



# 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 **06766-25 C.D.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C288904009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS)**

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 failed to comply with her EA service plan ("SP"). Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. This matter was transmitted during April, 2025; however, the matter was adjourned seven times throughout 2025. On February 20, 2026, the Honorable Kimberly K. Holmes, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On March 6, 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, following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

The purpose of EA is to meet the emergent needs of public assistance recipients, such as imminent homelessness, so that the recipient can participate in work activities without disruption and continue on a path to self-sufficiency. N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(a). In order to maintain eligibility for EA benefits, the recipient must take reasonable steps to resolve his or her emergent situation. N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Reasonable steps include, but are not limited to, the EA benefits recipient participating in the development of, and complying with, a written and signed SP. Ibid. Failure to comply with the requirements identified in the SP, without good cause, shall result in the termination of EA benefits and a six-month period of EA ineligibility. Ibid.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner was approved for EA benefits on January 28, 2025. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3. On that same date, Petitioner executed an EA SP, wherein she agreed, among other things, to contribute to her monthly shelter cost, to apply for Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits, and to submit proof of weekly housing searches. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). On February 12, 2025, Petitioner was notified by the Agency that she had a scheduled appointment with her Agency social worker on February 19, 2025, and included information that, if the appointment were missed it could affect her eligibility for EA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3. The Agency additionally informed Petitioner that she had not submitted any housing searches since October, 2024. Ibid. Over the



course of several months, the Agency sent weekly emails to Petitioner requesting information about housing searches and reminding her of her responsibilities pursuant to the EA SP. Ibid.

On March 24, 2025, the Agency notified Petitioner that her failure to comply with her EA SP would result in the termination of her EA and an ineligibility period of six-months. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3. During July, 2025, the Agency attempted to assist Petitioner in applying for affordable housing, however, Petitioner failed to supply all of the requested documentation. Ibid. On September 9, 2025, counsel for Petitioner submitted a letter to the Agency regarding concerns Petitioner expressed about the Agency failing to assist her with finding housing. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit P-2. A few weeks prior to the hearing, on February 6, 2026, Petitioner submitted a document outlining medical issues, and she contends that she could not provide the Agency with requested documentation due to health challenges for herself and her son. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also Exhibits P-1, P-3.

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ found, and the record reflects, that Petitioner failed to comply with the requirements contained in her SP, with no good cause credibly shown, by continually failing to contribute her portion of her shelter costs, by failing to provide verification that she had applied for SSI benefits, and by failing to provide proof of housing searches. See Initial Decision at 6; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. Ibid. I agree.

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

By way of additional 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 is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. April 23, 2026

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

