



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 15993-24 J.C.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C062698017 (SALEM COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of his Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits, contending that Petitioner had failed to provide information and documentation necessary to determine continued eligibility. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. A telephonic hearing was initially scheduled for December 16, 2024, but Petitioner failed to appear because he had called in to an old conference number. The telephonic hearing was rescheduled for December 18, 2024. On that rescheduled date, the Honorable Rebecca C. Lafferty, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony and admitted documents. The record was reopened for the admission of additional information, and additional telephonic hearing was held on January 9, 2025, and the record then closed on that date.

On January 10, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination. Here, the record reveals that Petitioner was receiving SNAP benefits, when, on October 10, 2024, the Agency was notified, via a new hire match, that a member of his household, his adult nephew, was earning income through two different employers—one since July 2024, and one since August 2024. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. Accordingly, on October 10, 2024, the Agency sent a New Hire Match request to Petitioner to complete and return within ten days, which Petitioner failed to do. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 5. The Agency also sent Wage Verification Forms to the nephew's employers, to which only one employer responded. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 7-9. On October 19, 2024, the Agency sent a Notification Form to Petitioner regarding his failure to respond to the New Hire Match request correspondence and subsequently, on October 29, 2024, Petitioner spoke with an Agency employee and advised he was unable to obtain paystubs, or an employment separation letter, from his nephew's employers as his nephew was employed only for a short period of time due to his inability to pass the employers' background checks. See Initial Decision at 3. Consequently, the Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits effective November 1, 2024, for failure to respond to the New Hire Match request. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 3-4.

On November 4, 2024, the Agency received the completed Wage Verification Form from one employer, noting that Petitioner's nephew worked from August 26, 2024, to October 10, 2024, with no reason for separation provided. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-1 at 7-9. The Wage Verification Form sent to the other employer was never returned to the Agency. See Initial Decision at 3. The day prior to the hearing, December 17, 2024, the Agency received a self-attestation letter from Petitioner's nephew regarding his employment. Ibid. Based upon that letter, the Agency determined Petitioner was eligible for SNAP benefits effective December 17, 2024. Ibid. Although the ALJ found that it was unclear if Petitioner had been previously advised, during the October 2024 conversation with the Agency, that a self-attestation letter from his nephew would suffice in proving his employments, nevertheless, the ALJ also found that all the information required by



the Agency to evaluate Petitioner's continued eligibility for SNAP benefits was not received until November 4, 2024, and December 17, 2024, and therefore, untimely. See Initial Decision at 5.

In order to determine eligibility for SNAP benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required, such as household income, both earned and unearned income. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.19, -2.20. Without said verification of required information, SNAP eligibility cannot be determined or granted. Ibid. Following presentation of testimonial and documentary evidence in this case, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had not timely provided the requested verifying information required to determine continued SNAP eligibility, and as such, further concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's SNAP benefits, effective November 1, 2024, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 5-6; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.19, -2.20. I agree. Additionally, the ALJ concluded that the reinstatement of Petitioner's SNAP benefits, effective December 17, 2024, following receipt of his nephew's self-attestation letter regarding his employment, was appropriate, and affirmed such reinstatement. See Initial Decision at 5-6. I also 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.

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

Officially approved final version. February 05, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

