



## State of New Jersey

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*Governor*

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 **02283-25 W.P.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C069600003 (BURLINGTON 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 EA benefits ineligibility. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that he abandoned shelter placement, thereby causing his own homelessness. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On February 6, 2025, the Honorable Nicole T. Minutoli, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

Also on February 6, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination. Here, the record reflects that the Agency had provided Petitioner with shelter placement on December 31, 2024. See Initial Decision at 2-3. Petitioner arrived at the shelter on that date, but left that same day and never returned, resulting in his termination from the shelter. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit R-3. Petitioner testified that he had initially left the shelter to go get identification needed for him to check into the shelter, which he left in his mother's car, and that he did not return because "he did belong in this neighborhood as it was dangerous, and he was robbed." See Initial Decision at 3. The record also reflects that Petitioner did not contact the Agency to voice his concerns with said shelter placement until January 8, 2025, claiming that he was nervous about the outcome of such conversation. *Ibid.* However, the ALJ found that Petitioner's reasons for abandoning his shelter placement did not constitute good cause. *Id.* at 4. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA benefits ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit R-4, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3). 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 and hereby ADOPT the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law in this matter.

By way of comment, because Petitioner has received continued assistance pending the outcome of this fair hearing, his six-month EA penalty will begin to run as of the date of the issuance of this Final Agency Decision.

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 in this matter is hereby ADOPTED and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED.



Officially approved final version. February 20, 2025

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

