



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 **21123-25 Y.W.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C134429008 (GLOUCESTER COUNTY DIV. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of her Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits, at recertification. The Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits, contending that Petitioner was unable to be located. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On February 20, 2026, the Honorable Carl V. Buck, III, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. Following the hearing, the record was held open to allow for the submission of additional documentation and closed on March 3, 2026. On April 13, 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 ("DFD"), Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby ADOPT the ALJ's Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

Here, the record reflects that, on September 11, 2025, the Agency received a "Notice of Termination" from Petitioner's sister, with whom Petitioner had been residing, advising the Agency that Petitioner's month-to-month tenancy would end on September 30, 2025. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. On October 9, 2025, the Agency confirmed via telephone with Petitioner's sister, that Petitioner had vacated the residence on October 3, 2025. Ibid. Thereafter, on November 10, 2025, the Agency closed Petitioner's case as she had failed to respond to and provide information requested, and required, to process her recertification for benefits application. Ibid. At the time of the hearing, Petitioner testified that she left the property due to issues with her sister and that she did not leave a forwarding address, as she was moving between different locations throughout the state. See Initial Decision at 2-3. Petitioner further testified that she attempted to contact the Agency, but was impeded by the "shutdown" (in reference to the Federal shutdown of October 1, 2025 to November 12, 2025), however, as the ALJ noted in his Initial Decision, such shutdown did not impact the operations of the County Agency. See Initial Decision at 3.

Based on the foregoing, and in consideration of N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.19(f), which requires the Agency to verify residency, the ALJ found that Petitioner did not contact the Agency to update her address, as required by regulation, nor provide the information necessary to complete her recertification for benefits. See Initial Decision at 4-5. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's SNAP benefits due to "unknown whereabouts" was reasonably supported by a preponderance of the evidence, and as such, the Agency's action was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.5(b) and Exhibit R-1. I agree.



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

Officially approved final version. April 29, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

