



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Jennifer Gonzalez,  
Principal Planner (M0872U),  
Hoboken

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2017-3036

ISSUED: October 24, 2017 (RE)

Jennifer Gonzalez appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services which found that she did not meet the education requirements for the open competitive examination for Principal Planner (M0872U), Hoboken.

The subject examination announcement was issued with specific requirements that had to be met as of the November 25, 2016 closing date (see attached). The appellant met the experience requirement and was found to be ineligible based on a lack of education. Specifically, she did not possess 21 semester hour credits in professional planning subjects such as the principles of land use planning, history of city planning, planning project design, and planning law and administration. She was credited with 3 college credits for the course POLS 448 Land Use Management and the Politics of Sprawl, and found to be lacking 18 specific credits. There was one qualified applicant on the eligible list, which was certified, and she was appointed on April 19, 2017.

On appeal, Ms. Gonzalez argues that she should be eligible as she has a Bachelor's degree and the required 21 credits in professional planning. She states that she has certifications, including an American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certificate, and has the experience and abilities to perform in the position. The appellant submitted her transcripts from Lehigh University for her Master's degree in Environmental Policy Design, and states that her courses included:

- POLS 448 Land Use Management and the Politics of Sprawl
- ES 401 Introduction to Environmental Policy Design

ES 402 Environmental Science Foundation for Policy Design  
ES 455 Environmental Justice and the Law  
ES 431 U.S. Environmental Law, Pollution and Risk  
EDUC 405 Qualitative Research Methods  
ECO 001 Principles of Economics

In support of this appeal, the appointing authority states that he himself possesses a Professional Planner license, and he considers the appellant to be an expert at the practice of professional planning, having drafted many comprehensive, well researched, well-reasoned, and legally sound planning documents and reports. Additionally, the appellant's supervisor, the Community Development Director, also holds a Professional Planner license and supports this appeal. The Community Development Director argues that the courses listed above directly pertain to elements of the appellant's duties, and that her specialization in environmental policy is directly related to planning functions. The supervisor indicates that the appellant needs an understanding of environmental policy design, economics, qualitative research methods, environmental justice and the law, and statistical analysis to perform various tasks, and that her education plays a direct role in her success.

*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 possesses a Bachelor's degree in International Relations/Spanish and a Master's degree in Environmental Policy Design. The appellant argues that the specific courses that she took are professional planning subjects. The Civil Service Commission does not agree. Absent a statement from a Dean from Lehigh University that the courses she took are equivalent to planning courses, this education cannot be accepted. The AICP certificate is not on the substitutable list for the educational requirement. The State Board of Professional Planners uses the national AICP examination, but also requires applicants to pass the New Jersey Planning Law examination in order to obtain a Professional Planner license in New Jersey. The State Board of Professional Planners indicates that recognized planning subjects include planning theory, planning methods, history of city planning, principals of land use planning, planning project design, planning law, and planning administration. Aside from POLS 448, descriptive information from the course catalog regarding the appellant's courses as listed above do not sustain the presumption that these are planning subjects. While they all are applicable ancillary courses, which certainly can be very helpful in performing planning tasks, they simply are not planning courses. Every degree requires ancillary courses in addition to the main courses required to obtain the specific degree. Completion of only the ancillary courses to a specific degree does



not establish that the individual has been educated in the specific degree. The appellant's courses, while they may be factors of planning, cannot be considered to equate to a degree in planning.

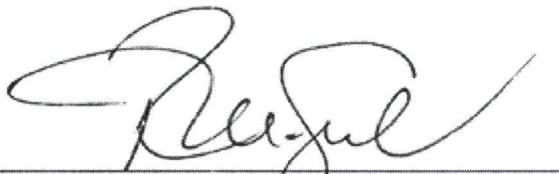
A thorough review of appellant's application reveals that the determination of the Division of Agency Services, denying appellant's admittance to the subject examination due to the fact that she did not possess the announced requirements for eligibility by the examination closing date, is amply supported 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  
THE 18<sup>th</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER, 2017



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Robert M. Czedh, Chairperson  
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries  
and  
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Enclosure

c: Jennifer Gonzalez  
Stephen Marks  
Kelly Glenn  
Records Center



## Job Announcements

Symbol: M0872U Title: **PRINCIPAL PLANNER**

Issue Date: 11/04/2016

Closing Date: 11/25/2016

Date:

Jurisdiction: HOBOKEN

Salary: \$45,000.00 - \$90,092.98 Per Year

Num. of Positions: 2

Workweek: 35 Hours per week

Application Fee: \$25.00

### OPEN TO RESIDENTS OF:

(1) Hoboken City; (2) Hudson County

### REQUIREMENTS:

**EDUCATION:** Graduation from an accredited college with a Bachelor's degree including or supplemented by twenty-one (21) semester hour credits in professional planning subjects such as the principles of land use planning, history of city planning, planning project design, and planning law and administration. Please upload a copy of your transcript with your application. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility.

**EXPERIENCE:** Three (3) years of responsible professional experience in municipal, county, regional, or state planning.

**NOTE:** Possession of a current and valid license as a Professional Planner in New Jersey issued by the New Jersey Board of Professional Planners may be substituted for the education requirement. If you are substituting a license for the required education, please upload a copy of your license with your application. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility.

**NOTE:** Possession of a Master's degree in Planning from an accredited college or university may be substituted for one (1) year of indicated experience. If you are substituting education for some of the required experience, please upload a copy of your transcript with your application. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility.

**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.**

**LICENSE:** A license as a Professional Planner, issued by the New Jersey State Board of Professional Planners is required for promotion or other appointment to the next higher level, Supervising Planner.

Appointees will be required to possess a driver's license valid in New Jersey only if the operation of a vehicle, rather than employee mobility, is necessary to perform the essential duties of the position.

**Customer Care and Technical Support:** If you are having difficulty submitting your application online, customer care and technical support are available during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. EST, Monday - Friday, excluding holidays and emergency closings. Please email: [OAS.support@csc.nj.gov](mailto:OAS.support@csc.nj.gov) or call (609) 292-4144. Please note that application support requests received outside regular business hours on the closing date will not change the application filing deadline so PLEASE FILE EARLY.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

1. NJAC 4A:4-2.3(b) states that all requirements must be met as of the closing date.
2. Online applications must be completed and submitted by the closing date listed above.
3. **You must complete your application in detail.** Your score may be based on a comparison of your background with the job requirements. **Failure to complete your application properly may lower your score or cause you to fail.**
4. If an employment list results from this announcement, it may be certified to fill full-time and part-time positions.
5. Effective September 1, 2011, the New Jersey First residency law was enacted. Please click here for additional information.
6. In accordance with Public Law 2010 c. 26, Veterans pay a reduced application fee of \$15.00 if they have previously established Veteran's Preference with the DMAVA (as defined by NJSA 11A:5-1 et seq). Those claiming Veteran's Preference but have not yet received approval from DMAVA must pay the full application fee and may