

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

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: MAY 23, 2022 (RE)

The subject examination was announced with a closing date of November 22, 2021. The examination was open to employees in the competitive division who had an aggregate of one year of continuous permanent service as of the closing date in the title Social Work Specialist or Social Work Specialist Bilingual in Spanish and English **OR** to employees in the competitive division who had an aggregate of one year of continuous permanent service as of the closing date in the title Social Worker or Social Worker Bilingual in Spanish and English and who met the open competitive requirements. These requirements included graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree supplemented by a Master's degree in Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Guidance and Counseling or other field related to social work or social services, and two years of social work experience involving gathering social information from clients, determining their needs, and planning and carrying out treatment plans and/or service plans geared to individual client needs. Applicants who did not possess the Bachelor's degree could substitute additional experience as indicated below on a year-for-year basis with thirty semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. Applicants who did not possess the required Master's degree could substitute one additional year of experience. The appellant was found to be below the minimum experience requirements per the substitution clause for education. Fifteen candidates were

admitted to the examination which has been held, but the results are not yet available.

The appellant indicated that he possessed a Bachelor's degree and he listed one position on his application, Social Worker from November 1994 to November 2021. Official records indicate that the appellant was a Social Worker from March 2004 to November 2021; a Social Work Supervisor from October 2003 to March 2004; a Social Worker from June 2000 to October 2003; a Human Services Specialist 2 from February 2000 to June 2000; an Income Maintenance Worker from April 1997 to February 2000; and an Income Maintenance Technician from November 1994 to April 1997. As the appellant did not possess a Master's degree in a required field, he was required to possess three years of applicable experience. None of his experience was credited and he was found to be lacking three years of experience.

On appeal, the appellant states that he has 22 years of experience, and has taken the test in the past. It is noted that this title is tested using the Supervisory Test Battery (STB), a computer-administered examination. The appellant states that his duties include doing BHI/SAI (Behavioral Health Issues/Substance Abuse Issues) referrals for client needs; placing clients in the Work First Program for activities, development of job skills and to obtain their GEDs (General Educational Development); placing clients in CWEP (Community Work Experience Program) for job experience, job searching and activities; completing FVO (Family Violence Option) referrals; referring clients to the Social Security Administration for benefits; performing CSA (County Service Area) social assessments to determine clients' specific needs; and placing clients in Immediate Need, Code Blue.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.6(a) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the promotional examination announcement by the closing date. *N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.1(g)* provides that the Civil Service Commission may request clarifying information from an applicant.

Initially, the appellant was correctly deemed to be ineligible for the subject examination since he lacked the minimum requirements in experience, specifically, three years of social work experience involving gathering social information from clients, determining their needs, and planning and carrying out treatment plans and/or service plans geared to individual client needs. On his application, the appellant described his duties for his Social Worker position as:

Placed homeless clients. Also placed clients in WFNJ activities. Also, processed BHI.SHI.FVO clients with referrals. I was acting supervisor in 2003 for 90 days. Processed all cases regarding the above job duties in accordance with State regulations.

Agency Services found that the appellant did not indicate that his experience included planning and carrying out treatment plans and/or service plans geared to individual client needs. Nonetheless, the appellant has applied for two previous examinations for this title, one in 2011 and one in 2017, and his experience as a Social Worker was accepted for both. For an examination closing in June 2017, the appellant listed his experience as a Social Worker as:

Placed clients in TANJ work activities also, did FVO and childcare referrals along with child care and transportation TRE checks. Also, was acting supervisor from 06/17/03 to 08/01/03.

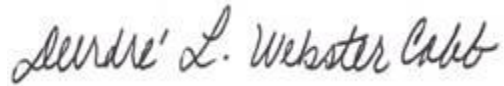
While the appellant did not describe this position in the same way on the current application, the record indicates that he was performing social work which included planning and carrying out treatment plans and/or service plans geared to individual client needs for at least three years prior to the closing date. The On-Line Application System User's Guide cautions applicants to carefully review the application to ensure that it is complete and accurate before submitting, and to complete the application in detail. It states that failure to complete the application properly may cause the applicant to be declared ineligible. The instructions under the experience portion of the applications advise applicants to provide all employment information (not just current employment information), and if they have multiple positions, they need to make sure that they provide each one separately. Under the circumstances, based on the clarifying information in the record, the appellant should be admitted to the subject examination. However, the appellant is cautioned to properly complete all future applications and include his positions (titles) separately, and all relevant duties for each position. Additionally, the appellant should refrain from using acronyms that he does not previously identify. Clarifying information is accepted per *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.1(g); however, in such a situation, it is longstanding practice that an applicant's name will be added to the eligible list for prospective employment opportunities only.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be granted, and the appellant be admitted to the examination for prospective appointment 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 18TH DAY OF MAY, 2022



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