



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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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 13700-25 S.W.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C109653011 (MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS..)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's sanctioning, and subsequent termination, of her Work First New Jersey/ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits. The Agency sanctioned Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits, contending that she failed to comply with the mandatory WFNJ work activity. The Agency terminated Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits due to alleged excess income over the maximum benefit level amount. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On October 27, 2025, the Honorable Andrea Spevak, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On November 12, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's sanctioning of Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development ("DFD"), Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's sanctioning of Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits, based on the discussion below.

In order to maintain eligibility for receipt of WFNJ benefits, a recipient must cooperate with, and participate in, the WFNJ work activity requirements. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.1(a). If a WFNJ recipient fails to comply with their work activities without good cause, the recipient is subject to a sanction resulting in a pro-rata reduction of WFNJ benefits for the first month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b). For a WFNJ/TANF benefits recipient, the pro-rata reduction of benefits shall continue for six months. See DFD Instruction number 24-03-04. Thereafter, if the WFNJ benefits recipient is still non-compliant, without good cause, the WFNJ benefits will be suspended for one month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b)(1). If the non-compliance continues, the recipient's case will close the month after the suspension of WFNJ benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b)(2).

Here, the ALJ found that the Agency notified Petitioner on May 19, 2025, that she was required to participate in a part-time work activity scheduled to begin on June 16, 2025. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. Petitioner responded to the Agency that she homeschooled her children, and stated that she was planning to return to school during July, 2025; however, she never provided documentary proof of either scenario satisfying the hours required to remain eligible for benefits. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibits R-1, R-5; P-A. Petitioner failed to attend the job activity on June 16, 2025 and June 17, 2025. See Initial Decision at 3. As a result, Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits were sanctioned, effective August 1, 2025. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-2. Based upon the testimonial and documentary evidence, the ALJ found that Petitioner had failed to comply with the mandatory WFNJ work activity, without good cause, and as such, the Agency's sanctioning, and subsequent termination, of Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits



was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.1(a), (d), -4.13. I agree.

Additionally, at the hearing, the Agency withdrew its determination to terminate Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits due to excess income. See Initial Decision at 2. As such, neither the Initial Decision, nor this Final Agency Decision, substantively address this issue.

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

Officially approved final version. January 08, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

