



State of New Jersey

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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 **04986-26 W.L.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C140247001 (ATLANTIC CO. DEPT OF FAM. & COM. DEV)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of his application for Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits contending that Petitioner had failed to provide information and documentation necessary to determine eligibility. Thereafter, because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On May 22, 2026, and continuing on June 3, 2026, and June 12, 2026, the Honorable Carl V. Buck III, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony and admitted documents. On July 14, 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, Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner applied for SNAP benefits on February 9, 2026. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit C-1. On that same date, the Agency sent Petitioner a notice scheduling a telephone interview with him regarding his SNAP benefits application on February 12, 2026, from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. The telephone interview was not conducted on February 12, 2026, and Petitioner was sent a notice of missed interview indicating he needed to call the Agency to reschedule his interview. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-1. On March 11, 2026, the Agency sent Petitioner a notice denying his application for SNAP benefits, due to his failure to participate in the SNAP interview. See Exhibit R-1; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.18.

At the time of the hearing, the timing of the telephone interview notice, as well as the veracity of the telephone interview call being placed were called into question by Petitioner's counsel. See Initial Decision at 3. As such, the Agency requested the Agency Information Technology ("IT") department confirm the call log for February 12, 2026. Ibid. Upon review of the February 12, 2026 call log, it was determined that the telephone interview call was not placed to Petitioner. Ibid.

Following the first date of the hearing, and with the knowledge the interview call had not been placed, on May 28, 2026, Petitioner's attorney emailed the Agency various documentation, in an effort to have Petitioner's eligibility for benefits reviewed, including a new SNAP benefits application from March 26, 2026 (for clarity this application was submitted to Burlington County, using Petitioner's mother's address, rather than Atlantic County who had denied the February,



2026 application), and a denial notification from the Burlington County Agency on April 27, 2026, for failure to provide all requested information. See Initial Decision at 3. Thereafter, on June 2, 2026, the Agency was able to conduct a telephone interview with Petitioner and his counsel, and, following such phone call, the Agency was provided with 1) an unemployment form, 2) Acme termination notice, and 3) Resorts orientation paystub. See Initial Decision at 4. Upon review of the documents, and upon reconvening the hearing, on June 3, 2026, the Agency determined that an eligibility determination could not be made based upon the documentation submitted. See Initial Decision at 4. Following a request to adjourn the hearing, Petitioner provided the Agency with additional documentation including, 1) a separation letter from Cracker Barrel, 2) an unemployment form, 3) a separation letter from Acme, and 4) contact information for Cracker Barrel and an additional employer. Ibid. Following receipt of this additional information, the Agency generated wage verification letters to three of Petitioner's former employers. See Initial Decision at 4-5. The Agency has not received responses from two of the three employers to whom wage verifications were sent. See Initial Decision at 5.

In order to determine eligibility for SNAP benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required, such as household income, both earned and unearned. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.14, -2.19, -2.20. Without said verification of required information, SNAP benefits eligibility cannot be determined or granted. Ibid. In the present matter, the ALJ found that Petitioner had not been provided with adequate notice of his scheduled interview with the Agency and further that, it was later discovered that the telephone call was never made to Petitioner. See Initial Decision at 7. The ALJ, however, concluded that the Agency has made "more than a good faith effort to assist" in attempting to resolve this matter and that Petitioner, even with the aid of legal counsel, has been unable to produce the documentation necessary in order for the Agency to consider his eligibility for SNAP benefits. See Initial Decision at 7-8. Petitioner did not submit all the requested information even more than four months after the filing of his application for benefits. See Initial Decision at 8; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.27. Following presentation of testimonial and documentary evidence in this case, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had not timely provided the requested information required to determine eligibility, and as such, the Agency's denial of SNAP benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 8; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.14. I agree.

By way of comment, Petitioner is without prejudice to reapply for SNAP benefits, if he has not already done so, but must timely provide all information and documentation requested in order to determine eligibility. Petitioner is advised to communicate directly with the Agency with regards to the application and any required documentation.

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

Officially approved final version. August 18, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

