permits additional experience in lieu of the college credits, as well as relevant experience, it is considered a professional title. Professional experience denotes that the applicants have educational training in some form of higher learning and the work itself is an application of this acquired knowledge. *See e.g., In the Matter of Linda A. Arcamone and Laure P. Woolverton* (MSB, decided May 22, 2001).

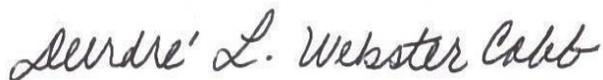
The appellant's prior-held State titles do not require a Bachelor's degree and therefore are not professional titles. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.5(a)3 states that nonprofessional titles require less than 60 general college credits or less than 12 specific college credits, while *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.5(a)2 states that para-professional titles require at least 60 general college credits or 12 or more specific college credits (but less than a full degree). However, the appellant's permanent title, Senior Therapy Program Assistant, is considered a bridge title. A bridge title is one that is recognized by the Civil Service Commission as related to a higher category title in terms of work performed and knowledge, skills, and abilities required. It is noted that "bridge titles" were established in order to allow individuals with experience in a given job category (e.g., clerical or paraprofessional) the opportunity to compete in promotional examinations involving a higher-level job category (e.g., paraprofessional or professional). Advancement in some cases was otherwise not possible because the experience acquired in the lower category titles would not technically satisfy the requirements for eligibility in the higher category title. In this regard, it is noted that experience gained in a bridge title to establish eligibility to a particular title does not mean that the same experience can be utilized to establish eligibility to a higher title in the series. Therefore, Agency Services correctly credited the appellant with her experience while serving as a Senior Therapy Program Assistant. However, the appellant's prior title, Therapy Program Assistant is not a bridge title. It is noted that the job specification for Therapy Program Assistant specifically indicates that incumbents in this title perform subprofessional tasks. Therefore, if the appellant is claiming that she performed the required duties while serving in this title or in any of her other non-professional titles, she would be performing out-of-title work, which is generally not applicable for a promotional examination. Additionally, as the list is complete, there is no basis to relax the rules.

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 19TH DAY OF MAY, 2021



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