



B-24

In the Matter of Robert Armstrong,
County Emergency Management
Planner (C0358T), Cape May County

CSC Docket No. 2016-1627

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: DEC 13 2016

(RE)

Robert Armstrong appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (DAS) which found that he did not meet the experience requirements for the open-competitive examination for County Emergency Management Planner (C0358T), Cape May County.

The subject open-competitive examination had a closing date of June 18, 2015, and was open to residents of Cape May County who met the experience requirements. These requirements included possession of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, and two years of experience in planning at the municipal, regional, state, or federal level, one year of which shall have been in the area of emergency/disaster planning. Applicants who did not possess the required education could substitute additional experience as indicated on a year for year basis with 30 semester hour credits being equal to one year of experience. The appellant was found to be below the minimum requirements in experience. As no candidates were admitted, the examination was cancelled on November 5, 2015.

On his application, the appellant indicated that he possessed a Bachelor's degree, and he listed one position, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with Woodbine Developmental Center. On his Curriculum Vitae, the appellant included positions as Director of Professional Residential Services, Assistant Director of Nursing Services, Head Nurse, Charge Nurse, Staff Nurse, and Nursing Assistant. As this experience was not accepted, the appellant was found to be lacking two years of qualifying experience, including one year of specific experience.

On appeal, Mr. Armstrong explains that, as a CEO, he was responsible for the operation and planning of a facility of over 300 clients and 1200 employees. He states that he worked closely with County Emergency Management to develop a shelter to be used during storms for up to 1000 people. He states that he also kept the facility operational and safe, and developed storage and distribution plans for supplies. He indicates that the facility maintains emergency supplies for the State Police, shelter systems, a regional branch of Homeland Security and New Jersey emergency management, with plans he developed and implemented. He also indicates that he has a Master's degree in Health Administration.

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

For the position of CEO, Mr. Armstrong indicated that his responsibility was to manage a 600 bed residential facility serving persons with disabilities. His duties included building a management team operating 13 departments, with over 1400 employees; approving and overseeing a \$90,000,000 budget; directing the center through regulatory surveys; interfacing with politicians to expand services and support; streamlining operations and utilization of staff; developing and initiating programs to recruit and retrain clinical staff; participating in development of policies and procedures; developing outreach programs; interacting with local and State Boards of Directors; developing and instituting quality improvement in risk management systems; initiating development of a long-term planning effort; and developing and instituting the Cape May County emergency shelter.

In order for experience to be considered applicable, it must have as its primary focus full-time responsibilities in the area required in the announcement. *See In the Matter of Bashkim Vlashi* (MSB, decided June 9, 2004). When an applicant indicates on his/her application a variety of duties for a position, it is necessary to provide the approximate or percentage amount of time spent per week performing those duties. In this regard, although it is not unreasonable to assume that a CEO would participate in planning sessions for emergencies, handle emergent situations, and assist other agencies in preparation for emergencies; this does not by itself demonstrate that Mr. Armstrong primarily worked in planning at the State level, including the area of emergency/disaster planning. Rather, it appears as though he primarily performed executive management duties, which would not be considered equivalent to the required experience for this examination. Executive managers formulate the performance directives of a facility, and are responsible for implementing them. They hold effective authority over people, budgets and equipment, and direct work towards specific goals and planned objectives. They plan overall work operations, set performance standards, establish

priorities for subordinates, and devise and plan methods and procedures. While these duties include planning, that is not the primary focus of the position. The appellant's experience in the remaining positions is clearly inapplicable. Additionally, the appellant's additional degrees beyond a Bachelor's degree have no bearing on this determination. In sum, the appellant lacks two years of applicable experience, including one year of specific experience.

An independent review of all material presented indicates that the decision of DAS, that the appellant did not meet the announced requirements for eligibility by the closing date, is amply supported by the record. The appellant provides no basis to disturb this decision. Thus, the appellant has failed to support his 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
THE 7th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2016



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