



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Christina Secondro,	:	FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
Quality Assurance Officer, Animal	:	OF THE
Health Diagnostic Laboratory	:	CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
(PS5038A), Department of	:	
Agriculture	:	
	:	
	:	Examination Appeal
	:	
CSC Docket No. 2022-1026	:	
	:	

**ISSUED: FEBRUARY 18, 2022
(SLK)**

Christina Secondro appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that she did not meet the experience requirements for the promotional examination for Quality Assurance Officer, Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory (PS5038A), Department of Agriculture.

The subject examination’s closing date was May 21, 2021. The education requirement was a Bachelor’s degree in Veterinary Science, Biology, Chemistry, Animal Science or a related science. The experience requirement was five years of experience in animal testing related quality assurance programs for biological and chemical testing, three years shall have been involved in assisting with or developing and implementing a quality assurance program. A Master’s degree in one of the fields specified above could have substituted for one year of the experience requirement. A doctoral degree in one of the areas specified above could have substituted for two years of the above experience requirement. The appellant was the only applicant and the examination was cancelled due to a lack of qualified candidates.

On the appellant’s application, she indicated that she had a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in Microbiology. She also indicated that she was provisionally serving in the subject title from March 2021 to the May 21, 2021, closing date, a Microbiologist from March 2020 to March 2021, and a Quality Assurance – Regulatory Manager for Suite K Value Added Services from October 2016 to March 2020. Agency Services credited her with having met the education requirement and one year and three months of experience based on her Master’s degree in Microbiology and her provisional service in the subject title, but determined that, per the

substitution clause, she lacked two years and nine months of the general experience and three years of the specialized experience.

On appeal, in addition to highlighting her Microbiology education and her current quality assurance duties for the appointing authority, the appellant presents that she has worked in a laboratory performing quality assurance works since October 2016 when she was a Regulatory and Quality Assurance Manager for Suite K. She describes her duties and quality assurance laboratory work for Suite K in detail. The appellant indicates that she has over five and one-half years managing, developing, and implementing a quality assurance system. Additionally, the appellant submits a letter of support from the Director, Division of Animal Health Laboratory Services. The Director indicates that the appellant was provisionally appointed in the subject title due to the resignation of the incumbent and the appellant's experience and ability in quality assurance. She asserts that the appellant's experience as a Regulatory and Quality Assurance Manager for Suite K closely aligns with the duties of the subject title.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.6(a) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the promotional announcement by the closing date. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:1-1.2(c) states that the Civil Service Commission (Commission) may relax a rule for good cause in order to effectuate the purpose of Title 11A, New Jersey Statutes. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.3(b) provides that the appellant has the burden of proof in examination appeals.

In this matter, Agency Services correctly determined that the appellant was not eligible as she did not meet the general and specialized experience requirements, as the appellant's experience prior to State service did not involve animal testing as required. However, the Director, Division of Animal Health Laboratory Services explains that the appellant was provisionally appointed to the subject title as the incumbent resigned and the appellant's quality assurance work for Suite K closely aligned with the duties in the subject title. Moreover, the appellant continues to successfully provisionally serve in the subject title, gaining an additional nine months of the require general and specialized experience, and the examination was cancelled due to a lack of qualified candidates. Further, while the appellant's experience prior to State service was not in animal testing, she has sufficient general experience in quality assurance laboratory work. The Commission notes that the dual purpose of the Civil Service system is to ensure efficient public service for State and local governments and to provide appointment and advancement opportunities to Civil Service employees based on their merit and abilities. These interests are best served when more, rather than fewer, individuals are presented with employment opportunities. *See Communications Workers of America v. New Jersey Department of Personnel*, 154 *N.J.* 121 (1998). Therefore, the Commission finds good cause under

N.J.A.C. 4A:1-1.2(c) to relax the provisions of *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.6(a) and accept the appellant's Regulatory and Quality Assurance Manager experience for Suite K, for eligibility purposes only, and admit her to the subject examination.

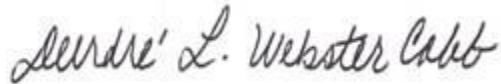
This determination is limited to the instant matter and does not provide precedent in any other matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be granted, the cancellation of the examination announcement be rescinded and the appellant's application be processed for prospective employment opportunities only.

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 16TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2022



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Chairperson
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and
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