



## State of New Jersey

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*Governor*

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DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
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TRENTON, NJ 08625-0716

NATASHA JOHNSON  
*Director*

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 07005-19 M.T.

AGENCY DKT. NO. S451033014 (MORRIS CO. OFFICE OF TEMP ASSISTANCE)

Petitioner appeals the Respondent Agency's denial of Petitioner's application for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits for April 2019. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits for April 2019, contending that Petitioner failed to provide requested documentation.

Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On June 6, 2019, the Honorable Andrew M. Baron, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony and admitted documents.

On July 17, 2019, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination. Here, the record reflects that the Agency requested certain documentation from Petitioner in support of her application for SNAP benefits. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-1, R-4, and R-8. The Agency claimed that the financial assistance letter provided by Petitioner's mother was insufficient, and that Petitioner failed to provide a financial assistance letter from her sister, as requested. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-4. As such, on April 29, 2019, the Agency denied Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-5. Of note, the Agency subsequently approved Petitioner for receipt of SNAP benefits, effective May 2, 2019. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-6. Nevertheless, Petitioner claims that she had provided the Agency with all requested documentation prior to its April 29, 2019, denial of SNAP benefits, and therefore, is seeking retroactive SNAP benefits for the month of April 2019. See Initial Decision at 1. The ALJ found that Petitioner had timely provided the Agency with a sufficient financial assistance letter from her mother, as well as all other documentation requested. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibits R-2, R-3, and R-7. The record also reflects that Petitioner was unaware of an additional financial assistance letter that the Agency claimed it required from her sister, and did not receive, or why the letters from her mother were insufficient. See Initial Decision at 2. The ALJ found that Petitioner had seven different case workers who had handled her case, which could have led to the confusion regarding the documentation that the Agency required from her. *Id.* at 2-3. The record further reflects that the required documentation from Petitioner's sister, as well as additional, yet identical, documentation from Petitioner's mother, was provided to the Agency on May 2, 2019. See Exhibits R-3, R-6 at 4-5. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of Petitioner's SNAP application for April 2019, was improper, and ordered the Agency to provide Petitioner with SNAP benefits retroactive to



April 1, 2019. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-5, and N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.15, -8.18. Based upon an independent review of the record, and the specific facts presented, I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As the Director of the Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, I concur with the ALJ's final conclusion in this matter and hereby ADOPT the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law.

By way of comment, in accordance with applicable regulatory authority, a fair hearing, Initial Decision, and Final Decision are all to be completed within 60 days from the receipt of an individual's request for a fair hearing in a case involving SNAP benefits. See 7 C.F.R. § 273.15(c)(1). With this time frame in mind, it should also be noted that Initial Decisions in SNAP cases are to be issued within 14 days from the date of the hearing before the ALJ. See N.J.A.C. 1:10-18.1(b).

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency's determination is REVERSED.

Officially approved final version.

JUL 25 2019

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Natasha Johnson  
Director

