



## State of New Jersey

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*Governor*

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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 17540-24 L.M.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C809388007 (ESSEX COUNTY DIVISION OF WELFARE)

Petitioner appeals from Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits, contending that she failed to provide proof that she applied for unemployment benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On April 17, 2025 the Honorable Bindi Merchant, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On April 29, 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 ("DFD"), Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision and following an independent review of the record, the ALJ's Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED and the Agency's determinations are AFFIRMED, based on the discussion below.

Here, Petitioner filed an application for WFNJ/TANF benefits on June 7, 2024, and thereafter was interviewed by the Agency on July 17, 2024, at which time she received a Request for Verification notice form outlining outstanding required documents necessary to complete her application, which were due by July 26, 2024. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-2. No documents were provided by the July due date, but on August 15, 2024, Petitioner submitted application addendums to the Agency; on August 16, 2024, Petitioner satisfied the child support requirements, and on August 23, 2024, Petitioner provided proof of address and phone number. See Initial Decision at 3. On August 23, 2024, Petitioner was informed that an application for unemployment insurance benefits was required to complete her WFNJ/TANF benefits application. Ibid. On August 25, 2024, Petitioner applied for unemployment insurance benefits, and on August 26, 2024, Petitioner provided proof of birth of a child and proof of her application under the Family Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"). Ibid. On August 26, 2024, the Agency denied Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits application. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. Thereafter, on October 7, 2024, Petitioner provided the Agency with a denial of her unemployment insurance benefits application. See Initial Decision at 3. Consequently, Petitioner reapplied for WFNJ/TANF benefits and began receiving benefits on October 23, 2024. Ibid.

In order to determine eligibility for WFNJ benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2. Verification for WFNJ benefits requires the applicant to provide all necessary documentation. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5) (stating that "As a condition of eligibility for WFNJ benefits, the applicant shall, subject to good cause exceptions, be required to provide all necessary documentation."). Further, an applicant who appears to be eligible for receipt of other benefits, such as unemployment insurance benefits, must apply for such benefits or be found ineligible for cash assistance. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.12 ("A person who appears to be eligible for other benefits such as (but not limited



to) unemployment insurance benefits; Social Security; Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance; [SSI]; or Veteran's benefits and such person refuses or neglects to apply for such benefits within 30 days of written notification without good cause, the entire assistance unit shall be ineligible to receive cash assistance.").

Based on the credible testimony provided, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had not provided the information required to be verified to determine eligibility, as she failed to provide the denial of unemployment insurance benefits, with no good cause shown, and as such, the Agency's August 26, 2024, denial of WFNJ/TANF benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.12, -2.2(a)(5). I agree.

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

Officially approved final version. May 22, 2025

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

