



State of New Jersey

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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 **03879-26 A.G.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C097331003 (BURLINGTON COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's suspension of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency suspended Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits because Petitioner failed to take necessary steps to lift a sanction. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On July 1, 2026, the Honorable Kim C. Belin, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On July 6, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received from Petitioner on July 20, 2026.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby ADOPT the ALJ's Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

In order to maintain eligibility for receipt of WFNJ benefits, a recipient must cooperate with, and participate in, the WFNJ work activity requirements. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.1(a). If a WFNJ recipient fails to comply with their work activities without good cause, the recipient is subject to a sanction resulting in a pro-rata reduction of WFNJ benefits for the first month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b). Thereafter, if the WFNJ benefits recipient is still non-compliant, without good cause, the WFNJ benefits will be suspended for one month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b)(1). If the non-compliance continues, the recipient's case will close the month after the suspension of WFNJ benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b)(2).

Following the loss of WFNJ cash assistance benefits due to noncompliance with work activities, the individual must re-apply for WFNJ benefits, satisfactorily complete sanction obligations and comply with work activities in order to be eligible for WFNJ benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(e).

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner failed to participate in the work activity required by regulation to maintain receipt of WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.1(a), -4.13. Petitioner was assigned to a work site from September 15, 2025 through October 13, 2025, and then from October 13, 2025 through January 11, 2026. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit P-1. On January 12, 2026, the Agency sent Petitioner an email indicating that her work site assignment was extended through April, 2026. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit P-2. At that time, Petitioner informed the Agency she did not wish to return to the work site, however, the Agency informed her that there were no other work assignments available. See Initial Decision at 3.



On February 9, 2026, the Agency was informed that Petitioner had failed to appear at the assigned work site from February 2, 2026 through February 6, 2026. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. On February 10, 2026, the Agency sent Petitioner a letter indicating a sanction had been imposed upon her WFNJ/GA case. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13. The only barrier that Petitioner identified as potentially preventing her from complying with the work requirements was transportation, and the Agency provided bus passes. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit P-1.

At the time of the hearing, Petitioner testified that another employee at the work site made derogatory comments to her in front of her class, and that Petitioner had notified her case manager, and was informed there were no other work options available. See Initial Decision at 3.

Without good cause, as defined at N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.11, a WFNJ/GA recipient must comply with the required work activity in order to receive benefits, and the Agency must impose a sanction upon Petitioner for failure to participate in the required work activity and suspend WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's determination to suspend Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits, and to later close her case, for failure to lift the sanction was proper and must stand. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13. I agree.

By way of comment, I have reviewed Petitioner's Exceptions, and I find that the arguments made therein do not alter my decision in this matter.

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

Officially approved final version. August 13, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

