



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 **12759-26 R.W.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C280099009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency denied EA benefits to Petitioner, contending that she had exhausted her lifetime limit of EA benefits, and did not qualify for any further extension of EA benefits at the present time. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On August 5, 2026, the Honorable Mindy Gensler, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On August 6, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner has received in excess of twenty-four months of EA benefits, including hardship extensions, which exceeds her lifetime limit of EA benefits, and that she currently does not qualify for any further extension of any kind. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (c). Petitioner did previously submit a MED-1 form, however, it expired on May 27, 2026. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-1. Of note, the record also reflects that, at the time of the EA denial in this matter, Petitioner also did not meet the criteria for an extension of EA benefits under the Emergency Assistance for Special Groups ("EASG") pilot program, as she had not submitted an updated, completed MED-1 form indicating that she could not work for one-year, which is needed to establish permanent disability. Ibid.; see also State of New Jersey Senate Bill, No. S866, P.L. 2018, c. 164, effective December 20, 2018 ("S866"), now codified at N.J.S.A. 44:10-51(a)(3), also known as Emergency Assistance for Specific Groups ("EASG"), and recently extended pursuant to State of New Jersey Assembly Bill, No. 5549, which extends EA benefits eligibility for certain categories of individuals, including, but not limited to WFNJ recipients who are permanently disabled, as documented by a twelve (12) month MED-1 Form, and Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits recipients. See Division of Family Development Instruction ("DFDI") No. 25-02-01. Further, at the time of the hearing, the testimonial and documentary evidence presented did not indicate that Petitioner would qualify for any of the specified EASG groups for whom additional benefits may be made available, specifically as she testified that her new mental health provider would not complete a MED-1 form until she had been under their care for six-months, approximately during October, 2026. See Initial Decision at 2-4. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1. I agree.

In addition, as of August 1, 2026, Petitioner is no longer a Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits recipient, and, as such, the ALJ further concluded that she is ineligible for receipt of EA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.2(a) (stating that only WFNJ cash assistance recipients and Supplemental Security Income recipients are eligible for EA benefits). I also agree.



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 concur with the ALJ's final conclusion in this matter and hereby ADOPT the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law.

By way of 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.

Officially approved final version. August 11, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

