



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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TRENTON, NJ 08625-0716

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 **00019-26 V.G.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C063501003 (BURLINGTON COUNTY BD. OF SOC. 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 he had abandoned his shelter placement, thereby causing his own homelessness. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On April 20, 2026, the Honorable Michael R. Stanzione, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On April 21, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

Here, the record reflects that Petitioner had previously received EA benefits beginning October, 2024, which placement was terminated on or about June 5, 2025, and that, on September 10, 2025, he again applied for EA benefits. See Exhibit R-B. Petitioner was placed at a motel; however, such placement was terminated effective November 5, 2025, due to Petitioner violating his EA service plan ("SP"), and the Agency imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty. *Ibid.* Further, Petitioner failed to comply with his EA SP as he had not completed a substance abuse/mental health assessment by October 11, 2025. See Exhibit R-C. Petitioner later returned to the Agency on December 5, 2025, and indicated that he had scheduled an assessment appointment for December 9, 2025, and the Agency offered him a shelter placement where he could reside until December 10, 2025, in order to ensure he attended his scheduled intake appointment. *Ibid.* On December 9, 2025, Petitioner came to the Agency and requested an alternate placement due to concerns with the current shelter placement, and, upon the Agency contacting the shelter, it was determined that Petitioner had not appeared for the placement on December 5, 2025. See Exhibit R-D. The Agency issued an EA termination notice and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty from December 9, 2025 to May 9, 2025 due to his abandonment of his placement, which made him ineligible for the receipt of EA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(e)(1)(ii). Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 2, 4; see also Exhibit R-A, R-B, R-C, R-D; N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3) and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(e)(1)(ii). 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.



By way of comment, because Petitioner has received continued assistance pending the outcome of this fair hearing, his six-month EA penalty will begin to run as of the date of the 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.

Officially approved final version. June 04, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

