



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Milagros Torres,
Rowan University

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

CSC Docket No. 2026-1278

Administrative Appeal

ISSUED: July 22, 2026 (HS)

Milagros Torres, a former Building Maintenance Worker with Rowan University, requests that the Civil Service Commission (Commission) reinstate her appeal of her removal, which was dismissed based on her failure to appear at a scheduled settlement conference.

As background, the appellant was removed effective October 11, 2025 on charges of inability to perform duties and job abandonment. The appellant appealed her removal to the Commission, which transmitted the matter to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for a hearing as a contested case. On appeal, the appellant indicated she was to be represented by the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers IFPTE, Local 195. A settlement conference was originally scheduled for March 4, 2026. However, the appellant failed to appear, and the matter was relisted for a later date. Specifically, on March 5, 2026 at 11:41 a.m. via email, the OAL issued the appellant and her union representative another Notice of Settlement Conference that advised, among other things:

A settlement conference in this case will be held on:

Date: 3/17/2026

Time: 1:00PM

Location: PLEASE DIAL IN FOR THE CONFERENCE CALL

Dial in: ... Meeting ID: ... Passcode: ...

...

The employee must be present at the conference even if he or she is represented by an attorney or union representative.

...

If you do not attend this conference, the file will be returned to the transmitting agency for appropriate action.¹

The record indicates that the appellant did not participate at the appointed time and based on her absence, the OAL issued a Failure to Appear notice that indicated that she failed to appear at the scheduled proceeding. On March 19, 2026, this matter was returned to the Commission for a final decision, with a notice giving the appellant 13 days to present any excuse for failure to appear to this agency.

In support of the appellant's March 30, 2026 request to reinstate her appeal, she claims not to have received proper notification of the hearing date. Specifically:

On March 4, 2026, my daughter . . . received an email from the Labor Relations Manager, Jerome Jackson, indicating the Union President, Steve Pinto, had attempted to contact me by phone but was unable to reach me. At that time, it was confirmed that an incorrect phone number was being used to attempt contact. This is concerning, as the agency has previously communicated with me using my correct phone number and email address. I'm not sure where the other phone number came from.

In response, the appointing authority, represented by Fatima Abdelsalam, Deputy Attorney General, contends that the appellant's assertion regarding the use of an incorrect phone number is irrelevant to her failure to appear. The Notice of Settlement Conference issued March 5, 2026 clearly set forth the date and time of the scheduled proceeding and provided explicit instructions that appellant was required to initiate participation by dialing into the conference. Accordingly, her attendance was not dependent on the agency or any representative contacting her by telephone. Rather, the obligation rested solely with the appellant to follow the instructions contained in the notice and appear as scheduled. The appointing authority thus urges the Commission to deny this request.

CONCLUSION

The appellant has clearly not sustained her burden of proof in this matter. The record reflects that the appellant was properly notified of the settlement conference scheduled for March 17, 2026 via the March 5, 2026 emailed notice, which is the email address she provided the OAL and which she confirms is correct on appeal. Said notice provided the

¹ The OAL emailed the notice to the appellant and her union representative and received delivery receipts. Additionally, the OAL used the same email address that the appellant is using for purposes of the instant appeal and that the appellant confirms is "correct."

scheduled time and dial-in information. Notably, it also advised that the “employee must be present at the conference even if he or she is represented by an attorney or union representative.” While the appellant describes the purported events of March 4, 2026 on appeal, those events are not relevant to the conference scheduled for March 17, 2026. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed based on the appellant’s failure to appear at the March 17, 2026 settlement conference.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that Milagros Torres’s request to reinstate her appeal be denied and her appeal be dismissed.

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 22ND DAY OF JULY, 2026



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