



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0716

SARAH ADELMAN
Commissioner

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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 **17051-25 D.J.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C247811020 (UNION COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") and Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner WFNJ/GA benefits because Petitioner failed to take necessary steps to lift a sanction. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On October 6, 2025, the Honorable Sandra L. Lascari, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On October 7, 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.

In order to maintain eligibility for receipt of WFNJ benefits, a recipient must cooperate with, and participate in, the WFNJ work activity requirements. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.1(a). If a WFNJ recipient fails to comply with their work activities without good cause, the recipient is subject to a sanction resulting in a pro-rata reduction of WFNJ benefits for the first month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b). Thereafter, if the WFNJ benefits recipient is still non-compliant, without good cause, the WFNJ benefits will be suspended for one month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b)(1). If the non-compliance continues, the recipient's case will close the month after the suspension of WFNJ benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b)(2).

Following the loss of WFNJ cash assistance benefits due to noncompliance with work activities, the individual must re-apply for WFNJ benefits, satisfactorily complete sanction obligations and comply with work activities in order to be eligible for WFNJ benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(e).

Here, the record shows that Petitioner had previously received WFNJ/GA benefits, but his case had been closed due to a sanction dated October 1, 2024. See Initial Decision at 2. Petitioner reapplied for WFNJ/GA benefits on September 9, 2025. Ibid. The Agency notified Petitioner that he must comply with the WFNJ program requirements in order to lift the sanction. Ibid. Petitioner attempted to provide proof that he was enrolled at a qualifying program, however, the only document provided was insufficient to verify enrollment and lift the sanction. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-1. Further, the ALJ did not find the testimony of Petitioner credible regarding his enrollment in the program. See Initial Decision at 2. As a result, by notice dated September 26, 2025, the Agency denied Petitioner WFNJ/GA benefits for failing to lift the sanction. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's determination to deny



Petitioner's application for WFNJ/GA benefits for failure to lift the sanction was proper and must stand. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5), -2.2(a)(7), -2.11(b)(3). I agree.

Additionally, based on the above conclusion, the ALJ found that the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner, on the basis that he was not a WFNJ or SSI benefits recipient, thus making him ineligible for receipt of such benefits, was also proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.2(a). I also 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.

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

Officially approved final version. October 16, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

