



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**DECISION OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of A.Z.,
Correctional Police Officer (S9999A),
Department of Corrections

CSC Docket No. 2022-1631

Medical Review Panel Appeal

ISSUED: August 24, 2022 (DASV)

A.Z. appeals her rejection as a Correctional Police Officer candidate by the Department of Corrections and its request to remove her name from the eligible list for Correctional Police Officer (S9999A) on the basis of psychological unfitness to perform effectively the duties of the position.

This appeal was brought before the Medical Review Panel (Panel) on May 18, 2022, which rendered its Report and Recommendation on May 18, 2022. No exceptions were filed by the parties.

The report by the Panel discusses all submitted evaluations and the information obtained from the meeting. The negative indications related to concerns about the appellant’s “social competence, emotional regulation and stress tolerance, integrity, cognitive ability, and poor judgment.” In that regard, Dr. Sandra Ackerman Sinclair, the appointing authority’s psychological evaluator, referenced the appellant’s employment history, which included terminations, and noted that the appellant “failed to articulate clear details and responses” regarding, among other things, her mental health treatment. Therefore, based on her findings, including the results of the psychological testing, Dr. Sinclair did not recommend the appellant for appointment as a Correctional Police Officer. However, the appellant’s psychological evaluator, Dr. Jennifer L. Pacyon, found the appellant suitable for appointment. Dr. Pacyon stated that the appellant “did not present with significant psychological symptomatology or personality dysfunction that would render her psychologically unfit to perform the duties of a [Correctional Police Officer].”

At the Panel meeting, the appellant was questioned regarding her terminations, as well as her post-partum depression and her history of late payments on her car. She clarified information in that regard. The appellant was also asked about the bias items she had endorsed on her psychological tests. She reported that she had misread the questions and her responses were mistakes. However, the Panel remained concerned about the appellant's psychological suitability and could not make a recommendation based on the existing record. Specifically, it found that it was necessary to explore the appellant's ability to tolerate stress in a correctional environment as it had concerns about the appellant's "passivity, naiveté and adjustment difficulties" that were reported in the appointing authority's evaluation. The Panel listed the circumstances of one of the appellant's job terminations and a separation from prior employment as examples of the concerns it had. Therefore, based on the evaluations, the test results of the appellant, and her presentation at the meeting, the Panel requested that the appellant undergo an independent evaluation.

CONCLUSION

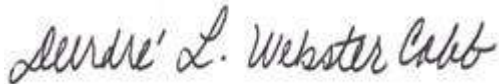
The Civil Service Commission (Commission) has reviewed the Report and Recommendation of the Panel. It notes that the Panel conducts an independent review of the raw data presented by the parties as well as the recommendations and conclusions drawn by the various evaluators and that, in addition to the Panel's own review of the results of the tests administered to the appellant, it also assesses the appellant's presentation before it prior to rendering its own conclusions and recommendations which are based firmly on the totality of the record presented. However, it was unable to render a determination of the appellant's psychological suitability given the concerns it had with her possible "passivity, naiveté and adjustment difficulties." Therefore, the Commission agrees with the Panel's recommendation for the appellant to undergo an independent psychological evaluation, which shall include an in-depth assessment of the appellant's ability to tolerate stress in a correctional environment given the Panel's concerns. The evaluation shall include a review of the appellant's behavioral record, prior evaluations, and her psychological testing, as well as any additional psychological tests deemed necessary in order to determine her psychological suitability to perform effectively the duties of a Correctional Police Officer. Accordingly, the Commission refers the appellant for an independent psychological evaluation by a New Jersey licensed psychologist.

ORDER

The Commission therefore orders that A.Z. be administered an independent psychological evaluation as set forth in this decision. The Commission further orders that the cost incurred for this evaluation be assessed to the appointing authority in the amount of \$530. Prior to the Commission's consideration of the evaluation, copies of the independent evaluator's Report and Recommendation will be sent to all parties with the opportunity to file exceptions and cross exceptions.

A.Z. is to contact Dr. Robert Kanen, the Commission's independent evaluator, within 15 days of the issuance date on this determination to schedule an appointment. If A.Z. does not contact Dr. Kanen within the time period noted above, the entire matter will be referred to the Commission for a final administrative determination and the appellant's lack of pursuit will be noted.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 24TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2022



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Civil Service Commission

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