



## State of New Jersey

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*Governor*

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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 **01403-25 W.W.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C129069006 (CUMBERLAND COUNTY BD OF SOC SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of his Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits, contending that Petitioner was not a separate household. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On March 5, 2025, the Honorable Kathleen M. Calemme, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony and admitted documents. On March 6, 2025 the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination.

Here, the ALJ found that, after Petitioner submitted his SNAP recertification paperwork, the Agency sent a Request for Verification regarding further information from Petitioner's roommate, stating that his roommate did not contribute monetarily to the rent or heating and that he is only responsible for providing and preparing his own meals. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 6. On November 1, 2024, the Agency received a handwritten letter from Petitioner's roommate, and placed a follow-up telephone call to Petitioner, on December 11, 2024, to clarify how food is purchased and whether Petitioner and his roommate share meals. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-1 at 5, 7. Following the telephone conversation, the Agency representative was of the understanding that Petitioner was no longer a separate household from his roommate, as they were sharing meals and the roommate was contributing money towards the purchase of groceries. See Initial Decision at 3. On December 16, 2024, the Agency issued a denial notice to Petitioner. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-1 at 2. Thereafter, Petitioner reapplied for SNAP benefits, which were restored on January 21, 2025, and he is now seeking benefits for the period of time when he was determined to not be a separate household. See Initial Decision at 3. Following Petitioner's testimony, the ALJ found that the letter from Petitioner's roommate, as well as the telephone conversation with the Agency's representative, may have caused confusion but that Petitioner testified that, while he and his roommate may go grocery shopping together, they each purchase their own food, and that they may sit together to eat dinner, but each prepare separate meals. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-1 at 7.

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ found that Petitioner had responded as directed to the Agency's Request for Verification, by submitting the letter from his roommate, and that the phone conversation between the Agency representative and Petitioner was not adequate proof that Petitioner was not a separate household. See Initial Decision at 4-5. Accordingly, the ALJ found that Petitioner established that he and his roommate are separate households from one another for SNAP eligibility purposes. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.2 and N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.3(a)(1)(iii). Of note, the record reflects that Petitioner is now receiving SNAP benefits, effective January 21, 2025. See Initial Decision at 3. Accordingly, the ALJ reversed the Agency's determination and ordered the Agency to provide Petitioner with retroactive SNAP benefits for the period from December 1, 2024, until the restoration of his benefits during January 2025. Id. at 5. I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.



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

Officially approved final version. April 02, 2025

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

