



State of New Jersey

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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 **03134-24 L.R.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C124387004 (CAMDEN-CCBSS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of her Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits due to Petitioner's failure to participate with the mandatory Supportive Assistance to Individuals and Families ("SAIF") program. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. Prior to the hearing in this matter, status conferences were held on April 4, 2024 and May 13, 2024. On June 20, 2024, the Honorable Kimberley M. Wilson, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. Following the hearing, the record remained open to allow Petitioner to provide supplemental submissions by June 27, 2024. No supplemental submissions were received from Petitioner and the record then closed on July 1, 2024. On July 9, 2024, the ALJ sent a Letter Order regarding reopening the record to allow the Agency to submit information relevant to the appeal. The Agency provided the information requested on July 16, 2024, and the record again closed on July 19, 2024. On August 1, 2024, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby ADOPT the ALJ's Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

The SAIF program assists eligible WFNJ recipients to become self-sufficient before they exhaust their 60-month WFNJ lifetime limit. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(a). The 24-month program offers intensive case management to individuals who have received 48 months of WFNJ benefits, who have complied with WFNJ requirements, have not become self-sufficient, and who do not appear to be exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit under N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4. Ibid. SAIF participants are eligible for an extension of WFNJ cash benefits, social, and work support services for up to 12 additional months beyond the 60-month lifetime limit, or a maximum of 72 months. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(c) and (g). Failure to begin, or continue to participate in an assigned activity, without good cause, shall be considered a refusal to cooperate and result in sanctioning and penalties being imposed, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13 through N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.18. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(f).

Here, the ALJ in this matter issued a very thorough and comprehensive Initial Decision, outlining the procedural history, providing a detailed factual timeline, and rendering a well thought out analysis, applying law to fact. See Initial Decision at 2-9. Petitioner, on October 1, 2023, was a WFNJ/GA recipient, had received WFNJ/GA benefits for a total of sixty-six months, and was referred to a SAIF program provider. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. The record shows that Petitioner never attended her initial or rescheduled intake appointments with the SAIF provider on October 18, 2023,



November 3, 2023, or November 17, 2023. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 21-23. Petitioner did not contact the SAIF vendor, nor did she contact the Agency, and various attempts by the vendor to contact Petitioner via letter and telephone were unsuccessful. Ibid. As a result, on November 20, 2023, the SAIF program vendor advised the Agency that Petitioner missed her three scheduled intake appointments and as such, Petitioner was in non-compliance with the SAIF Program. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-1 at 7-8. As a result, on December 1, 2023, the Agency sent Petitioner a Notification Form advising that her WFNJ/GA benefits would be terminated effective January 1, 2024 for failure to participate in the SAIF program. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1 at 1-4.

The ALJ in this matter found that Petitioner had not provided any good cause for failing to comply with SAIF, and as such, that the Agency's January 1, 2024, termination of Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 9; see also Exhibit R-1, R-2, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(f). I agree.

By way of comment, the transmittal in this matter also included an issue with respect to the termination of Petitioner's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. However, during the status conferences held prior to the hearing, the ALJ determined the only contested matter was the termination of Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 2. Therefore, the termination of SNAP benefits is not addressed in this decision.

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

Officially approved final version. August 22, 2024

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

