



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Maritza Tellez,  
Human Services Specialist 1,  
(C1491D) and Human Services  
Specialist 1, Bilingual in Spanish and  
English (C1492D), Hudson County

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

CSC Docket Nos. 2023-1455 and  
2023-1456

Examination Appeals

**ISSUED: May 3, 2023 (SLK)**

Maritza Tellez appeals the determinations of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that she did not meet the experience requirements for the promotional examinations for Human Services Specialist 1, (C1491D) and Human Services Specialist 1, Bilingual in Spanish and English (C1492D), Hudson County. These appeals have been consolidated due to common issues presented.

The closing date of the examinations was October 21, 2022. The education requirements were 60 college credits. Experience involving any combination of the following could have been substituted for the education requirements on a year-for-year basis with 30 semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience: securing/verifying information and making determinations or recommendations relating to eligibility or qualifications of applicants for loans, insurance, credit, employability, and/or job training services, or entitlement to cash awards, financial benefits or adjustment and settlement of insurance claims; investigations involving the collection of facts and information by observing conditions, examining records, interviewing individuals, and preparing investigative reports of findings; or investigating, establishing, and/or enforcing support obligations in a welfare board or agency, court system, or related agency. Additionally, the Human Services Specialist 1, Bilingual in Spanish and English (C1492D) candidates were required to be able to read, write, speak, and communicate in English and Spanish sufficiently to perform the duties of the position. Candidates were to be tested at the time of certification for the ability to communicate effectively in both English and Spanish. A total of 145 employees applied for the Human Services Specialist 1, (C1491D) open competitive

examination, 98 were admitted to the examination, and 46 were determined eligible after the test. Certification OL230303 was issued and its disposition is due June 27, 2023. Additionally, a total of 61 employees applied for the Human Services Specialist 1, Bilingual in Spanish and English (C1492D) open competitive examination, 44 were admitted to the examination, and 20 were determined eligible after the test. Certification OL230304 was issued and its disposition is due June 27, 2023. The lists for both examinations expire on March 22, 2026.

On the appellant's applications, she indicated that she possesses a high school diploma or GED. Also, she indicated that she was a Bilingual Clerk from October 2013 to the examination closing date. Personnel records indicate that the appellant was a Clerk 1, Bilingual in Spanish and English, from January 2015 to the examination closing date and a Clerk 1 from October 2013 to January 2015. The Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) determined, per the substitution clause for education, that she lacked two years of experience for both examinations.

On appeal, the appellant presents that she has been employed by the Hudson County Welfare Division since 2012 and describes her experience as involving, but not limited to, the screening and interviewing of applicants/clients. Further, regarding eligibility for public assistance programs, the appellant states that she advises clients as to the information required, she collects the information and documents for the eligibility process, and she applies the information to determine eligibility for benefits. Additionally, the appellant indicates that she worked for Hudson Milestones from 2005 to 2012 and her duties for this non-profit agency mostly consisted of interacting and assisting low functioning clients through programs provided by the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Moreover, she presents that she has completed one year of study at Hudson County Community College where she majors in Sociology and indicates that she is planning on continuing her studies. The appellant attaches her notices of ineligibility for the above-referenced examinations.

Additionally, while she acknowledges that she does not have a college degree, she believes that her 10 years of experience working for Hudson County interviewing clients and assisting with their eligibility for programs should allow her to be admitted to the test. The appellant states that there were Clerks who could take the test previously solely based on their experience who did not possess college degrees. Further, she contends, regarding the subject examination, that it is unfair that applicants who possess college degrees, but who do not have any experience or less than one year of experience can sit for the test while she cannot.

## CONCLUSION

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.3(b) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the open competitive announcement by the examination closing date. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.3(b) provides that the appellant has the burden of proof in examination appeals.

In this matter, a review of the record demonstrates that Agency Services correctly determined that the appellant did not meet the examination requirements. Specifically, as she did not indicate on her application that she possessed any college credits, she needed two years of applicable experience. In that regard, to substitute one year of experience for 30 college credits, the experience needed to involve making eligibility determinations for financial benefits programs or other experience as indicated in the announcement. However, although the appellant indicated in part of her appeal that she determined eligibility for public assistance programs, on her applications and in another part of her appeal, she states that she “assists” in such determinations. In that regard, she presented duties on her applications which appear to be consistent with her clerical titles. 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). Concerning the appellant’s work for Hudson Milestones, as this experience was not including on her application, it cannot be considered since it is an amendment to her application after the examination closing date. *See N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.1(f). Nonetheless, the experience does not appear to be applicable. Similarly, as the appellant did not indicate on her application that she possessed college credits, her studies at Hudson County Community College are an amendment to her application and cannot be considered. Also, even if the appellant’s college credits were included on her application, since it does not appear that the appellant has completed 60 college credits by the examination closing date as she has only one year of study, this would be insufficient to meet the education requirements.

Concerning the appellant’s belief that she should be allowed to take the test based on her 10 years of experience with Hudson County, only possessing the examination requirements, *i.e.* possessing the requisite combination of college credits and/or **applicable** experience, allowed candidates to be admitted to the examination. Regarding the appellant’s comments about a prior examination for the subject title, eligibility is determined on the basis of each discrete announcement. If the appellant does not meet the requirements for the current announcement, the fact that others may have been eligible for a prior examination based on experience which she implies is similar to her current experience is not relevant. It is noted that an applicant could have been admitted to the subject examination based on experience alone if the applicant possessed sufficient experience as indicated in the announcement by the closing date. Additionally, referring to the appellants comments that it is unfair that applicants could be determined eligible based on college credits with little or no experience while she has 10 years of experience with Hudson County, the subject title


is a para-professional title performing higher-level duties than clerical titles. Therefore, it was appropriate for eligibility for the subject examination to require a sufficient combination of college credits and/or applicable higher-level experience.

**ORDER**

Therefore, it is ordered that these appeals be denied.

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 3<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF MAY, 2023



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c: Maritza Tellez  
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