



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 **00636-26 W.W.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S640558012 (MIDDLESEX 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 failed to comply with his EA service plan ("SP"). Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On March 27, 2026, the Honorable Jeffrey N. Rabin, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On April 10, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

The purpose of EA is to meet the emergent needs of public assistance recipients, such as imminent homelessness, so that the recipient can participate in work activities without disruption and continue on a path to self-sufficiency. N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(a). In order to maintain eligibility for EA benefits, the recipient must take reasonable steps to resolve his or her emergent situation. N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Reasonable steps include, but are not limited to, the EA benefits recipient participating in the development of, and complying with, a written and signed SP. Ibid. Failure to comply with the requirements identified in the SP, without good cause, shall result in the termination of EA benefits and a six-month period of EA ineligibility. Ibid.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner applied for EA benefits on September 24, 2025. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. On that same date, Petitioner executed an EA SP, wherein he agreed, among other things, to submit proof of monthly housing and weekly employment searches. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-2, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Thereafter, on December 8, 2025, Petitioner failed to attend a mandatory case review at the Agency and, a subsequent review of his case file led the Agency to determine that he had not been submitting housing or employment search logs, as required by the terms of his SP. Ibid. On December 8, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner a notice terminating his EA benefits, effective February 1, 2026, and imposing a six-month EA ineligibility penalty for failure to comply with his SP. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-7, R-8, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a).



The ALJ found, and the record reflects, that Petitioner failed to comply with the requirements contained in his SP, with no good cause credibly shown, by continually failing to provide proof of housing and employment searches, as well as by failing to attend a mandatory meeting with the Agency. See Initial Decision at 3-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Based on the foregoing, 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. Ibid. I agree.

By way of comment, because Petitioner has received continued assistance pending the outcome of this fair hearing, his six-month EA ineligibility 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, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. June 04, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

