



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of Gregory R. Leonardi,
Program Specialist 4, Social/Human
Services (PS2621K), Department of
Human Services

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2024-1052

ISSUED: November 7, 2024 (BS)

Gregory R. Leonardi appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services which found that he did not meet the experience requirements for the promotional examination for Program Specialist 4, Social/Human Services (PS2621K), Department of Human Services.

The promotional examination at issue was announced in relevant part with education and experience requirements which had to be satisfied as of the announced July 21, 2023 closing date. Applicants had to possess a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university plus four years of experience in planning, monitoring, coordinating, implementing, modifying and/or evaluating a social or human services program, one year which shall have been in a supervisory capacity over professional or technical staff. Applicants who did not possess the required education could substitute additional experience on a year-for-year basis. The examination announcement also stipulated that a Master's degree from an accredited college or university 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 be substituted for one year of the required non-supervisory experience. A total of 36 employees applied for the subject promotional examination that resulted in a list promulgating on March 1, 2024 with 18 eligibles and expiring on February 28, 2026. It is noted that five eligibles were appointed from the eligible list thus far.

The appellant filed an application on which he indicated that he possessed a Bachelor's degree plus experience as a provisional Supervising Community Program Specialist (March 2022 to the July 21, 2023 examination closing date), Principal Community Program Specialist (July 2021 to March 2022), Habilitation Plan Coordinator (November 2013 to July 2021), Investigator (May 2011 to November 2013),¹ and Senior Case Manager and Case Manager (October 2006 to May 2011). Agency Services concluded that the appellant satisfied the educational requirement and possessed two years and one month of applicable experience as a provisional Supervising Community Program Specialist and Principal Community Program Specialist, including the one year of supervisory experience. However, none of the appellant's remaining positions involved responsibilities in the required areas. Consequently, Agency Services found the appellant ineligible for the subject promotional examination.

On appeal, the appellant asserts that he satisfies the subject requirements. In this regard, the appellant argues that he has 20 years of experience working in the human services field, including applicable experience as a Habilitation Plan Coordinator which led to his transition into the Principal Community Program specialist position and promotion to Supervising Community Program Specialist.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.6(a) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the examination announcement by the closing date. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.3(b) provides that, except for medical or psychological disqualification appeals, the appellant shall have the burden of proof.

A review of the appellant's application reveals that he satisfied the educational requirement and possessed two years and one month of applicable experience as a provisional Supervising Community Program Specialist and Principal Community Program Specialist, including the one year of supervisory experience as of the closing date. However, none of his remaining positions involved responsibilities which rose to the level and scope of those duties required of the subject title. In particular, the primary focus of a Habilitation Plan Coordinator is in the development of individualized treatment plans geared to the needs of individual clients, which is not considered the same as the overall planning, monitoring, coordinating, implementing, modifying and/or evaluating of a social or human services program as required.

In order for experience to be considered applicable, it must have as its primary focus full-time responsibilities in the areas required in the subject announcement. *See In the Matter of Bashkim Vlashi* (MSB, decided June 9, 2004). The amount of

¹ Agency records indicate that the appellant served as a Family Service Specialist Trainee from May 2011 to May 2012 and a Family Service Specialist 2 from May 2012 to November 2013. His experience prior to this was not with the State.

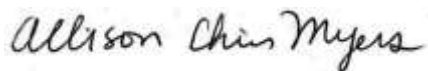
time, and the importance of the duty, determines if it is the primary focus. An experience requirement that lists a number of duties that define the primary experience requires that the applicants demonstrate that they primarily performed all of those duties for the required length of time. Performance of only one or some related aspects of the duties listed is not indicative of comprehensive experience. *See In the Matter of Jeffrey Davis* (MSB, decided March 14, 2007). Planning, monitoring, coordinating, implementing, modifying and/or evaluating a social or human services program is not the primary focus of a Habilitation Plan Coordinator. As such, this position cannot be credited. Accordingly, the record reflects that the appellant did not meet the requirements for the title under test.

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 6TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2024



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