



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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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 **00121-26 X.R.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C266068020 (UNION COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner challenges the correctness of the Respondent Agency's determination that Petitioner did not qualify for retroactive Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits at the unemployable rate from January 2025, until September 2025. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. This matter was initially scheduled for March 13, 2026, but was adjourned. On March 19, 2026, the Honorable Sudha V. Raja, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On April 2, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Petitioner submitted a statement regarding the hearing, via email to the Division of Family Development's Bureau of Administrative Review and Appeals, on March 19, 2026, following the completion of the fair hearing, but before the ALJ had issued the Initial Decision. This statement will be treated as Petitioner's Exceptions in this matter.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development ("DFD"), Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby MODIFY the ALJ's Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

Based upon an independent review of the record, Petitioner had been receiving WFNJ/GA benefits at the unemployable amount of \$277 through December 2024. See Exhibit R-3; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.6(a) and DFD Informational Transmittal ("IT") No. 19-21. The record reflects that, after December 2024, Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits amount was reduced to the employable amount of \$185, due to the fact that his previously submitted MED-1 form had expired. See Exhibits P-1, R-5. Petitioner continued to receive the employable WFNJ/GA benefits amount of \$185 until a valid MED-1 form was submitted to the Agency in early September 2025, at which time Petitioner was again approved for the unemployable WFNJ/GA benefits amount of \$277, effective September 6, 2025. See Exhibits R-5, R-10.

The issue presented in this matter is if Petitioner is entitled to the unemployable rate of \$277 from January 2025, to September 2025. In his submitted Exceptions, Petitioner maintains that a MED-1 form was submitted in January 2025, and corrected by his physician in February 2025, but not "accepted or approved until September 2025." See Exceptions. However, a review of the submitted MED-1 forms shows that there are three separate and distinct MED-1 forms: one submitted January 2, 2025, then a revised one submitted January 3, 2025, and then the final one, dated September 3, 2025. See Exhibit R-8. With respect to the sufficiency and validity of the MED-1 forms submitted in January 2025, I take official notice that in a prior fair hearing, under OAL Docket number HPW 00189-25, this precise issue was discussed. The ALJ in that matter found that the January 2, 2025, was authentic, but lacked specific necessary information, and included a designation of a "temporary disability" rather than a "permanent disability." Thereafter, the MED-1 form was



revised on January 3, 2025, and resubmitted to the Agency, however, as indicated in both the ALJ's Initial Decision, and the Final Agency Decision, in the matter, issued January 22, 2025, not all of the previously noted deficiencies were cured, and as such, Petitioner had not submitted a valid MED-1 form indicating a permanent disability as of the date of the January 7, 2025 fair hearing. Based on the foregoing, I find that Petitioner did not submit a valid MED-1 form until September 2025, at which time the Agency increased Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits to the unemployable amount of \$277. See Exhibit R-8. As such, I further find that Petitioner is not entitled to any retroactive benefits between January 2025 and September 2025, due to the lack of a valid MED-1 form during that time period, and that Petitioner's assertion that he is entitled to such retroactive benefits, is misplaced. The Initial Decision is modified to reflect the above findings.

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

Officially approved final version. June 04, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

