



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

SARAH ADELMAN
Commissioner

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0716

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 **03697-24 P.B.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C174744015 (OCEAN COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner Agency charges Respondent with committing an intentional program violation ("IPV") of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP"). The Agency asserts that Respondent intentionally misrepresented her household composition and failed to report receipt of household income, while she received SNAP benefits, thus causing Respondent to receive an overissuance of benefits to which she was not entitled. Respondent was properly noticed of the Administrative Disqualification Hearing, the charges against her, and the proposed disqualification penalty, via USPS certified mail with return receipt, on February 26, 2024. See Exhibit P1. Because Respondent failed to execute and return the waiver of her right to a hearing, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing as a contested case. *Id.* On April 26, 2024, the Honorable Gauri Shirali Shah, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ,") held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record then closed. Respondent did not appear for the hearing, and the matter proceeded *ex parte*, which is permissible pursuant to our regulatory scheme. See N.J.A.C. 1:10-14.1(d). Respondent was given ten days following the hearing, to present good cause for her failure to appear. Respondent did not respond.

On May 22, 2024, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, which found that the Agency had met its burden in establishing, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent had deliberately and intentionally withheld information from the Agency, which resulted in Respondent receiving an overissuance of SNAP benefits, to which she not entitled. See Initial Decision at 5. Specifically, the ALJ found that Respondent did not properly identify the address where she resided, knowingly misrepresented the composition of her household by excluding her non-married partner, and intentionally failed to report receipt of her partner's income, which would have made the household ineligible to receive SNAP benefits. See Initial Decision at 2-3, 5; see also Exhibits P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, and P7. Such misrepresentations resulted in an overissuance of SNAP benefits to Respondent in the amount of \$8,962.00 for the period of June, 2022 through May, 2023. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibits P2, P3.

As this was the first IPV committed by Respondent, the ALJ ordered the mandatory regulatory penalty of a 12-month disqualification from receipt of SNAP benefits, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.2(a)(1). See Initial Decision at 5.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have considered the Initial Decision in this matter, and following an independent evaluation of the record, I concur with the ALJ's decision, and hereby adopt the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law in this matter.

I direct that the Agency proceed to recoup the overissuance.



Accordingly, based upon the foregoing, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision in this matter, and ORDER that Respondent is disqualified from receipt of SNAP benefits for a period of 12 months. I further ORDER that the Agency is to recoup the overissuance.

Officially approved final version. June 20, 2024

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

