



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 **08656-26 S.B.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C717560002 (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 WFNJ/GA benefits contending that she is being financially supported by a family member. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On July 7, 2026, the Honorable Evelyn J. Marose, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On July 14, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As the 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 ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

In order to determine eligibility for WFNJ/GA benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2. Verification for WFNJ/GA benefits requires the applicant to provide all necessary documentation. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5).

In order to be eligible for WFNJ/GA benefits, the total countable income of the unemployable single adult, or couple without dependent children, must be equal to or less than the maximum benefit payment level for the size of the assistance unit as set out in Schedule V at N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.6(a). See also N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.1(b)(1). Effective July 1, 2019, the maximum benefit level for an unemployable WFNJ/GA AU, consisting of one person, is \$277 per month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.6(a); see also DFD Informational Transmittal ("IT") No. 19-21.

Here, the record reflects that Petitioner applied for WFNJ/GA benefits on March 27, 2026, and indicated on her application that she did not own her home, nor have any financial resources, including a bank account. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-4. Further, Petitioner indicated on her application that she is not employed, is unable to work, and does not receive any federal or state benefits such as Supplemental Security Income or unemployment benefits. Ibid. Petitioner additionally indicated that she does not receive any financial support from any organization. Ibid. At the time of the hearing, Petitioner testified that she had previously resided with her son until November, 2025, and that he claims her as a dependent on his tax returns. Ibid.; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4. Petitioner noted she has monthly expenses of \$1,255 in rent and \$168 in utilities. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-4.

On April 30, 2026, the Agency notified Petitioner that her application for WFNJ/GA benefits was denied, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.8(a), as she was being supported by her son, based upon her own statements. See Initial Decision at



2; see also Exhibits R-2, R-3. The ALJ in this matter considered N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.8(a)(15), which states that a WFNJ/GA benefits applicant or recipient over the age of sixty who is claimed as a dependent on their adult child or other relative's U.S. Individual Income Tax Return (1040 Form), regardless of whether or not they are residing in the household, is ineligible for WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3. In this matter, however, the ALJ correctly points out that Petitioner is not yet sixty years of age. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-4.

The ALJ concluded that, in order to determine eligibility for WFNJ/GA benefits, the Agency must consider all income earned or unearned. See Initial Decision at 3; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.9. In this matter, Petitioner acknowledged that her adult son claims her as a dependent on his tax return, however, the ALJ found that Petitioner failed to provide any information as to how she supports herself and if she is receiving assistance from her son, or any other source, in order to pay for her expenses. See Initial Decision at 3-4. Based on the forgoing, the ALJ determined that Petitioner failed to provide the Agency with verification as to how she supports herself and concluded that the Agency's denial of WFNJ/GA benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand, as the Agency was unable to verify all of Petitioner's income for purposes of determining benefits eligibility. See Initial Decision at 4; Exhibit R-2, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2, -3.9. I agree.

By way of comment, Petitioner is without prejudice to reapply for WFNJ/GA benefits, but is reminded that she must provide all information and documentation requested in order to determine eligibility. Petitioner is advised to communicate directly with the Agency with regards to the application and any required documentation.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED.

Officially approved final version. August 18, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

