



State of New Jersey

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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 **08459-26 I.C.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C521795002 (BERGEN COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/GA benefits, contending that Petitioner failed to provide information necessary to determine eligibility for said benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On July 2, 2026, the Honorable Susana Guerrero, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. On July 15, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming in part, the Agency's determination, and reversing in part, the Agency's determination.

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 MODIFY the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

In order to determine eligibility for WFNJ benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2. Eligibility for WFNJ/GA benefits requires the applicant to provide all necessary documentation. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5) (stating that "As a condition of eligibility for WFNJ benefits, the applicant shall, subject to good cause exceptions, be required to provide all necessary documentation.").

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner applied for WFNJ/GA benefits on March 9, 2026. See Exhibit R-1. Thereafter, the Agency sent Petitioner a Request for Verification, seeking several documents, and advising Petitioner to return the verifications, which were required in order to determine eligibility for benefits. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. Petitioner failed to respond to the Agency, and on April 8, 2026, the Agency denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1.

At the time of the hearing, the ALJ found that the Agency requested, among several other verifications, a letter from Petitioner's employer stating her hourly rate of pay, how many were worked per week, when she last worked, and a copy of her last paycheck. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1. Petitioner failed to provide the Agency with any of the information requested regarding her previous employment. See Initial Decision at 3-4. Separately, the Request for Verification requested "bank statements," and the Agency representative testified at the hearing that the statement requested was actually for Petitioner's CashApp account, and not for a bank account statement. See Initial Decision at 4. Based upon the testimony provided at the hearing, the ALJ found that the Agency improperly denied Petitioner's



application based upon her failure to submit CashApp statements as the Request for Verification did not specifically require submission of CashApp statements, and the term "bank statements" could reasonably be understood not to include such statements. Ibid.

Based on the credible testimony and documentary evidence provided, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had not provided all information required to be verified to determine eligibility, specifically as to her prior employment, and as such, the Agency's denial of WFNJ/GA benefits on April 8, 2026, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 2-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5). I agree, and I am modifying the Agency's action in this matter to reflect the proper basis for the denial of Petitioner's WFNJ/GA application was the failure to submit verification relevant to her previous employment.

By way of comment, Petitioner is without prejudice to reapply for WFNJ/GA benefits, if she has not already done so, but is reminded that she must provide all information and documentation requested in order to determine eligibility.

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

Officially approved final version. August 27, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

