



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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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 **06316-25 A.W.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C634516007 (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's EA benefits application, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that she violated the rules of her shelter placement, resulting in her termination from said placement, thereby causing her own homelessness. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On April 14, 2025, the Honorable Danielle Pasquale, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On April 15, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Here, Petitioner applied for EA on January 28, 2025, and on February 5, 2025, she was placed, on an immediate need basis, at a shelter. See Initial Decision at 2. Petitioner was specifically placed by the Agency representative at the same shelter where her daughter was living. Ibid. On February 11, 2025, Petitioner executed an EA service plan ("SP"), as well as a contract with the shelter, wherein she agreed, among other things, to comply with shelter rules, specifically as to abiding by the shelter's curfew and attendance rules. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2. Petitioner was additionally made aware that her EA benefits could be terminated, and a six-month EA ineligibility penalty imposed, for failure to comply with the placement rules. See Exhibit R-1.

Petitioner was involved in several incidents at the shelter that resulted in the issuance of warnings, which Petitioner refused to sign, however, the most concerning is Petitioner's unauthorized absence from the shelter from April 2, 2025, to April 7, 2025. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibits R-3, R-4. During the aforementioned time period, Petitioner failed to sign the shelter attendance sheet, did not report to the shelter, and failed to cooperate with the Agency representative when attempts were made to determine her whereabouts. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-4. On April 8, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner a Notification Form advising that her EA benefits application was denied, effective April 7, 2025, for failure to follow shelter rules and effectively abandoning her EA placement, and that Petitioner would be ineligible to receive EA benefits for a period of six months. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-5. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had violated shelter rules, thereby causing her own homelessness, and as such, found that the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit R-5, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3), -6.6(a). I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

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.



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By way of comment, Petitioner is advised that her six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall run from April 2, 2025, the date she abandoned her EA placement, through October 2, 2025. See Exhibit R-5.

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

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

Officially approved final version. April 16, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

