



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 **17215-25 A.J.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C116965008 (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 because he failed to provide all documentation necessary to make an eligibility determination and because he was terminated from his employment due to misconduct. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On October 7, 2025, the Honorable Rebecca C. Lafferty, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents into evidence, and the record then closed. On October 8, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

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

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.15, an adult applicant who voluntarily quits employment, without good cause, including situations in which an applicant has been discharged from employment due to an action or inaction on his or her part in violation of the employer's written rule or policies, or lawful job-related instructions, shall be ineligible for WFNJ cash assistance benefits for a period of 90 days beginning with the date of quit.

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner, after being homeless for four months due to his inability to pay rent following his loss of employment, applied for EA benefits on September 10, 2025. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 4-8. Petitioner was placed under immediate need on that date and the next day the Agency attempted to contact him in order to complete his application, however, they were unable to reach him and his immediate need ended on September 15, 2025. See Initial Decision at 3. On September 16, 2025, Petitioner contacted the Agency and was provided a Request for Verification form requesting that he provide various documentation to complete his application, specifically information on where he had lived for the prior six months, any eviction papers, any documentation from his last employer stating the terms of his separation, documentation from unemployment providing information as to why he was denied benefits, and documentation regarding his emotional support animal. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit R-1 at 9. Petitioner was provided additional immediate need, however, his immediate need ended on October 1, 2025, as Petitioner failed to provide the Agency with the documentation requested. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 10-12.

The Agency additionally performed a search with the Department of Labor and determined that Petitioner had been terminated from employment in April 2025 due to "active misconduct." See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 at



14-15. On October 2, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner a Notification Form denying his EA benefits application, as he had failed to provide all documents requested to determine his eligibility for benefits, as well as that he had caused his own homelessness for being terminated from his employment for misconduct. Ibid. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had not provided the information required to be verified to determine eligibility, as well as due to the cessation of employment caused by misconduct, and as such, the Agency's denial of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a mandatory six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.6(a), -1.15, -6.1(c)(3). I agree.

By way of comment, the Agency shall refer Petitioner to any and all agencies and organizations that may be able to assist with his current needs, including Social Services for the Homeless.

By way of additional comment, Petitioner's six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall run from October 2, 2025, the effective date of the EA denial, to April 2, 2026. See Exhibit R-1 at 17; 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 action is hereby AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. October 16, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

