



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 **00176-25 S.A.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S663043012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/GA benefits, contending that Petitioner failed to provide information necessary to determine eligibility for said benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. The parties in the matter initially appeared for a plenary hearing on February 21, 2025, however, the matter was rescheduled. On May 2, 2025 the Honorable Nicole T. Minutoli, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents into evidence, and the record then closed. On May 19, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner, while incarcerated, applied for WFNJ/GA benefits on September 24, 2024. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. Thereafter, on October 6, 2024, following his release from incarceration, he uploaded several documents to his WFNJ/GA benefits application. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-3. On October 7, 2024, Petitioner completed his face-to-face interview with the Agency. See Initial Decision at 2. On October 9, 2024, the Agency sent Petitioner a Request for Verification, requesting various information and documentation required to determine eligibility. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-4. The Request for Verification included a deadline for the return of the requested documentation, and advised that if the requested information was not returned, the application for benefits would be denied. Ibid. Petitioner failed to respond to the Agency by the due date of November 6, 2024, and thereafter, the Agency denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-5. Petitioner testified that he never received the Agency's October 9, 2024 Request for Verification. See Initial Decision at 3. The Agency representative testified as to the standard protocol for the production of documents for mailing, as well as the mail-room processes and procedures at the Agency. Ibid. Further, the Agency representative testified that the mail was not returned undeliverable to the Agency, and that Petitioner received other notices mailed to the same address. Ibid. The ALJ, following a thorough legal analysis, determined that the October 9, 2024, request was not returned as undeliverable, and that Petitioner was unsuccessful in rebutting the presumption of receipt of the mail. See Initial Decision at 5-6.

In order to determine eligibility for WFNJ benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2. Eligibility for WFNJ/GA 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."). Based on the credible testimony and documentary evidence provided, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had not provided all information required to be verified to determine eligibility, and as such, the Agency's denial of WFNJ/GA benefits was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 6-7; see also 10:90-2.2(a)(5). I 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.

By way of comment, Petitioner is without prejudice to reapply for WFNJ/GA benefits, if he has not already done so, but is reminded that he must provide all information and documentation requested in order to determine eligibility.

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

Officially approved final version. May 30, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

