



State of New Jersey

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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 **05298-26 Y.S.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C103034018 (SOMERSET COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits, and the denial of a hardship extension of EA benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, and denied her further EA benefits, contending that she had exhausted her lifetime limit of EA benefits, 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 19, 2026, the Honorable Sarah G. Crowley, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On June 1, 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, 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 determinations, 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 her 12-month lifetime limit of EA benefits, and currently does not qualify for any further extension of EA benefits of any kind. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-1. Petitioner did submit a Hardship Extension application on February 19, 2026, however, upon review, the Agency determined that she has already received 12 months of EA and did not meet the criteria for a hardship extension of EA benefits. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (c). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the denial of a hardship extension of EA benefits, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. 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 determinations are AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. July 16, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

