



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

SARAH ADELMAN
Commissioner

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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 09390-25 T.R.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C054721012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that she failed to comply with her EA service plan ("SP"). Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On June 3, 2025, the Honorable Mamta Patel, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), began an emergent telephonic plenary hearing. On that date, Petitioner provided information that she had been hospitalized, and therefore unable to comply with the terms of her SP. See Initial Decision at 2. The Agency agreed to allow Petitioner additional time to submit outstanding housing search logs to demonstrate her substantial compliance with her SP. Ibid. Additionally, Petitioner was advised to provide any hospital discharge paperwork to indicate what period of time she was hospitalized, which may excuse some of the time she failed to comply with the housing searches required by her SP. Ibid. Further, on June 3, 2025, Petitioner agreed to have her case downgraded from an emergent matter to a regular case, and the hearing was rescheduled for June 6, 2025. Ibid. On June 6, 2025, the Agency informed Petitioner the housing search logs received were insufficient, and Petitioner indicated that she would bring the logs to the Agency in person. Ibid. The Agency agreed to another adjournment to allow Petitioner to provide the housing logs, and the hearing was rescheduled for June 9, 2025. See Initial Decision at 3. On June 9, 2025, the Agency asserted that the housing search logs received remained insufficient, and at that time, the ALJ held the full telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On June 23, 2025 the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determinations, based on the discussion below.

The purpose of EA is to meet the emergent needs of public assistance recipients, such as imminent homelessness, so that the recipient can participate in work activities without disruption and continue on a path to self-sufficiency. N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(a). In order to maintain eligibility for EA benefits, the recipient must take reasonable steps to resolve his or her emergent situation. N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Reasonable steps include, but are not limited to, the EA benefits recipient participating in the development of, and complying with, a written and signed SP. Ibid. Failure to comply with the requirements identified in the SP, without good cause, shall result in the termination of EA benefits and a six-month period of EA ineligibility. Ibid.



Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner applied and was approved for EA benefits, and provided a motel placement during August 2024. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2. Petitioner subsequently executed an updated SP on October 23, 2024, wherein she agreed, among other things, to submit ten weekly housing searches and to provide a monthly compliance letter from her behavioral health provider memorializing her compliance with the program. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Thereafter, Petitioner executed an additional SP on January 23, 2025 with the same terms. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibits R-3, R-4. On April 25, 2025, the Agency conducted a case review with Petitioner via telephone, at which time Petitioner was informed that the Agency had not received any weekly housing search logs since January 31, 2025, nor the monthly verification of her attendance for behavioral-health treatment services. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-5. Also on that date, Petitioner entered into a third SP requiring the submission of ten housing searches per week and submission of a monthly behavioral health compliance letter. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit R-6. Petitioner was required to provide all requested information on or before May 25, 2025. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-7. Thereafter, the Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits effective May 25, 2025, via a Notice of Termination, due to her failure to comply with the terms of her SP. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-7. Following the termination, Petitioner provided the Agency with the requested treatment letters. See Initial Decision at 4. In addition, Petitioner provided weekly housing search logs from January 28, 2025 to February 11, 2025, after the EA benefits termination, however, none of the logs included the required ten searches. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit R-8. Petitioner later submitted one housing log for the month of March 2025, and weekly housing search logs from April 3, 2025 to May 1, 2025, however, none of the logs included the required ten searches. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-10. Following the commencement of the hearing in this matter, Petitioner submitted additional housing logs on June 6, 2025, comprised of searches from January 28, 2025 to May, 2025, however, none of the logs included the required ten searches per week. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit P-1. Petitioner never provided the Agency, nor the tribunal, with any hospital discharge paperwork. See Initial Decision at 5.

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, for failure to comply with the requirements contained in her SP, with no good cause credibly shown, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 6; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c), -6.6(a). I agree.

By way of comment, Petitioner is advised that the six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall run from May 26, 2025, the effective date of the termination, through November 26, 2025. See Exhibit R-7.

By way of further comment, the Agency shall refer Petitioner to any and all agencies and organizations that may be able to assist with her current needs, including Social Services for the Homeless.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency's determinations are AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. August 05, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

