



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 **07603-25 A.S.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C064648018 (SOMERSET COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits for failure to provide information necessary to determine eligibility. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On May 27, 2025, the Honorable Advia Knight Foster, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic conference and adjourned the case so that the Agency could provide Petitioner with its fair hearing exhibits. On June 10, 2025, ALJ Knight Foster, held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On June 11, 2025, Petitioner and Respondent both submitted closing statements, and the record again closed. On June 24, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Here, the record reflects that Petitioner applied for SNAP benefits on August 13, 2024, and was granted expedited SNAP benefits, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.28, from August 13, 2024 to August 31, 2024, based upon information provided at her initial screening that she received neither earned, nor unearned income. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 16-17, 45. Petitioner's expedited benefits certification period ended on August 31, 2024. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.30(a)(3). On August 19, 2024, the Agency notified Petitioner that she was eligible for expedited SNAP benefits, and sent a Request for Verification Form for additional information including income documentation, specifically requesting paystubs or a letter of termination from her employer if she was no longer employed. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 6, 43-44. During its application verification process, the Agency conducted a standard income verification, via the New Jersey Department of Labor, which resulted in information that Petitioner had earned income during the third quarter of 2024. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 40. In addition, the verification process revealed that Petitioner was receiving unearned income in the form of child support. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 29-33. Petitioner never provided any income verifications to the Agency and, consequently, the Agency did not have the necessary information to determine her eligibility, and her SNAP benefits case was closed. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 6. At the time of the hearing, Petitioner relied upon an affidavit of zero income, which had never previously been proffered to the Agency, however, the ALJ found that the record was devoid of any evidence that her paystubs were unavailable as a form of income verification. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit P-5, and 7 C.F.R. 273.2(f)(1).

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ found that the Petitioner failed to provide the Agency with the required documentation necessary to determine Petitioner's eligibility for SNAP benefits, and as such, concluded that the Agency's denial of Petitioner's application for said benefits was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.14, -2.19, -2.20, -2.22. I agree.



Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received from Petitioner on July 3, 2025.

As Assistant Commissioner, 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 is without prejudice to reapply for SNAP benefits, if she has not already done so, but is advised that she must provide all documentation necessary to determine eligibility. Petitioner is advised to communicate directly with the Agency with regards to the application and any required documentation.

By way of further comment, I have reviewed the Exceptions submitted on behalf of Petitioner, and I find that the arguments made therein do not alter my decision in this matter.

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

Officially approved final version. July 10, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

