



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 **01220-26 G.W.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C292245020 (UNION COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner challenges the correctness of the Respondent Agency's calculation of his monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits, at recertification. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. This matter was initially scheduled for March 13, 2026, but was adjourned to March 19, 2026, and then to March 30, 2026. On March 30, 2026, the Honorable Sudha V. Raja, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. On April 13, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

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, the ALJ's Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency determination is AFFIRMED, based on the discussion below.

Regulatory authority applicable to SNAP benefit cases, defines income as "all income from whatever source unless such income is specifically excluded." See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.3.

In order to determine an applicant's eligibility for SNAP, the applicant's income and resources must be below a certain threshold. N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16 outlines the procedures used to calculate net income and benefit levels for SNAP recipients. The regulation provides that the applicant's monthly net income is determined by adding together all earned and unearned income, then subtracting all income exclusions. Then, the standard deduction, based upon the size of the household, is subtracted from the income.

Thereafter, the household is evaluated to determine if a medical deduction is appropriate, which is if the household has medical expenses that exceed \$35.00. If the household is entitled to a medical deduction, then the amount in excess of \$35.00 is subtracted from the applicant's income. Then, the applicant is evaluated for an excess shelter deduction. Such a deduction is permitted when the individual's shelter costs exceed 50% of their net income. If this deduction is allowable, then the difference between the shelter costs and the 50% net income, or up to the maximum allowable amount, is subtracted from the individual's income. The remaining figure is Petitioner's net income. This net income is then compared against the maximum allowable net income amount for the household's size, as outlined at N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.3, to determine eligibility. If eligible, the household's monthly SNAP allotment shall be equal to the maximum food stamp allotment for the household's size, reduced by 30 percent of the household's net monthly income. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.6(a)(1).



Here, the record reveals that Petitioner submitted a SNAP recertification application in November, 2025, indicating that he had \$500 monthly shelter costs, but did not submit proof of shelter costs, which were subsequently requested by the Agency and due by November 24, 2025. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-2, R-3. On December 3, 2025, the Agency notified Petitioner that his SNAP benefits would be reduced from \$254 to \$104 due to his failure to provide proof of his shelter costs. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibits R-4, R-5. On January 22, 2026, Petitioner provided the Agency with a copy of his lease agreement, lease renewal, and an affidavit indicating that his rent was \$500 per month. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-6. Upon review, the Agency determined that Petitioner's name did not appear on the lease he had submitted, and on January 29, 2026, the Agency requested that Petitioner provide a letter from his landlord verifying that he lived at the address and that his rent was \$500 per month. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-7. On February 5, 2026, the Agency received verification from Petitioner's landlord, and as a result, issued Petitioner a pro-rated amount of additional benefits for March, 2026 and beginning with Petitioner's April, 2026, issued SNAP benefits in the amount of \$254. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibits R-8, R-9, R-10.

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's calculations of Petitioner's monthly SNAP benefits allotment were correct and must stand, and that Petitioner is not entitled to any retroactive benefits for January, 2026 or February, 2026. See Initial Decision at 4. I agree.

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

Officially approved final version. April 30, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

