



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 13998-25 T.W.

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C076764014 (MORRIS CO. OFFICE OF TEMP ASSISTANCE)**

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 violated the terms of her service plan ("SP"). Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On September 23, 2025, the Honorable Susana Guerrero, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

On September 29, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination. Here, the record reflects that the Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, contending that Petitioner had violated the terms of her SP, claiming that Petitioner had an authorized guest in her motel room. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-1 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1, -6.6. At the time of the hearing, the ALJ found that neither the motel manager, nor anyone with firsthand knowledge of the allegations against Petitioner regarding the violations of her SP or shelter rules, nor anyone from the Agency with direct knowledge of the alleged violations, was present at the hearing to attest to the truth of the alleged violations. See Initial Decision at 2-5; see also N.J.A.C. 1:1-15.5(b). Further, the ALJ noted that the only evidence offered by the Agency was the hearsay statement of the Agency representative. Id. at 2-4. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency had failed to meet its burden of proof to show, by a preponderance of the credible evidence, that Petitioner had violated the terms of her shelter rules or SP. Id. at 5. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were improper and must be reversed. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-1. 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.

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



Officially approved final version.

November 07, 2025

Natasha Johnson

Assistant Commissioner

