



State of New Jersey

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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 **05299-26 A.F.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C104191018 (SOMERSET COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, contending that she had exhausted her lifetime limit of EA benefits, and because she had sufficient income to pay her rent. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On May 18, 2026, the Honorable Sarah G. Crowley, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. The record was held open, and on the following day the record was closed. On June 1, 2026, 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, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

EA benefits are limited to 12 months, plus limited extensions for an "extreme hardship" where the recipient has taken "all reasonable steps to resolve the emergent situation but the emergency nonetheless continues or a new emergency occurs, which causes extreme hardship to the family." N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(b); see also N.J.S.A. 44:10-51.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(a)(1), EA benefits shall be made available "[w]hen shelter costs equal or exceed total recorded income to the [Work First New Jersey] WFNJ or [Supplemental Security Income] SSI assistance unit and the recipient is unable to document other sources of income, for example, loans from relatives, which enable the individual or family to meet monthly housing/living expenses[.]"

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner has received her 12-month lifetime limit of EA benefits, and currently does not qualify for any hardship extension of any kind. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-1. No testimonial or documentary evidence was presented at the time of the hearing to indicate that the assistance unit would meet the criteria for a hardship extension of EA benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (c). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of EA benefits, due to receipt of the lifetime limit of such benefits, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-1. I agree.

In addition, the Agency found that the assistance unit has a monthly income which includes Work First New Jersey/ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits, Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits (on behalf of two minor children), and child support, which totals \$2,737.50. See Initial Decision at 2. The assistance unit resides in a rental property which has a monthly rent of \$2,350, and therefore, the income of the assistance unit exceeds the rental amount.



See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibit R-1 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(a)(1). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of EA benefits, due to the income of the assistance unit exceeding that of their housing cost, was proper and must stand. Ibid. I also agree.

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

Officially approved final version. July 16, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

