



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 **00104-25 M.C.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S972353009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner WFNJ/GA benefits because Petitioner failed to provide required proof of having applied for citizenship. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On March 20, 2025, the Honorable Nanci G. Stokes, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On March 25, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Here, Petitioner, a permanent United States ("U.S.") resident since 2014, applied for WFNJ/GA benefits and was interviewed on February 14, 2024, by the Agency. See Initial Decision at 2. The Agency employee noted that during their conversation, Petitioner was informed he would need to apply for U.S. citizenship for his benefits to be recertified. See Initial Decision at 2-3. Petitioner was approved for WFNJ/GA benefits on February 27, 2024. See Initial Decision at 3. Petitioner testified disputing that he was informed he had to apply for U.S. citizenship. Ibid. During June 2024, Petitioner supplied the Agency with a new phone number and advised he had obtained part-time employment. Ibid. On July 12, 2024, the Agency requested paystubs and, once received, the Agency terminated Petitioner's GA benefits effective September 1, 2024, due to his being over income to receive said benefits. Ibid. On September 18, 2024, Petitioner again applied for WFNJ/GA benefits, and was interviewed on September 26, 2024, at which time the Agency employee noted that he "must apply for citizenship" and sent Petitioner a Request for Information requesting various information, although none specifically related to proof of his filing for citizenship. Id. at 3; see also Exhibit P-2. Petitioner has never filed for U.S. citizenship and testified that he was unable to obtain assistance from any of the organizations the Agency informed him about. See Initial Decision at 3. Additionally, Petitioner met with Legal Services, who informed him about the U.S. Citizenship requirement for benefits, as well as how to obtain a filing fee waiver. Ibid. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of WFNJ/GA benefits to Petitioner, because he failed to provide proof that he had applied for citizenship, which is a requirement for continued WFNJ/GA benefits, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibit R-1 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5), - 2.3(a)(3). I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

As the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the record and the Initial Decision, and having made an independent evaluation of the record, I concur with the ALJ's Initial Decision, and hereby adopt the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in this matter.

By way of comment, should Petitioner apply for U.S. citizenship, and be able to provide verification of same, he is without prejudice to re-apply for WFNJ/GA benefits.



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

Officially approved final version. April 25, 2025

Natasha Johnson

Assistant Commissioner

