



## 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 **00167-25 L.L.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C110628003 (BURLINGTON COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS)**

Petitioner appealed from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. A telephonic plenary hearing was scheduled for March 10, 2025, before the Honorable Sarah H. Surgent, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"). On that date, Petitioner called into the scheduled telephonic hearing, and during a prehearing discussion regarding the denial of WFNJ/TANF benefits, and before going on the record, Petitioner engaged in disrespectful and obstructive verbal behaviors toward both the ALJ and the Agency. See Initial Decision at 2. Petitioner's hearing had to be continued as another hearing was scheduled to take place, and upon being instructed by the ALJ that the telephonic hearing would proceed at 1:00 pm, Petitioner replied "Okay – bitch" and hung up. Ibid. Consequently, when Petitioner dialed in for the 1:00 pm hearing, the ALJ advised Petitioner, and the record substantiates, that in accordance with N.J.A.C. 1:1-14.14, her use of such disrespectful language towards the ALJ, warranted a dismissal of her appeal. Id. at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ dismissed Petitioner's appeal.

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, as I find that the dismissal of Petitioner's appeal was warranted. As such, the Agency's December 2, 2024, denial of WFNJ/TANF benefits to Petitioner, remains in force as issued.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and Petitioner's appeal is hereby DISMISSED with prejudice.

Officially approved final version. March 27, 2025

---

Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner



F,03,N,C110628003X,0027,000029747273

BARA003