



State of New Jersey

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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 **08230-26 W.J.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C165557011 (MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS..)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for EA benefits, contending that she had exhausted her lifetime limit of EA benefits, plus all available extensions, and did not qualify for a further extension of EA benefits at the present time. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On May 28, 2026, the Honorable William T. Cooper III, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On May 29, 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, hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

EA benefits are limited to 12 months, plus limited extensions for "extreme hardship" where the recipient has taken "all reasonable steps to resolve the emergent situation but the emergency nonetheless continues or a new emergency occurs, which causes extreme hardship to the family." See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (d); N.J.S.A. 44:10-51. Specifically, a Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") recipient may qualify for an additional six months of EA when an "extreme hardship" exists. Ibid. In the event the recipient's extreme hardship continues to exist at the expiration of the six-month extension period, an additional six months of EA may be provided. Ibid. Thus, the maximum amount of EA a WFNJ/TANF recipient may receive is 24 months.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner, a WFNJ/TANF recipient applied for EA benefits on April 22, 2026, at which time the Agency determined that she had previously received her lifetime limit of EA benefits, as well as the two six-month hardship extensions available to her, and currently does not qualify for any further extension of any kind. See Initial Decision at 2-5; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (c). Of note, the record also reflects that, at the time of the EA benefits denial in this matter, Petitioner also did not meet the criteria for an extension of EA benefits under the Emergency Assistance for Special Groups ("EASG") pilot program. See Initial Decision at 4; see also the State of New Jersey Senate Bill, No. S3960, P.L. 2023, c. 198, effective December 21, 2018 ("S3960"), now codified at N.J.S.A. 44:10-51(a)(3), also known as EASG (extending EA benefits eligibility for certain categories of individuals, including, but not limited to WFNJ recipients who are permanently disabled, as documented by a twelve-month MED-1 Form, and Supplemental Security Income benefits recipients), and DFD Instruction ("DFDI") No. 25-02-01.



Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of Petitioner's application for EA benefits, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit R-1, R-2. I agree.

By way of comment, the Agency shall refer Petitioner to any and all agencies and organizations that may be able to assist with her current needs, including Social Services for the Homeless.

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

Officially approved final version. June 10, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

