



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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

In the Matter of Michele Walters,
Department of Law and Public Safety

CSC Docket No. 2020-1002

Classification Appeal

ISSUED: FEBRUARY 23, 2021 (RE)

Michele Walters appeals the decision of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that her position with the Department of Law and Public Safety is correctly classified as Technical Support Specialist 1. She seeks an Administrative Analyst 3, Information Systems classification in these proceedings.

The appellant is permanent in the title Technical Support Specialist 1 within the Department of Law and Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General, Information Technology Operations, reports to an Administrative Analyst 3, Information Systems, and has no supervisory responsibility. She requested a review by Agency Services to determine if her position was properly classified. A thorough review of all documentation submitted was performed. The review by Agency Services determined that the appellant’s duties and responsibilities are commensurate with the title Technical Support Specialist 1. It is noted that the appellant had requested a classification review of her position as an Information Technology Specialist in July 2017, and in a determination dated February 13, 2018, Agency Services determined that the duties of the position were commensurate with Technical Support Specialist 1.

On appeal, the appellant states that “for the last couple years” she has been convinced she is performing the work of an Administrative Analyst 3, Information Systems. She states that she consistently goes beyond helpdesk duties, and she advances the objectives and goals of the IT unit. She states that her focus has been on analysis and evaluation of operations, business practices and solutions, and she

functions as a project lead. She states that she meets and collaborates with the Director and Deputy Director, and others do not.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e) states that in classification appeals, the appellant shall provide copies of all materials submitted, the determination received from the lower level, statements as to which portions of the determination are being disputed, and the basis for appeal. Information and/or argument which was not presented at the prior level of appeal shall not be considered.

The definition section of the specification for Administrative Analyst 3, Information Systems states:

Under general supervision of an Administrative Analyst 4, Information Systems, or other supervisory officer in a State department or agency, performs the analysis and evaluation of internal operations, business practices, methods and techniques of the organization to determine optimal solutions and/or approaches to satisfy agency information technology (IT) business needs/initiatives; evaluates users' needs and recommends (IT) solutions; provides recommendations in support of the agency's business needs and IT goals and objectives; formulates and/or recommends IT policies and procedures; may function as project leader; does other related duties as required.

The definition section of the job specification for Technical Support Specialist 1 states:

Under general supervision, as a lead worker in a mainframe environment, provides guidance and direct hands on support to a work shift of the Data Processing Operations unit in resolving complex production problems from verbal or written problem reports; consults with, and assists network management and systems programming staff in the diagnosis, and resolution of complex problems; monitors and allocates space on direct access storage devices; uses and guides the use of productivity aids in implementing and maintaining software, applications, and system libraries; OR, as a lead worker in a client/server environment, provides direct support to end users and/or guidance to help desk and/or desktop technical personnel in the provision of direct support; installs and guides the installation of hardware and software on servers and/or workstations; does other related duties.

First, the purpose of the State's classification system is not to perpetuate misclassifications and the classification plan is not intended to limit an appointing authority's ability to organize its work force or supervisory structure as appropriate, so long as the designated titles are performing applicable in-title duties. However, an inappropriate reporting relationship includes when supervisors and subordinates hold the same title, or even when titles are in the same class code. *See In the Matter of Celia D. Chee-Wah* (CSC, decided April 18, 2012); and *In the Matter of Joseph Stefanoni* (CSC, decided February 8, 2012). In this case, the appellant seeks an Administrative Analyst 3, Information Systems classification, the same title as her supervisor. Thus, the requested title would result in an inappropriate reporting relationship.

As background, the Technical Support Specialist series was originally designated for use by the Office of Information Technology in providing direct hands-on production support in the Mainframe environment, and was later revised and generalized (with the evolution of the client/server technology) to allow for its use in client/server environments. The primary use of this title series in the client/server environment is infrastructure support and providing tier/level 2 and 3 support depending on the location. The Technical Support Specialist 2 title is used for positions which install or implement systems; install and configure hardware (servers, routers, switches, etc.) and software; work closely with the Network Administrator, and provide diagnosis, assistance and resolution for tier/level 2 types of problems.

Next, there is a sharp distinction made between a position and an incumbent. A position consists of a group of currently assigned duties and responsibilities requiring employment of one person, while an incumbent is an individual occupying a position. It is positions that are classified, not persons who happen to be occupying positions at a given time. How well or efficiently an employee does his or her job, length of service, volume of work and qualifications have no effect on the classification of a position currently occupied, as *positions*, not employees are classified. *See In the Matter of Debra DiCello* (CSC, decided June 24, 2009). Thus, the knowledge, skills, and abilities of an incumbent are not factors under consideration for classification purposes as they relate to the incumbent and not to the position. Also, as indicated in *In the Matter of Patricia Lightsey* (MSB, decided June 8, 2005), *aff'd on reconsideration* (MSB, decided November 22, 2005), the outcome of position classification is not to provide a career path to the incumbent, but rather to ensure the position was classified is the most appropriate title available within the State's classification plan.

Also, classification determinations list only those duties which are considered to be the primary focus of appellant's duties and responsibilities that are performed on a regular, recurring basis. *See In the Matter of David Baldasari* (Commissioner of Personnel, decided August 22, 2006). It is long-standing policy that upon review of a

request for position classification, when it is found that the majority of an incumbent's duties and responsibilities correspond to the examples of work found in a particular job specification, that title is deemed the appropriate title for the position. There can only be one primary focus of the position, which is determined by the importance of the task(s) and length of time needed to accomplish that objective. A review of the duties listed on the appellant's Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ), and in the Agency Service's decision, indicate HelpDesk duties, technical support, and ensuring proper performance of hardware and software are the primary duties. On appeal, the appellant emphasizes the analysis aspects of the position, specifically, analysis and evaluation of operations, business practices and solutions, and functioning as a project lead.

A review of the PCQ indicates that the appellant did not provide requested information. Appellants were required to provide a list of duties performed and give a percent of time in order of difficulty for each duty. In this case, the appellant did not provide an order of difficulty for any of her duties. Additionally, she provided a general description of the job, and then provided a list of bulleted tasks performed 50% of the time, a second list performed 45% of the time, and a third list performed 5% of the time. Since there was a description and six duties tasks associated with 50% of her time, and 18 duties associated with 45% of her time, the appellant was essentially not responding to the amount of time performing each task, or the order of difficulty for each of her tasks, or the remaining four tasks performed 5% of the time. The appellant has cloaked the amount of time and importance of her primary duties. Thus, the classification needs to be determined based on a holistic view of the description and the duties provided. The general description given for the first task includes HelpDesk duties and other aspects included in the second list (45% of the time).

The supervisor of the position indicates that the most important duties of the position are: troubleshooting computer hardware and software problems, and providing clear technical support and training to end users; reviewing and maintaining accurate inventory of all equipment from receipt, storage, distribution to surplus supporting the state procedures, and enlisting help from colleagues is needed; and creating accurate equipment reports for management. These duties do not have Administrative Analyst 3, Information Systems tasks as the primary focus. This title, which is a variant, performs the analysis and evaluation of internal operations, business practices, methods and techniques of the organization to determine optimal solutions and/or approaches and a significant portion of duties of the position pertaining to evaluating users' needs and recommending (IT) solutions, providing recommendations in support of needs and IT goals and objectives, and formulating and/or recommending IT policies and procedures. Instead, the majority of the position's duties fall squarely into the second portion of the bifurcated definition for Technical Support Specialist 1, which is to provide direct support to end users and/or guidance to help desk and/or desktop technical personnel in the provision of

direct support, and install and guide the installation of hardware and software on servers and/or workstations. The appellant performs analysis and evaluation of practices and procedures during her primary work of providing direct support to end users.

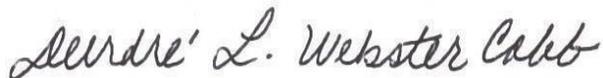
Accordingly, the record establishes that the proper classification of the appellant's title is Technical Support Specialist 1 at the time of the audit.

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 17TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2021



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