



State of New Jersey

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0716

STEPHEN CHA, MD, MHSR
Commissioner

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lt. Governor

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 **03875-26 W.P.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C102277015 (OCEAN COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, contending that he had exhausted his lifetime limit of EA benefits, as well as a six-month hardship extension, and did not qualify for any 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. This matter was initially scheduled for April 2, 2026; however, an adjournment was granted until April 10, 2026, at which time an additional adjournment was granted until April 27, 2026. On April 27, 2026, an additional adjournment was requested, which was granted. On May 5, 2026, the Honorable Allison Friedman, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On May 22, 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.

EA benefits are limited to 12 months, plus limited extensions for an "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." N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(b); see also N.J.S.A. 44:10-51. Specifically, a Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") recipient may qualify for an additional six months of EA when an "extreme hardship" exists. *Ibid.* Thus, the maximum amount of EA that a WFNJ/GA benefits recipient may receive is 18 months.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner has received his 12-month lifetime limit of EA benefits, as well as a six-month hardship extension, and currently does not qualify for any further extension of any kind, including Emergency Assistance for Special Groups ("EASG"). See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3, N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (c), and State of New Jersey Senate Bill, No. S866, P.L. 2018, c. 164, effective December 20, 2018 ("S866"), now codified at N.J.S.A. 44:10-51(a)(3), and extended pursuant to State of New Jersey Assembly Bill, No. 5549, and Division of Family Development Instruction ("DFDI") No. 25-02-01. At the time of the hearing, Petitioner had not completed an EASG application, however, the testimonial and documentary evidence presented indicate that Petitioner would not qualify for any of the specified EASG groups for whom additional benefits may be made available, unless he were able to obtain a twelve-month MED-1 form from a physician. See Initial Decision at 2-4. Based on the foregoing, the



ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits was proper and must stand, and that Petitioner is ineligible for any further extension of EA benefits at the present time. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibits R-1, R-3, R-4. I agree.

By way of comment, should Petitioner's circumstances change, and he is able to present a 12-month MED-1 form to the Agency, he is without prejudice to reapply for EA benefits.

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, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. July 09, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

