



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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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 01717-21 F.C.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C058406001 (ATLANTIC CO. DEPT OF FAM. & COM. DEV)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/TANF benefits, contending that Petitioner failed to provide required information in order to determine eligibility. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On April 16, 2021, the Honorable Tama B. Hughes, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

On April 23, 2021, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination. The record in this matter reflects that Petitioner applied for WFNJ/TANF benefits on December 28, 2020. See Initial Decision at 2. On December 29, 2020, the Agency sent Petitioner a letter, denoting what was needed in order to be eligible for WFNJ/TANF benefits, and indicating that said information was due to the Agency by January 15, 2021. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit R-1 at 8 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.2(b)(stating that both the WFNJ applicant, and the Agency, have the responsibility to verify and document eligibility). Amongst the required items was for Petitioner to apply for unemployment benefits, as well as to schedule interviews with the Child Support Unit and the WFNJ/TANF unit, which Petitioner failed to do. See Initial Decision at 2. As a result, on January 27, 2021, the Agency denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/TANF benefits for failure to comply with requirements necessary for eligibility. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit R-1 at 1-4 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5)(stating that "As a condition of eligibility for WFNJ benefits, the applicant shall, subject to good cause exceptions, be required to provide all necessary documentation."). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of WFNJ/TANF benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 3, 4. I agree. Furthermore, the ALJ found that a letter sent to Petitioner, indicating that he had been approved for Families First benefits, had been sent to Petitioner in error, as at no time prior to December 28, 2020, had Petitioner applied for WFNJ/TANF benefits, but rather, only Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits, in September, 2020, and that both WFNJ/TANF and SNAP benefits are issued via an Electronic Benefits Transfer ("EBT") card. *Id.* at 2-3; see also Exhibit P-1 at 1, 5. I also agree.

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 concur with the ALJ's final conclusion in this matter and hereby ADOPT the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law.

By way of comment, Petitioner is without prejudice to reapply for WFNJ/TANF benefits, but is reminded that he must comply with program requirements and provide all documentation requested.

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

Officially approved final version.

MAY 27 2021

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

