



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 13993-25 A.S.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C638974007 (ESSEX COUNTY DIVISION OF WELFARE)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits because she had exhausted the 60-month lifetime limit for WFNJ benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. The matter was initially scheduled for September 9, 2025, however, was adjourned due to the need for additional documentation to be submitted. On September 11, 2025, the Honorable Marianne B. Ortega, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On September 25, 2025, 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.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.3(a), "eligibility for cash assistance benefits shall be limited to a lifetime total of 60 cumulative months for an adult individual recipient." See also N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.1(d) ("Assistance benefits provided under WFNJ are time-limited and considered a temporary cash subsidy[.]"). However, an individual may receive additional months of cash assistance if he/she qualifies for an exemption from, or extension of, the time limit, as set forth at N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4 and -2.5 respectively. The goal of WFNJ is help the recipient achieve self-sufficiency through obtaining employment and removal from the program. See N.J.S.A. 44:10-62(a).

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner had received 118 total months of WFNJ/TANF benefits, and as such, had exceeded the 60-month lifetime limit for receipt of WFNJ benefits. See Initial Decision at 2. The Agency provided Petitioner with the opportunity to submit medical documentation documenting a permanent disability, specifically a MED-1 form, however Petitioner never submitted such documentation. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit R-2 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ in this matter found that the Agency appropriately terminated Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits as there was no evidence presented that Petitioner would qualify for an exemption from, or extension of, the lifetime limit of benefits. See Initial Decision at 3; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4, -2.5. I agree.

By way of comment, should Petitioner's circumstances change, and she is able to present a 12-month MED-1 to the Agency, she is without prejudice to reapply for WFNJ/TANF benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4(a)(3).



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

Officially approved final version. November 06, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

