



State of New Jersey

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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 **02927-26 S.M.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C253468004 (CAMDEN-CCBSS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits, in the form of utility assistance. The Agency denied Petitioner EA benefits, contending that she failed to provide all required documentation needed to determine EA benefits eligibility. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On June 5, 2026, the Honorable Tama B. Hughes, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On June 24, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner applied for EA benefits on November 21, 2025, seeking in excess of \$21,000 in utility assistance due to an outstanding utility bill. See Initial Decision at 2. At the time of her application, Petitioner produced a letter from her mortgage company stating that the utility provider was going to place a lien on the home due to the outstanding account balance. Ibid. At the time of the application, Petitioner's adult child, and minor niece and nephew resided with her and Petitioner informed the Agency that her daughter was responsible for the mortgage payments for the home. Ibid. The Agency gave Petitioner a Request for Information notice, which requested certain documentation be submitted to the Agency within thirty days. Ibid. Petitioner failed to submit any documentation as requested by the Agency. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-1. Specifically, the Agency requested proof of her current emergency including her current utility bill as well as a breakdown of utility costs for the prior three years, proof that her mortgage was current, a copy of the lien documentation, proof of monthly income on behalf of her niece and nephew from the Social Security Administration, and copies of her daughter's four prior pay stubs. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit R-1. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for EA benefits on January 20, 2026, after she had been given more than sixty days to present the required documentation. See Initial Decision at 3. At the time of the hearing, Petitioner testified that she had provided the Agency with all documentation requested. Ibid. At some point in time, Petitioner spoke with the Agency representative who informed her that she was found ineligible for receipt of Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF"), and, as such, she would be ineligible for EA benefits. Ibid.

Petitioner maintained that she had submitted certain documentation to an Agency representative on November 21, 2025 at the Agency, however, it is unclear from the record whether Petitioner, in actuality, provided the documentation to the Agency's WFNJ/TANF unit, rather than the EA unit, which is a separate unit within the Agency which requires separate documentation when making an eligibility determination regarding an application for benefits. See Initial Decision at 3-6.

Based on the testimonial and documentary evidence presented, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 6-7; see also Exhibit R-1 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.6, -2.2(a)(5), -6.3(a)(1)(ii), -6.6. I 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.

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

Officially approved final version. August 13, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

