



State of New Jersey

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Commissioner

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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 **06411-26 S.C.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C197507003 (BURLINGTON 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 WFNJ/GA benefits application, 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 June 26, 2026, the Honorable Tama B. Hughes, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. On July 8, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and REVERSE Agency's determinations, 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 completed an application for WFNJ/GA benefits on January 6, 2026, within which she indicated her banking institution. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-A. On March 9, 2026, the Agency sent Petitioner a request for additional information, specifically requesting three months of recent bank statements for all bank accounts, including all savings and checking accounts. Ibid. Petitioner provided bank statements from October, 2025, November, 2025, and December, 2025, although the request was for December, 2025, January, 2025, and February, 2025, and did not provide any savings account information to the Agency. See Initial Decision at 2. On March 27, 2026, the Agency sent Petitioner notification that her WFNJ/GA application was denied for failure to provide information, specifically her savings account information. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-A.

At the time of the hearing, Petitioner testified that she has never had a savings account, and specifically did not have a savings account at the time of her application for benefits. See Initial Decision at 3. She further testified that she was unaware that she needed to inform the Agency that she did not have a savings account. Ibid. Petitioner testified that she contacted the Agency on several occasions to inquire if any additional information was required and was never informed that any documentation was outstanding. Ibid.



The ALJ found that the request for information sent from the Agency to Petitioner on March 9, 2026 did not implicitly, nor explicitly, advise Petitioner that she had to inform the Agency that she did not maintain a savings account. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibit R-A. The ALJ further found that the Agency representative testified that the sole basis for the denial of benefits in this matter was because Petitioner failed to provide the Agency with savings account documentation. See Initial Decision at 4. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency should process her WFNJ/GA application based upon the documentation submitted and issue an eligibility determination. See Initial Decision at 6. I agree, and as such, I direct that the Agency is to expeditiously review Petitioner's WFNJ/GA application and, if Petitioner is found to be eligible for the receipt of benefits, issue benefits retroactive to the date of her application. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-9.16(e). Should Petitioner be denied WFNJ/GA benefits, based upon the review of her application, Petitioner is without prejudice to request another fair hearing on that substantive denial.

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

Officially approved final version. August 13, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

