



State of New Jersey

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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 **08320-26 V.T.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C048998019 (SUSSEX COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits, contending that she had not accurately reported her household composition. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On June 16, 2026, the Honorable Leslie Z. Celentano, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony and admitted documents. On June 24, 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 considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, the ALJ's Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED and the Agency determination is AFFIRMED, based on the discussion below.

Here, the record reveals that the Agency had initiated a fraud investigation on January 22, 2026, to determine if Petitioner's spouse, J.T., was residing with her at the same address while Petitioner was receiving SNAP benefits. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2. On March 2, 2026, the Agency sent Petitioner a Request for Contact directing her to provide information regarding her husband, as he could not be considered a separate household for purposes of SNAP benefits. Ibid. Petitioner did not respond to the Request for Contact and on March 18, 2026, her SNAP benefits case was closed with an effective date of April 1, 2026. Ibid.

During the course of the fraud investigation, the Agency conducted several searches of official government records including postal records, law enforcement records, election records, and unofficial records including multiple social media platforms. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-2. The post office confirmed that J.T. receives mail at Petitioner's address and additional databases confirmed the most recent address for J.T. is Petitioner's address. Ibid. Additionally, Petitioner and J.T. are co-owners of the property and have been since October 30, 2018. Ibid. On January 30, 2026, the local police department provided an incident report from October 4, 2025, made after law enforcement went to the address due to an abandoned 911 call, and identified that J.T. answered the door at the residence. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-2.

Further investigation revealed that Petitioner is a "family focused content creator" and the Agency found accounts on social media which showed the family, as well as an independent website created and maintained by Petitioner, which including photographs and articles/postings about marriage and motherhood. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit



R-2. By way of example, a July 1, 2025, video shows a celebration that Petitioner is pregnant and includes J.T. and their other children. Ibid. The Agency presented additional examples portraying a family cruise, birth of a child on or about September 30, 2025, Christmas Eve, and New Years' Eve family photographs. Ibid.

On January 30, 2026, Petitioner submitted an interim driver's license for J.T. listing an address in New York. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit P-2. At the time of the hearing, Petitioner testified that J.T. receives mail at a New York address. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibits P-3, P-4, P-5, P-6. Petitioner further testified that she and J.T. separated in 2022, and that, beginning in July, 2024 he provided support of \$400 per month. See Initial Decision at 4. When addressing her various social media accounts and personal website, Petitioner testified the family was intact until 2022 but that the references to a husband and family content reflect her work partnering with family brands and does not establish that J.T. resided with her while the household was receiving SNAP benefits. Ibid. She indicated J.T. comes to the home "a few times a month" and stays at the home "occasionally." Ibid. She further testified that she is the sole name on her mortgage and financially responsible for the home even though she and J.T. are listed as co-owners. Ibid.; see also Exhibit P-7.

Of note, during 2020, J.T. applied for SNAP benefits, using the address, but asserting that he was a tenant at the property and paid rent to Petitioner, who he identified as his landlord. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-2. At the time of the hearing, Petitioner testified that she had no knowledge that he had previously applied for SNAP benefits, however, the Agency presented a letter authored by her in support of his application indicating that he was her tenant and paid \$1,200 per month in rent. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-2.

Based on the testimonial and documentary record presented, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner's testimony could not be found credible and that the Agency had established, by a preponderance of the credible evidence, that J.T. resided at the same address as Petitioner. See Initial Decision at 5-6. Specifically, the ALJ found that J.T. appears with Petitioner, and their children, in "countless pictures," that they had a child together approximately eight months ago, that he is present at the home, that he receives mail at the home, and that he vacations with Petitioner and their children. See Initial Decision at 6. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency properly closed Petitioner's SNAP benefits case, effective April 1, 2026, due to her failure to provide verifications in response to their Request for Contact regarding J.T. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.1, N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.1 et seq. I agree.

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

Officially approved final version. July 30, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

