



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Janessa Gray,  
Program Specialist 2, Social/Human  
Services (S0356E), Statewide

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

CSC Docket No. 2024-1430

Examination Appeal

**ISSUED:** August 14, 2024 (SLK)

Janessa Gray appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that she did not meet the experience requirements for the Program Specialist 2, Social/Human Services (S0356E), Statewide open competitive examination.

The closing date of the examinations was May 22, 2023. The education requirement was a Bachelor's degree. The experience requirements were two years of experience in planning, monitoring, coordinating, implementing, modifying and/or evaluating a social or human services program. Applicants who did not possess the required education could have substituted additional experience on a year-for-year basis. Additionally, a Master's degree in a social/human services specialty area, public or business administration, child advocacy and policy, or child advocacy and policy with a concentration in public child welfare could have substituted for one year of experience. A total of 46 applicants applied for the subject examination and 17 were admitted. The subject test was administered on December 12, 2023, and 10 applicants were found eligible. The list expires on January 31, 2027.

On the appellant's application, she indicated that she possessed a Bachelor's degree. Additionally, the appellant presented that she was a Grant Manager for 22<sup>nd</sup> Century Technologies from October 2022 to the May 22, 2023, examination closing date. Further, the appellant provided that for the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium she was an Early Childhood Specialist from May 2019 to October 2022, an Early Intervention SPOE Service Coordinator from September 2012 to May 2019,

and a Health Families TIP Program Family Support Worker from July 2010 to August 2012. The Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) credited the appellant for her Bachelor's degree and eight months of experience based on her Grant Manager experience, but it determined that she lacked one year and four months of experience.

On appeal, the appellant states that she is eligible for the subject examination based on her 15 years of work where she planned, monitored, coordinated, implemented, modified, and evaluated multiple social/human services programs. She also highlights her Bachelor's degree in community health including completion of multiple public health courses. The appellant asserts that all her work experience for the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium has been in implementing a social/human service program that was funded by the State. While the appellant acknowledges that a large part of her career includes direct service to families, she provides that she has more than two years of experience working at the program level. She highlights her more than three years of experience as an Early Childhood Specialist, which was a position under the Connecting NJ program funded by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). During this time, the appellant presents that she was the representative and lead person for her county and implemented programmatic responsibilities daily to measure the success and functionality of the program. She provides that she worked with DCF to brainstorm and problem solve different program improvements on an ongoing basis. The appellant states that as a strategy, she often implemented the Plan, Do, Study, and Act model to carry out the program's goals of supporting and promoting early childhood developmental awareness to the public. She notes that she has experience with Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) activities and evaluation, and she collected and provided analytical information through the SPECT database on a quarterly basis which she reported to DCF. The appellant states that she used the data collected to support recommendations for improvements of the program's functionality. Further, the appellant provides that she collaborated with community partners and State agencies and planned and hosted Community Advisory Committee meetings while serving as a liaison to the Connecting NJ program. Moreover, she indicates that she networked and built working relationships with stakeholders to ensure positive service linkages for vulnerable families. Additionally, the appellant created a child development educational virtual program to promote early childhood development awareness to community partners and families.

## CONCLUSION

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.3(b)2 requires applicants to possess all the requirements specified in an announcement for an open competitive examination by the 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, Agency Services correctly determined that the appellant lacked the required experience for the subject Program Specialist 2, Social/Human Services (S0356E), Statewide open competitive examination as only her eight months of experience as a Grants Manager was applicable, and she lacked one year and four months of the required experience. Specifically, a review of the appellant's application, resume, and appeal indicates that as an Early Childhood Specialist with the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium, while she may have performed **some** duties to implement the Connecting NJ at the program level, her work primarily involved case work on the individual level and not at the overall program level. 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).

### 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 BY THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON  
THE 14<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF AUGUST, 2024




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