



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Rocio Velazquez,
Bergen County Board of Social
Services

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE CHAIR/
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

CSC Docket No. 2025-2779

Classification Appeal

ISSUED: August 28, 2025 (SLK)

Rocio Velazquez appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that the proper classification of her position with the Bergen County Board of Social Services is Human Services Aide (HSA). The appellant seeks a Human Services Specialist 1 (HSS1) classification.

The record in the present matter establishes that the appellant's permanent title is HSA. The appellant sought reclassification of her position, alleging that her duties were more closely aligned with the duties of an HSS1. In support of her request, the appellant submitted a Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ) detailing the duties that she performs as a HSA. Agency Services reviewed and analyzed the PCQ, conducted phone interviews with the appellant and her supervisors,¹ and reviewed other information and documentation submitted.

Agency Services found that the appellant's primary duties and responsibilities entailed, among other things, processing renewal applications for clients seeking Family Care benefits; reviewing the information on applications and workers portal; using systems and databases for verification on data related to client identification, citizenship, income, and household; requesting additional information or actions from clients for further case assessment when needed; ensuring all required documentation is collected and submitted to Human Services Specialist 3s or 4s (HSS3 or HSS4); and updating and maintaining case summaries. In its decision, Agency Services determined that the duties performed by the appellant were

¹ The appellant's supervisors include her direct supervisor and Administrator.

consistent with the definition and examples of work included in the job specification for Human Services Aide.

On appeal, the appellant presents that on her PCQ, she selected “General” supervision instead of “Close” supervision.² However, she states that she is supervised in a manner that is comparable to an HSS1. The appellant indicates that she manages active cases, reviews documentation, calculates benefits and applies policies using the same systems and procedures as an HSS1. She also asserts that she processes cases that are the same level of difficulty as an HSS1. The appellant provides that the most effective way for her to demonstrate the work that she is performing is to evaluate the cases that she is processing. However, due to confidentiality concerns, she cannot present this communication.

In response, the appointing authority states that the appellant works under close supervision as her work is thoroughly reviewed by an HSS3 or HSS4 before final determinations are made. The appointing authority indicates that an HSS3 or HSS4 is consistently available to assist her throughout the workday. Therefore, it interprets this level of oversight as aligning with the definition of “direct supervision” as outlined in the HSA job specification.³

The appointing authority provides that HSAs in the Family Care Unit are not involved in the case assignment process as case assignments are managed by the supervisor, who distributes work based on each staff member’s title and demonstrated ability. It states that it is important to note that although the appellant works in a redetermination unit, not all cases share a similar baseline level of complexity. The appointing authority presents that there is a screening process that is used to identify more complex cases, which are generally assigned to staff in the HSS1 or HSS2 classifications.

In reply, the appellant underlines certain duties as presented in the HSS1 job specification. Specifically, she highlights “does field and office work involved in the collection, recording and evaluation of date,” which is in the HSS1 job specification

² The PCQ defines the levels of supervision as follows:

CLOSE SUPERVISION: Work is performed according to detailed instructions and supervision is available on short notice. LIMITED SUPERVISION: Incumbent proceeds on his/her own initiative while complying with policies, practices, and procedures prescribed by the supervisor. The supervisor generally answers questions only on the more important phases of the work. GENERAL SUPERVISION: Work is performed independently. The incumbent seldom refers matters to supervisor except for clarification of policy. OTHER: If your work is supervised in a manner different from all of the above, please describe briefly how your work is assigned and supervised.

³ The HSA job specification indicates that the incumbent works under “direct supervision” and the HSS1 job specification indicates that the incumbent works under “close supervision.” While there is no definition for direct supervision on the PCQ, it is functionally equivalent to the definition of close supervision. In other words, both HSAs and HSS1s are subject to the same type of supervision.

definition. Additionally, she highlights “Reviews information on forms, applications, and other financial assistance documents for completeness and accuracy during the eligibility process;” “Performs work involved in eligibility determinations, including but not limited to rates, fees, refunds, credits, benefits, cash values, payments, collections or other amounts consistent with schedules, formulas or other established procedures;” and “Performs the field and office work involved in determining the economic needs of clients and their eligibility for various financial and other public assistance programs,” which are examples of work for an HSS1. The appellant asserts that these underlined duties are her exact duties. Additionally, she notes that no other HSS1s go out into the field like she did when she was going to Hackensack Hospital.

The appellant also underlines certain duties from the HSA job specification. Specifically, she highlights “assists the Human Service Specialists in the performance of specific duties on a paraprofessional level which includes determination of eligibility for financial assistance in accord with rules and regulations promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Human Services,” which is part of the HSA job specification definition section. Further, she underscores “May assist Human Services Specialists where necessary in their work determining basic eligibility and extent of financial need in clarification and verification of data obtained from clients and other pertinent sources,” which comes from the HSA examples of work. The appellant states that although she works directly under the supervision of an HSS4, she does not assist an HSS1. She asserts that she does the same work as an HSS1 and does not determine “basic eligibility” as there is no such thing in her department. Additionally, she maintains that her duties are not on a paraprofessional level.

The appellant reiterates her disagreement with her supervisors’ comments that she is assigned less difficult applications than HSS1s. She presents that, for four years, she was sent to Hackensack Hospital to assist workers on questions regarding eligibility for Family Care. She asserts that she processed intake applications that involved all level of difficulties. Additionally, the appellant contends that she processes redeterminations for Family Care applications that are the same level of complexity as HSS1s, which involve calculating more in-depth budgets and demonstrate knowledge of policies and systems.

The appellant states that since she was interviewed regarding her position classification, her assignments have changed as she is now assigned budget adjustments, single person applications, or all adults in the household applications, and sometimes intact family cases. She claims that it is difficult to judge the level of difficulty by glancing at the application before it is assigned.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e) states that in classification appeals, the appellant shall provide copies of all materials submitted, the determination received from the lower

level, statements as to which portions of the determination are being disputed, and the basis for appeal. Information and/or argument which was not presented at the prior level of appeal shall not be considered.

The definition section of the HSA job specification states:

Under direct supervision of a Human Services Specialist 4 or other supervisor in a County Welfare Agency, while receiving formal and in-service training, assists the Human Services Specialists in the performance of specific duties on a paraprofessional level which includes determination of eligibility for financial assistance in accord with rules and regulations promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Human Services; does other related duties as well.

The definition section of the HSS1 job specification states:

Under the close supervision of a designated supervisor in a welfare agency, does the field and office work involved in the collection, recording and evaluation of data, to include the employability, the medical status and the physical or mental health of applicants/clients, for the purpose of determining applicants'/clients' eligibility for program services; provides information to families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency through employment opportunities and/or child support services; does related work.

In this matter, a review of the definition sections for the job specifications for HSA and HSS1, based on the scope of the information collected, recorded and evaluated, an HSS1's work involves applications that are a greater level of difficulty than an HSA's work. Further, Agency Services found that the appellant is assigned less difficult work and given greater scrutiny than an HSS1. Moreover, other than the appellant's assertions, she has not presented any evidence that would contradict her supervisors' comments and Agency Services' findings. Regarding the appellant's statements that she cannot demonstrate that her work is at the level of difficulty as an HSS1 due to confidentiality concerns, the appellant has the burden of proof. *See N.J.A.C. 4A:2-1.4(c)*.

Concerning the appellant's claim that her duties are the same as some of the HSS1 examples of work, the fact that some of an employee's assigned duties may compare favorably with some examples of work found in a given job specification is not determinative for classification purposes, since, by nature, examples of work are utilized for illustrative purposes only. Moreover, it is not uncommon for an employee to perform some duties which are above or below the level of work which is ordinarily performed. For purposes of determining the appropriate level within a given class, and for overall job specification purposes, the definition portion of the job specification is appropriately utilized. Regarding the appellant's assertion that she is performing

the same duties as other HSS1s, a classification appeal cannot be based solely on a comparison to the duties of another position, especially if that position is misclassified. *See In the Matter of Carol Maita, Department of Labor* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided March 16, 1995); *In the Matter of Dennis Stover, Middletown Township* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided March 28, 1996). *See also, In the Matter of Lorraine Davis, Office of the Public Defender* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided February 20, 1997), affirmed, Docket No. A-5011-96T1 (App. Div. October 3, 1998).

Referring to the appellant's statement that she currently has new duties and she previously had offsite duties at Hackensack Hospital, the foundation of position classification, as practiced in New Jersey, is the determination of duties and responsibilities being performed at a given point in time as verified by this agency through an audit or other formal study. Therefore, her duties that were prior or after the position classification review cannot be considered. Regardless, there has been nothing in the record presented that indicates that these duties were at the level of difficulty of an HSS1.

Therefore, there is no basis to disturb Agency Services' determination, and the appellant's position is properly classified as an HSA.

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 ON
THE 27TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2025



Allison Chris Myers
Chair/Chief Executive Officer
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries
and
Correspondence

Nicholas F. Angiulo
Director
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs
Civil Service Commission
Written Record Appeals Unit
P.O. Box 312
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Rocio Velazquez
Scott Modery
Division of Agency Services
Records Center