



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of Barbara Sandargus,
Administrative Supervisor of Social
Work (PC4183D), Union County

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2023-367

ISSUED: December 21, 2022 (RE)

Barbara Sandargus appeals the decision of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) which found that, per the substitution clause for education, she did not meet the experience requirements for the promotional examination for Administrative Supervisor of Social Work (PC4183D), Union County.

The subject examination announcement was issued with a closing date of June 21, 2022. The examination was open to employees in the competitive division who had an aggregate of one year of continuous permanent service as of the closing date in the title Assistant Administrative Supervisor of Social Work, OR to employees in the competitive division who had an aggregate of one year of continuous permanent service as of the closing date in any competitive title, and who met the announced requirements. These requirements included graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree supplemented by a Master's degree in Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Guidance and Counseling or other field related to social work or social service, and four years of experience in social work involving obtaining social information from clients, determining their needs, and planning and carrying out treatment plans based on needs of individual clients, two years of which shall have been in a supervisory capacity. Applicants who did not possess the required Bachelor's degree could have substituted additional experience as indicated on a year for year basis with 30 semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. Applicants who did not possess the required Master's degree could have substituted one additional year of experience. The appellant was determined to be ineligible for below the minimum requirements

in experience per the substitution clause for education. Seven candidates had been admitted to the examination, but the examination has not yet been held.

On her application, the appellant indicated possession of a Bachelor's degree, but not a specific Master's degree. As such, she was required to possess five years of required experience. She listed the following positions on her application: Human Services Specialist 4, Human Services Specialist 3, Human Services Specialist 2, Human Services Specialist 1, Receptionist, Senior Investment Operations Clerk, Retirement Services Representative (with two different employers), Retirement Services Coordinator, Senior Account Administrator and Account Administrator. None of her experience was accepted, and she was found to be lacking five years of applicable experience, including two years of qualifying supervisory experience.

On appeal, the appellant states that that she has over five years of supervisory experience, gained in the title Human Services Specialist 4. She also argues that Union County has historically allowed lateral transfers between Human Services Specialist 1, 2, 3 and 4 positions and Social Worker positions, and she asks how Union County is allowed to do lateral transfers between these titles. She also would like to know how the Civil Service Commission can create Social Worker titles for people who do not hold degrees or licenses in Social Work, and suggests that practicing Social Work without a license is a violation of the law.

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:2-1.4(c) states that the burden of proof shall be on the appellant.

In order for experience to be considered applicable, it must have as its primary focus full-time responsibilities in the areas required in the announcement. *See In the Matter of Bashkim Vlashi* (MSB, decided June 9, 2004). Professional experience requires the application of professional knowledge and abilities, as distinguished from either the desirability of such application or the simple possession of professional knowledge and abilities. Thus, only experience gained in professional level titles (a title requiring a Bachelor's degree or substituted experience) would be acceptable experience. The Human Services Specialist title series requires completion of 60 college credits. As such, experience in this title series is para-professional, and the duties do not involve professional experience in obtaining social information from clients, determining their needs, and planning and carrying out treatment plans based on needs of individual clients. Rather, this title series is responsible for collecting information, making eligibility determinations, and preparing reports. Experience in this title series is not applicable as it does not have the announced experience as the primary focus, and it

is not at the level and scope of the announced experience. The appellant's remaining positions do not have social work as the primary focus. Accordingly, the appellant lacks five years of applicable experience, including two years in a supervisory capacity. With regard to her other arguments, the appellant has not provided any substantive evidence of misapplication of Civil Service rules, or violations of law.

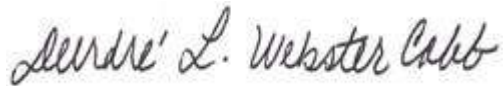
An independent review of all material presented indicates that the decision of Agency Services that the appellant did not meet the announced requirements for eligibility by the closing date is amply supported by the record. The appellant provides no basis to disturb this decision. Thus, the appellant 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 21st DAY OF DECEMBER, 2022



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