



State of New Jersey

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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 **13860-25 A.C.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C132353008 (GLOUCESTER COUNTY DIV. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

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, contending that she caused her own homelessness by being evicted from affordable housing due to non-payment of rent. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On August 13, 2025, the Honorable Kim C. Belin, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On August 14, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

Here, Petitioner applied for EA benefits on August 7, 2025, requesting shelter placement as she was being evicted due to non-payment of rent, as well as a failure to maintain the rental property in a clean and sanitary manner, disturbing the peace and enjoyment of other persons, and allowing unauthorized occupants or pets to reside on the rental premises. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-3. On that same date, the Agency advised Petitioner that her EA application would be denied, and a six-month period of EA benefits ineligibility would be imposed, due to her causing her own homelessness. See Initial Decision at 2, 5.

Based on the testimony and evidence presented, the ALJ concluded that the evidence did not support the allegations that Petitioner destroyed the rental property. See Initial Decision at 5. Further, the ALJ found that the evidence did not support claims that Petitioner disturbed the peace or allowed unauthorized guests or pets on the premises. *Ibid.* However, the ALJ did find that Petitioner had caused her own homelessness, without good cause, due to nonpayment of affordable rent. See Initial Decision at 5-6. Accordingly, the ALJ found that the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner, due to her non-payment of rent, and the imposition of a mandatory six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. *Id.* at 5-6; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(1)(ii), -6.1(c)(3)(vi). I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As the Assistant Commissioner 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, Petitioner's six-month EA ineligibility penalty, as imposed on August 7, 2025, shall run through February 7, 2026. See Initial Decision at 6; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3) (stating that EA benefits shall not be provided for a period of six months when an applicant "has caused his or her own homelessness, without good cause").

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



Officially approved final version. August 19, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

