



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 **04935-26 S.K.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C858084007 (ESSEX COUNTY DIVISION OF WELFARE)**

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 due to violation of shelter rules. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On March 30, 2026, the Honorable William J. Courtney, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On March 31, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development ("DFD"), Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby ADOPT the ALJ's Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, 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, "[t]hreatening 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, the record reflects that Petitioner applied for EA benefits, and was placed at a shelter, with his minor child, where he signed documentation on January 12, 2026, affirming that he received and understood the shelter Handbook of Rules and Regulations, and agreeing to comply with all rules and regulations of his housing placement. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1. The ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner's EA benefits were terminated for violating shelter rules by engaging in threatening/disruptive actions, on multiple occasions, some of which required involvement of law enforcement. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-2. Further, the Agency imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty based upon a termination from a shelter placement without good cause. *Ibid.* The record reflects that several staff members of the shelter placement provided testimony as to Petitioner's behavior, which the ALJ found credible. *Ibid.* Specifically, shelter staff testified that Petitioner threatened various staff members and other residents at the shelter using profane language, that he left the shelter on various occasions without his minor child, that he left shelter doors open which posed a threat to other residents and staff, that he did not complete required chores, and that he disrupted the shelter by playing music at a high volume. *Ibid.* Further, the ALJ found that the testimony of Petitioner lacked credibility. See Initial Decision at 4.



Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had engaged in disruptive behaviors at his EA shelter placement, and therefore, the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of EA ineligibility, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 2, 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 benefits pending the fair hearing, Petitioner's six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall begin to run upon 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 his current needs, including Social Services for the Homeless.

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

Officially approved final version. April 07, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

