



State of New Jersey

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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 01515-18 G.M.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C018689007 (ESSEX COUNTY DIVISION OF WELFARE)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner EA benefits, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that she was evicted from subsidized housing due to non-payment of rent. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On January 31, 2018, the Honorable JoAnn LaSala Candido, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), issued an Initial Decision dismissing Petitioner's appeal.

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 ADOPT the ALJ's Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determination.

On January 31, 2018, Petitioner and the Agency's representative appeared before the ALJ for a hearing. See Initial Decision at 2. After a brief discussion of the matter, Petitioner left the hearing and did not return. Ibid. As a result, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner's refusal to remain at the hearing constituted an abandonment of her request for a hearing and the ALJ dismissed Petitioner's appeal. Ibid. I agree.

Based on the foregoing, I find that Petitioner abandoned her appeal in this matter and, therefore, I affirm the Agency's denial of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1.

By way of comment, Petitioner's six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall run from January 19, 2018, the date of the Agency's EA benefits denial, through July 18, 2018. See Exhibit R-1.

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

Officially approved final version.

MAR 12 2018

Natasha Johnson
Director



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