



State of New Jersey

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0716

STEPHEN CHA, MD, MHSR
Commissioner

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lt. Governor

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 **13135-26 D.W.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S639588012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA"), and Emergency Assistance ("EA"), benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/GA benefits, contending that the assistance unit's income exceeded the WFNJ/GA benefits financial eligibility limits, and denied Petitioner EA benefits because he was not a WFNJ cash benefits recipient, nor a Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits recipient. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On August 14, 2026, the Honorable Jeffrey N. Rabin, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On August 17, 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 ("DFD"), Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, I hereby MODIFY the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determinations, based on the discussion below.

Initial financial eligibility for Work First New Jersey ("WFNJ") benefits is determined based upon the assistance unit's ("AU") countable income, both earned and unearned, as well as countable resources. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.1(a). If an employable WFNJ/General Assistance ("GA") AU has income that is equal to or less than the maximum allowable income level, then financial eligibility exists. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.1(b) and -3.5(a). The maximum allowable income level for an employable WFNJ/GA benefits AU that consists of one individual is \$278 per month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.6(b) and DFD Informational Transmittal ("DFD IT") No. 19-21.

Only WFNJ cash assistance recipients and Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits recipients are eligible for EA benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.2(a).

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner applied for WFNJ/GA benefits during June, 2026. See Initial Decision at 2. Based upon the receipt of earned income, the Agency determined that Petitioner's monthly income exceeded the maximum benefit level, of \$278, for receipt of WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-1, N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.5(b), and DFD IT No. 19-21. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of WFNJ/GA benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. *Ibid.* I agree, but the Initial Decision is modified to reflect that the correct income amount for eligibility at the time of initial application for an employable individual is \$278, rather than \$185, as stated in the Initial Decision.



The ALJ further found that, because Petitioner is neither a WFNJ, nor an SSI, benefits recipient, the household is ineligible for EA benefits, and as such, concluded that the Agency's denial of Petitioner's EA benefits was also proper and must be affirmed. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.2(a). I also agree.

By way of comment, Petitioner is without prejudice to reapply for WFNJ/GA and EA benefits, should his circumstances change.

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

Officially approved final version. August 26, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

