



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Jerome Wakefield,
Supervising Employment Specialist
(M0684F), Trenton

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

CSC Docket No. 2025-122

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: January 15, 2025 (HS)

Jerome Wakefield appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services), which found that he did not meet the experience requirement for the open competitive examination for Supervising Employment Specialist (M0684F), Trenton.

The subject examination was announced with a closing date of May 21, 2024 and was open to Trenton residents who possessed, in pertinent part, a Bachelor's degree and three years of professional experience in assessing education and training needs and providing referrals for work experience and training services, or in providing manpower development and training, job placement, education or vocational counseling, or a combination thereof, one year of which shall have been in a lead worker capacity. The resulting eligible list of one name promulgated on July 11, 2024 with an expiration date of July 10, 2026. A certification issued from the eligible list on July 15, 2024 (OL240772), and the lone eligible's name was removed from the list.

On his application, the appellant indicated possession of a Bachelor's degree. He also listed the following experience: Supervising Employment Specialist with Trenton from October 2023 to May 2024;¹ Director of Purchasing/Supervising Procurement Specialist with Newark from November 2015 to July 2022; Managerial

¹ Agency records indicate that the appellant received a provisional appointment to the subject title effective October 16, 2023. He continues to serve in that capacity.

Specialist/Chief of Staff, Law Department, with Newark from March 2015 to October 2015; Wakefield Consulting from 2000 to 2018; President of Friends of Lifers Youth Corporation from 2000 to 2014; Director, Community Resource Center, with the Kintock Group from February 2008 to September 2009; Coordinator, Prisoner Re-entry Initiative with Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey in 2007; Assistant Director with Delaney Hall and Logan Hall from January 2004 to December 2006; Placement Specialist with Project S.E.A.R.C.H. from 2000 to 2001; Clerk with the Hudson County Public Defender's Office in 1996; and Intake Officer with the American Civil Liberties Union from 1993 to 1995.

Agency Services credited the appellant with two months of experience as a Placement Specialist with Project S.E.A.R.C.H. *See In the Matter of Bernard Monks* (MSB, decided May 19, 2004) (In accordance with longstanding policy, when only years are indicated on the application with respect to periods of employment, the applicant only receives the minimum credit for the year of job entry and the year of job termination). None of the remaining listed experience was credited. For example, concerning the appellant's position as Supervising Employment Specialist with Trenton, Agency Services determined that the position did not primarily focus on the required duties. In this regard, he had described his experience as follows on his resume: overall supervision of employees/staff re: hiring, training, discipline and management of tasks and assistance to director of water and sewer utility – writing documents, reviewing resolutions, attending municipal council meetings, acting as director in director's absence. Concerning the appellant's position as Director, Community Resource Center, with the Kintock Group, Agency Services indicated that there was no indication of the required experience. In this regard, he had described his experience as follows: implemented clinical programs and services; established working relationships with staff subordinates and contractors; supervised staff, volunteers and interns; responsible for written reports, hiring staff, approving invoices, disbursements, and expenditures; managed budget and procured goods and services; interacted with collaborating agencies and programs. Therefore, Agency Services deemed the appellant ineligible since he lacked two years and 10 months of experience, of which 10 months were in a lead worker capacity. Thus, the appellant did not meet the experience requirement set forth in the announcement.

On appeal to the Civil Service Commission, the appellant maintains that he is eligible. He highlights, among other things, his position as the Director, Community Resource Center, with the Kintock Group. The appellant states that in this position, he was directly and personally responsible for ensuring job placement and the employment of program participants and staff; manpower development; enhancing their employability; arranging curriculums and courses for them; entering collaborations with other departments and agencies; and entering into contracts for the participants' employment. He states further that he supervised the evaluation of participants' progress toward employability. The Community Resource Center at Kintock, per the appellant, was a work program.

The job description reveals that an individual in the title of Supervising Employment Specialist, under direction, supervises the program staff concerned with assessing the education and training needs of program participants and providing and/or making referrals to appropriate work experience and training services as a means of improving the employability of participants.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.3(b)2 provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the open competitive examination announcement by the closing date.

A review of the appellant's application reveals that he did not possess the required experience. 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). The amount of time, and the importance of the duty, determines if it is the primary focus. An experience requirement that lists a number of duties that define the primary experience, requires that the applicants demonstrate that they primarily performed all of those duties for the required length of time. Performance of only one or some of the duties listed is not indicative of comprehensive experience. *See In the Matter of Jeffrey Davis* (MSB, decided March 14, 2007). In the instant matter, Placement Specialist with Project S.E.A.R.C.H. was the only position that had, as the primary focus, the required experience, and Agency Services could only provide two months' worth of credit. *See Monks, supra*. The discussion the appellant provides on appeal regarding his experience as the Director, Community Resource Center, with the Kintock Group demonstrates, at best, that the position may have included some relevant aspects, not that the primary focus of the position was the required duties. Accordingly, the record reflects that the appellant did not meet the requirements for the title under test.

Finally, the appellant is presently serving provisionally in the title of Supervising Employment Specialist. *N.J.S.A.* 11A:3-1 and *N.J.A.C.* 4A:3-3.1(a) provide that each position in the career and unclassified services shall be assigned to a job title. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:3-3.3(d) provides that positions in the career, unclassified, and senior executive services shall be subject to job audit to ensure accurate classification and compliance with Titles 11A and 4A. Moreover, *N.J.A.C.* 4A:3-3.4 provides that no person shall be appointed or employed under a title not appropriate to the duties to be performed nor assigned to perform duties other than those properly pertaining to the assigned title that the employee holds. However, the primary focus of the appellant's duties, as noted above, would not be classified as supervising the program staff concerned with assessing the education and training needs of program participants and providing and/or making referrals to appropriate work experience and training services as a means of improving the employability of participants. Rather, based on the present record, it appears that the appellant is primarily


assisting the director of the water and sewer utility in the operation of the utility. Therefore, it is appropriate that this matter be referred to the Division of Agency Services for a classification review of the appellant's position.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied. It is further ordered that the classification of the appellant's position be referred to the Division of Agency Services.

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 15TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2025



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