



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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 **11062-24 J.J.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C065444021 (WARREN CO. DIV TEMP ASST & SOC. SVCS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, contending that he had exhausted his lifetime limit of EA benefits, and did not qualify for an extreme hardship extension of EA benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. A hearing was initially scheduled for October 22, 2024, but was adjourned to November 6, 2024, at which time it was adjourned for the final time to November 13, 2024. On that date, the Honorable Bindi Merchant, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

On November 21, 2024, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination. Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner had received 12 months of EA benefits, and as such, had exhausted his lifetime limit of EA benefits, and further found that Petitioner did not qualify for an extreme hardship extension of EA benefits. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also Exhibits R-3, R-4, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (c). The record also reflects that Petitioner had failed to comply with his EA service plan ("SP") by failing to submit to the Agency proof of the required housing searches, employment searches, and failed to attend weekly Agency check-ins, an eligibility requirement for an extreme hardship extension of EA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3, 5; see also Exhibits R-6, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Further, the ALJ found that Petitioner had failed to demonstrate that his circumstances warranted an extreme hardship extension of EA benefits. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(b). Moreover, the ALJ found that, despite the Agency's many attempts to contact and assist Petitioner with his EA hardship application process, Petitioner failed to respond. See Initial Decision at 3-5; see also Exhibits R-5, R-7 through R-11. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and denial of an extreme hardship extension, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also Exhibits R-1, R-4, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b). I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, 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, the Agency shall refer Petitioner to any and all agencies and organizations that may be able to assist with her current needs, including Social Services for the Homeless.

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



Officially approved final version. December 20, 2024

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

