



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of Kudirat Onitiri,
Substance Abuse Counselor 2, Mental
Health/Alcoholism Services,
Department of Human Services

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2018-3068

ISSUED: August 3, 2018 (RE)

Kudirat Onitiri appeals the determination of the Division of the Agency Services (Agency Services), which found that she was below the minimum requirements in experience for a qualifying examination for Substance Abuse Counselor 2, Mental Health/Alcoholism Services.

By way of background, the appellant was appointed provisionally, pending a qualifying examination (PAQ), in the Substance Abuse Counselor 2, Mental Health/Alcoholism Services title effective January 6, 2018. Agency Services processed a qualifying examination for the appellant to determine if she possessed the necessary qualifications for the subject title which was a lateral position. These requirements included possession of a certificate as a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC), issued by the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners, New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs, Department of Law and Public Safety, and two years of experience in mental health or alcoholism counseling or social work having the responsibility for gathering and analyzing social or health information from clients, the determination of their needs and the planning and carrying out of a treatment plan geared to the needs of individual clients, one year of which shall have included direct experience with persons addicted to alcohol in an alcohol treatment, prevention and/or rehabilitation program. The appellant failed the examination but remains in her provisional position.

On her qualifying examination application, the appellant indicated possession of the required license, and she listed her positions as a provisional

Substance Abuse Counselor 2, Mental Health/Alcoholism Services; Lead Screener (part-time, 14 hours per week) with Mercer County Intoxicated Driver Resource Center; Family Services Specialist 2 with the Department of Children and Families; Unit Manager, Unit Supervisor and Program Counselor with Bo Robinson Treatment and Assessment Center; and Outpatient Clinical Counselor (part-time, no hours given) with NJ Rescue Mission. In its determination dated April 4, 2018, Agency Services credited her with four months of general experience only in her provisional position. She received no credit for her positions as Lead Screener, Family Services Specialist 2, and she received general credit for her experience as Unit Manager, Unit Supervisor and Program Counselor. Her position as Outpatient Clinical Counselor could not be quantified, as she provided no hours of service, however, the duties involved general experience only. As she did not possess one year of direct experience having the responsibility for gathering and analyzing social or health information from clients, the determination of their needs and the planning and carrying out of a treatment plan geared to the needs of individual clients with persons addicted to alcohol in an alcohol treatment, prevention and/or rehabilitation program, she did not pass the qualifying examination for the subject title.

On appeal, the appellant acknowledges that she should have elaborated on her experience in treating individuals with alcoholism and her involvement in directing and coordinating rehabilitation programs, and she argues that she possesses sufficient applicable experience. Specifically, she contends that she has more than 10 years of experience working with a diverse clientele in treating a variety of mental health issues including substance and alcohol abuse. She provides a detailed explanation of her experience in each position and a copy of her resume.

CONCLUSION

At the outset, it must be underscored that a “Qualifying Examination” examination requires the candidate to demonstrate on her qualifying examination application that she possesses the necessary experience for the subject title in order to effect a lateral transfer to the title. Additionally, 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).

Agency Services determined that the appellant’s experience in her current and prior-held titles did not have direct experience having the responsibility for gathering and analyzing social or health information from clients, the determination of their needs and the planning and carrying out of a treatment plan geared to the needs of individual clients with persons addicted to alcohol in an alcohol treatment, prevention and/or rehabilitation program as the primary focus of the positions. It is unclear how the appellant’s provisional position does not meet

these criteria, however, she had four months of this experience as of the April 2018 determination date. If it were to be accepted, she would still lack eight months of applicable specific experience. The Family Services Specialist 2 does not perform that announced duties, and the appellant did not indicate out-of-title work.

The appellant's position as a part-time Lead Screener with Mercer County Intoxicated Driver Resource Center did not have responsibility for gathering and analyzing social or health information from clients, the determination of their needs and the planning and carrying out of a treatment plan. In that position, she is training and supervising staff, providing information to Interns, making referrals for drug assessments, collecting information and addressing emergent issues. This position does not address the scope of responsibility listed in the announcement.

The Bo Robinson Treatment and Assessment Center is a center for adult probationers, parolees and pre-trial defendants. This center does not have alcohol treatment, prevention and/or rehabilitation programs as the primary focus. Additionally, the appellant mentioned other programs in addition to substance programs for her positions with this employer, such as male correction populations. Similarly, the NJ Rescue Mission serves the homeless, hungry, transient and addicted. This employer is not focused on alcohol treatment, prevention and/or rehabilitation programs.

The appellant was provisionally appointed to the subject title, however, she indicated on her application that she does not supervise, nor did she include any supervisory duties on her application, resume or appeal. The Substance Abuse Counselor 2, Mental Health/Alcoholism Services title is a first-level supervisory title, and is in the "R" Employee Relations Group. Thus, it does not appear that the appellant's provisional position is properly classified by her Substance Abuse Counselor 2, Mental Health/Alcoholism Services. Therefore, Agency Services should review the appellant's job duties to determine the proper classification of her position.

Agency Services correctly determined that the appellant did not pass the subject qualifying examination. Therefore, she has failed to support her burden of proof in this matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this request be denied, and the matter of the appellant's position classification be referred to Agency Services for review.

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 1st DAY OF AUGUST, 2018



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