



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

CAROLE JOHNSON
Commissioner

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

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 02602-20 A.B.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C076891012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD OF SOC SCVS)

Petitioner Agency charges Respondent with committing an intentional program violation ("IPV") of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP"), and the Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") program. The Agency asserts that Respondent intentionally falsified her address to reflect the county in which she received SNAP and WFNJ/TANF benefits, thus causing Respondent to receive an overissuance of benefits to which she was not entitled. Respondent was properly noticed of the Administrative Disqualification Hearing, the charges against her, and the proposed disqualification penalties, via certified mail, return receipt requested, on January 17, 2020. See Exhibits P-1, P-2, P-4. Because Respondent failed to execute and return either waiver of her right to a hearing, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing as a contested case. See Exhibits P-3, P-5. On March 10, 2020, the Honorable Joan M. Burke, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record then closed. Respondent did not appear for the hearing, and the matter proceeded ex parte, which is permissible pursuant to our regulatory scheme. See N.J.A.C. 1:10-14.1(d). Respondent was given ten days to present good cause for her failure to appear, or otherwise submit additional documentation. Respondent did not respond, and no additional documents were received.

On April 1, 2020, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, which found that the Agency had met its burden in establishing, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent had deliberately provided false information to the Agency, which resulted in Respondent receiving an overissuance of SNAP and WFNJ/TANF benefits to which she was not entitled. See Initial Decision at 4. Specifically, Respondent misrepresented that she resided in Middlesex County in order to receive benefits to which she was not entitled to receive, which resulted in an overissuance of SNAP benefits to Respondent in the amount of \$21,234, from the period beginning October, 2016, through August, 2019, and an overissuance of \$1,968.22 in WFNJ/TANF benefits, from July, 2019, through August, 2019. *Id.* at 2, 3-4; see also Exhibits P-5, P-7, P-10, P-14, P-15, P-17; and N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.3, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-11.1(a).

As this was the first IPV committed by Respondent, the ALJ ordered the mandatory regulatory penalties of a 12-month disqualification from receipt of SNAP benefits, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.2(a)(1),



and a 6-month disqualification from the WFNJ program, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:90-11.11(a)(1). See Initial Decision at 5.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have considered the Initial Decision in this matter, and following an independent evaluation of the record, I concur with the ALJ's decision and hereby adopt the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law in this matter.

I direct that the Agency proceed to recoup the overissuances.

Accordingly, based upon the foregoing, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision in this matter, and ORDER that Respondent is disqualified from receipt of SNAP benefits for a period of 12 months, and from receipt of WFNJ benefits for a period of six months. I further ORDER that the Agency is to recoup the overissuances.

Officially approved final version. **APR 23 2020**

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

