



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 **06027-26 S.O.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C295654009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS)**

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. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that she moved to New Jersey without a plan and voluntarily left her housing without an eviction. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On April 20, 2026, the Honorable Julio C. Morejon, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On April 21, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Here, based on the credible evidence and the application of the relevant law, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had the capacity to plan to avoid her homelessness, but failed to plan for housing prior to her move to New Jersey. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c), -6.1(c)(3). Specifically, the ALJ found that Petitioner has resided within New York for the majority of her life, and that, for at least the past five years, her rent has been paid by the New York State Department of Social Services. See Initial Decision at 2. During March 2026, Petitioner decided to leave New York, with her four minor children, for New Jersey, where she has no family or friends located. *Ibid.* Petitioner's landlord had informed her during 2025 that he planned to sell the property where she was residing, however, as of March 2026, Petitioner was not facing any eviction from the property. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit P-1. Following her EA application, on April 7, 2026, the Agency denied Petitioner's application, indicating that she was not facing an actual or imminent state of homelessness and that her decision to leave New York without a plan for employment or housing, had resulted in her current state of homelessness. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-1. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Petitioner had failed to plan for her housing prior to leaving New York, thereby causing her own homelessness and as such, the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner, and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c), -6.1(c)(3). 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. April 23, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

