



State of New Jersey

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

STEPHEN CHA, MD, MHSR
Commissioner

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lt. Governor

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 **06083-26 L.N.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C138889008 (GLOUCESTER COUNTY DIV. OF SOC. 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 was involved in a physical altercation with another shelter resident, thereby causing her own homelessness. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On May 8, 2026, the Honorable Samantha L. Price, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On May 29, 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, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determinations, based on the discussion below.

EA benefits shall not be provided for a period of six months to adult recipients who are terminated from an EA placement when the termination is the result of the recipient's actions, without good cause, which may include, but are not limited to, engaging in threatening and/or disruptive behavior that affects the operations of the shelter or the safety of other residents. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(c)(3).

Here, Petitioner was placed, on an immediate need basis, at a shelter on August 18, 2025, at which time she signed an Immediate Need Agreement, as well as a copy of the shelter rules, which explicitly prohibited any violence or threats of violence. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2. On September 17, 2025, Petitioner executed an EA service plan ("SP"), wherein she was informed that her EA benefits would be terminated if she was asked to leave the shelter placement due to engaging in threatening or disruptive behavior that affected the operations of the shelter or safety of other residents. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-3. On October 6, 2025, Petitioner and another shelter resident engaged in a physical and verbal altercation at the shelter, which led Petitioner to report the altercation on a Resident Grievance Form. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-5. On December 8, 2025, Petitioner and another shelter resident engaged in a verbal altercation, which escalated into Petitioner "splashing water" on the other shelter resident, and which led to Petitioner to report the altercation on a Resident Grievance Form. Ibid. On the same date, December 8, 2025, the shelter sent the Agency a Vendor Early Termination Notice terminating Petitioner's placement due to her failure to comply with shelter regulations, specifically citing the two previously referenced incidents. See Initial



Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-4. Petitioner's EA benefits were terminated on December 8, 2025, due to her violating the shelter's rules, as well as her client agreement with the Agency. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibits R-6, R-7.

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had violated the requirements for receipt of EA benefits by engaging in verbal and physical altercations with another shelter resident on shelter property in violation of shelter rules, and thereby affecting the operations of the shelter and the safety of other residents. See Initial Decision at 4. Accordingly, concluded that the Agency's termination of EA benefits to Petitioner, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper, and must stand. Id. at 4-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(c)(3). I agree.

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

By way of further 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 outline above.

Officially approved final version. July 16, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

