



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Hansa Mehta, Human Services Specialist 1 (C0112T), Union County

CSC Docket No. 2015-3086

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE
ACTION OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Examination Appeals

ISSUED: 007 2 2 2015

(RE)

Hansa Mehta appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (DAS) which found that she did not meet the education requirements for the open competitive examination for Human Services Specialist 1 (C0112T), Union County.

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The subject examination announcement was issued with a closing date of February 26, 2015, and was open to residents of Union County who met the educational requirements of possession of 60 semester hour credits from an accredited college or university. Applicants who did not possess the required education could substitute the following experience on a year for year basis with 30 semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience: experience involving any combination of the following: 1) securing/verifying information and making determinations or recommendations relating to eligibility or qualifications of applicants for loans, insurance, credit, or entitlement to cash awards, financial benefits or adjustment and settlement of insurance claims; 2) investigations involving the collection of facts and information by observing conditions, examining records, interviewing individuals, and preparing investigative reports of findings; or 3) investigating, establishing, and/or enforcing support obligations in a welfare board or agency, court system, or related agency. The appellant was found to be below the minimum requirements in education. One hundred twenty seven candidates appear on the eligible list, which has not yet been certified.

On her application, Ms. Mehta indicated that she possessed a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree from a foreign country, but did not provide an evaluation of her foreign degrees. She listed six positions on her application: Clerk,

Legislative Aide, President of D. & H. Petroleum (a service station); Owner of J. & R. Photo; and Vice President of J. Ram Trading. None of her experience was acceptable as a substitute for education, and she was found to be below the minimum requirements in education.

On appeal, the appellant indicates that she possesses a Master's degree and has accrued required experience since 2007. In addition, she provides a copy of the Evaluation of her foreign degree, which states that her education is equivalent to a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Political Science. She also submitted a letter from the Director of the Department of Human Services for Union County which describes her education and her work abilities.

Commission staff responded that the job announcement clearly states in bold letters "NOTE: Foreign transcripts must be evaluated by a recognized evaluation service. Please upload a copy of your evaluation with your application. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility." Page 20 of the online application guide indicates that foreign degree evaluations are to be submitted either on-line or by mail, and provides further instructions. candidates to carefully review the announcement to see if additional documentation is needed. To proceed to the payment section, candidates must certify that their application is complete and accurate. On the Civil Service Commission website, the Job Seekers section includes a segment on Nine Steps to a New Career. Step 2 explains job requirements and provides addresses for five evaluation services for foreign transcripts. It states, "Submit a copy of the evaluation with each application that requires a college degree or credits." It was explained that the appellant did not follow these instructions and she was asked to please check to ensure that her future applications are properly filled out and all required documentation is submitted. A second review of her duties did not find that the primary focus of any of her positions matched the required experience.

In response, the appellant replied that she had been admitted to a Human Services Specialist 1 examination in the past, and she assumed that a foreign degree evaluation would be kept on file.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.3(b) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the open competitive examination announcement by the closing date.

CONCLUSION

The appellant was correctly deemed to be ineligible for the subject examination on the basis of not meeting the education requirements. The announcement clearly indicated that candidates must meet the requirements, and that failure to provide a foreign degree evaluation would result in ineligibility. This was not an ambiguous statement, and the announcement does not state that prior

possession of a transcript evaluation would waive the current requirement. The instructions on the announcement are very clear and were repeated in the instructions for completing an online application, and on the Commission's website. The appellant was required to submit a foreign degree evaluation by the closing date, February 26, 2015. Her foreign degree evaluation was submitted on May 20, 2012, but for a prior examination announcement. This is very competitive examination, with 127 candidate names on the eligible list.

A review of the appellant's duties for each listed position reveals that none of them have, as the primary focus, performing investigations or making determinations or recommendations relating to eligibility or qualifications of applicants for loans, insurance, credit, or entitlement to cash awards, financial benefits or adjustment and settlement of insurance claims.

A thorough review of appellant's application reveals that the determination of DAS, denying appellant's admittance to the subject examination due to the fact that she did not possess the announced requirements for eligibility by the examination closing date, is amply supported by the record. The appellant provides no basis to disturb this decision. Thus, the appellant has failed to support her burden of proof in this matter.

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 21st DAY OF OCTOBER, 2015

Lohert III Czeck Robert M. Czech

Chairperson

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