



State of New Jersey

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DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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NATASHA JOHNSON
Assistant Commissioner

The following Decision is distributed for your information. This Decision has been made in consideration of the specific facts of this case. This Decision is not to be interpreted as establishing any new mandatory policy or procedure otherwise officially promulgated.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FINAL DECISION

OAL DKT. NO. HPW **05604-24 D.B.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C150248006 (CUMBERLAND COUNTY BD OF SOC SVCS.)**

Petitioner challenges the correctness of the Respondent Agency's calculation of his monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On June 5, 2024, the Honorable Rebecca C. Lafferty, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. On June 12, 2024, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed by Petitioner on June 17, 2024.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development ("DFD"), Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, the ALJ's Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency determination is AFFIRMED, based on the discussion below.

Regulatory authority applicable to SNAP benefit cases, defines income as "all income from whatever source unless such income is specifically excluded." See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.3. Additionally, for SNAP benefits cases, unearned income includes survivors, disability, and Social Security benefits for both adults and children in the household, and also includes unemployment compensation. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.5(a)(2).

In order to determine an applicant's eligibility for SNAP, the applicant's income and resources must be below a certain threshold. N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16 outlines the procedures used to calculate net income and benefit levels for SNAP recipients. The regulation provides that the applicant's monthly net income is determined by adding together all earned and unearned income, then subtracting all income exclusions. Then, the standard deduction, based upon the size of the household, is subtracted from the income.

Thereafter, the household is evaluated to determine if a medical deduction is appropriate, which is if the household has medical expenses that exceed \$35.00. If the household is entitled to a medical deduction, then the amount in excess of \$35.00 is subtracted from the applicant's income. Then, the applicant is evaluated for an excess shelter deduction. Such a deduction is permitted when the individual's shelter costs exceed 50% of their net income. If this deduction is allowable, then the difference between the shelter costs and the 50% net income, or up to the maximum allowable amount, is subtracted from the individual's income. The remaining figure is Petitioner's net income. This net income is then compared against the maximum allowable net income amount for the household's size, as outlined at N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.3, to determine eligibility. If eligible, the household's monthly SNAP allotment shall be equal to the maximum food stamp allotment for the household's size, reduced by 30 percent of the household's net monthly income. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.6(a)(1).



Here, the record shows that Petitioner filed an application for recertification on January 31, 2024. See Initial Decision at 2, 3. A systems generated report showed that Petitioner was receiving unearned income in the form of unemployment insurance benefits (“UIB”) in the amount of \$361 per week, or \$1,564 per month. See Initial Decision at 2, 4; see also Exhibit R-1 at 10, 11. Incorporating Petitioner’s UIB payments into the SNAP eligibility calculations as unearned income, and providing the standard deduction and a utility credit, the Agency calculated Petitioner’s SNAP benefits allotment to be \$23. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 2, 10. However, Petitioner receives a SNAP allotment of \$95, as the minimum SNAP allotment was raised to that amount due to a recent change in State law. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-13.1 et seq. Based on the testimony and documentary evidence presented in this matter, the ALJ issued a thorough and comprehensive Initial Decision, applying law to fact, and outlining how the SNAP benefits allotment had been calculated. See Initial Decision at 4-7; see also Exhibit R-1 at 7-8, 100. The ALJ further concluded that, contrary to Petitioner’s assertions, the Agency had properly included Petitioner’s UIB compensation in the SNAP benefits calculations. See Initial Decision at 6-7; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.5(a)(2). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency’s calculations of Petitioner’s monthly SNAP benefits allotment was correct and must stand. Id. at 7. Based upon an independent review of the record, I agree.

By way of comment, I have reviewed Petitioner’s Exceptions and I find that the arguments made therein do not alter my decision in this matter.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision in this matter is ADOPTED, and the Agency’s determination is hereby AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. July 02, 2024

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

