



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Electrician
(M1067D), Gloucester Township

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

CSC Docket No. 2024-1187

Appointment Waiver

ISSUED: February 28, 2024 (AMR)

Gloucester Township requests permission not to make an appointment from the November 14, 2022 certification for Electrician (M1067D), Gloucester Township.

The record reveals that Gloucester Township provisionally appointed David Austin, pending open competitive examination procedures, to the subject title effective January 3, 2022. An examination was announced with a closing date of August 22, 2022, that resulted in a list of four eligibles promulgating on November 10, 2022 and expiring on November 9, 2025. It is noted that Austin was separated from his provisional position effective December 6, 2022. Additionally, there are currently no employees serving provisionally pending open competitive examination procedures in the subject title with the appointing authority.

The appointing authority returned the subject certification and requested a waiver of the appointment requirement, stating that while serving as the provisional appointee in the Electrician title, Austin failed to apply for the subject examination when it was announced and was subsequently separated from his provisional appointment. It further asserted that upon Austin's separation, there arose a need to generate significant cost savings due to budgetary constraints. Therefore, in an attempt to avoid the need for future layoffs, the appointing authority indicated that it was unable to fill the position and did not intend to fill it in the future.

The appointing authority's request for an appointment waiver was acknowledged, and it was advised that if its request were granted, it could be assessed for the costs of the selection process in the amount of \$2,048. Despite the opportunity,

the appointing authority did not provide any additional information for the Civil Service Commission (Commission) to review.

CONCLUSION

Initially, in examining the legislative history of *N.J.S.A. 11A:4-5*, in *Local 198 of I.A.F.F. v. Atlantic City*, Docket No. A-855-88T1F (App. Div. June 14, 1989), the court stated that this agency is required to issue a certification automatically where there is a provisional appointee or a vacancy. Moreover, the court concluded that *N.J.S.A. 11A:4-5* unambiguously stated that once the examination process has been initiated due to the appointment of a provisional employee, the appointing authority must make an appointment from the eligible list if there is a complete certification. Additionally, the court found that this agency was correct in interpreting *N.J.S.A. 11A:4-5* to find that it was a clear legislative response to pervasive violations of Title 11A, and that non-compliance with this statute is not a mere technical violation, but rather it undermined the purpose and intent of the constitutionally-based merit selection system. The court found that in circumstances such as these, it was appropriate to order the appointing authority to make an appointment. Thus, there is no doubt that the appointing authority must make an appointment from this list if there is a complete certification, that is, one containing the names of at least three interested and eligible candidates. Moreover, the Commission is specifically given the power to assess compliance costs and fines against an appointing authority, including all administrative costs and charges, as well as fines of not more than \$10,000, for noncompliance or violation of Civil Service law or rules or any order of the Commission. *N.J.S.A. 11A:10-3; N.J.A.C. 4A:10-2.1(a)2. See In the Matter of Fiscal Analyst (M1351H), Jersey City*, Docket No. A-4347-87T3 (App. Div. February 2, 1989).

Therefore, in accordance with *N.J.S.A. 11A:4-5*, once the examination process has been initiated due to the appointment of a provisional employee or due to an appointing authority's request to fill a vacancy, the appointing authority must make an appointment from the resulting eligible list if there are three or more interested and eligible candidates. The only exception to this mandate may be made for a valid reason such as fiscal constraints.

In the instant matter, the appointing authority returned the subject certification and requested a waiver of the appointment requirement, stating that while serving as the provisional appointee in the Electrician title, Austin failed to apply for the subject examination when it was announced and was subsequently separated from his provisional appointment. It further asserted that upon Austin's separation, it was unable to fill the position and did not intend to fill it in the future due to cost saving measures. Therefore, in conjunction with the fact that there are no provisionals currently serving, there is a sufficient justification for an appointment waiver.


Although an appointment waiver is granted in this matter, both *N.J.S.A.* 11A:4-5 and *N.J.A.C.* 4A:10-2.2(a)2 state that if an appointing authority receives permission not to make an appointment, it can be ordered to reimburse for the costs of the selection process. While administering examinations and providing the names of eligible job candidates to the jurisdictions under the Civil Service system are two of the primary activities of this agency, these costly efforts are thwarted when appointing authorities fail to utilize the resulting eligible lists to make appointments and candidates have needlessly expended their time, efforts and money to take these examinations in hopes of being considered for a permanent appointment. In this case, the appointing authority did not take any action to obviate the need for the examination at the time of the announcement or prior to its processing. Its determination to initiate cost saving measures after the provisional was separated from the title due to not applying for the subject examination does not provide a basis on which to waive the selection costs. Therefore, although an appointment waiver is granted, it is appropriate that the appointing authority be assessed \$2,048 for the costs of the selection process.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that a waiver of the appointment requirement be granted. Additionally, the Commission orders that the appointing authority be assessed for the costs of the selection process in the amount of \$2,048 to be paid within 30 days of the issuance of this order.

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 28TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2024



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