



State of New Jersey

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DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
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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 02849-21 T.D.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C028682018 (SOMERSET COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits because Petitioner's combined household income exceeded the maximum permissible level for receipt of said benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On April 13, 2021, the Honorable Sarah G. Crowley, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. On April 19, 2021, 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 considered the ALJ's Initial Decision and following an independent review of the record, the ALJ's Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED and the Agency determination is AFFIRMED, based on the discussion below.

Regulatory authority applicable to SNAP benefits cases, defines income as "all income from whatever source unless such income is specifically excluded." See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.3. Further, N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.5(a)(2) specifically includes "unemployment compensation" as unearned income which is to be included when determining a household's SNAP eligibility.

In order to determine an applicant's eligibility for SNAP, the applicant's income and resources must be below a certain threshold. N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(d)(2), states that households that do not contain an elderly or permanently disabled household member must meet both the gross income test, as well as the net income test, meaning that the respective income amounts must be below the established standards. See also N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.3, -12.4. N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(b) further outlines the procedures used to calculate both gross and net income for SNAP benefits purposes, and the applicable benefit levels, if eligible. The regulation provides that the applicant's monthly net income is determined by adding together all earned and unearned income, then subtracting all income exclusions. Then, the standard deduction, based upon the size of the household, is subtracted from the income.



Thereafter, the household is evaluated to determine if a medical deduction is appropriate, which is if the household has medical expenses that exceed \$35.00. If the household is entitled to a medical deduction, then the amount in excess of \$35.00 is subtracted from the applicant's income. Then, the applicant is evaluated for an excess shelter deduction. Such a deduction is permitted when the individual's shelter costs exceed 50% of their net income. If this deduction is allowable, then the difference between the shelter costs and the 50% net income, or up to the maximum allowable amount, is subtracted from the individual's income. The remaining figure is Petitioner's net income for SNAP benefits purposes. This net income is then compared against the maximum allowable net income amount for the household's size, as outlined at N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.3, to determine eligibility. If eligible, the household's monthly SNAP allotment shall be equal to the maximum food stamp allotment for the household's size, reduced by 30 percent of the household's net monthly income. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.6(a)(1).

The record in this matter reflects that Petitioner's household is comprised of three people. See Initial Decision at 2. The record further reflects that Petitioner works part-time, and also receives unearned income in the form of partial Unemployment Insurance Benefits ("UIB"). Ibid. Additionally, Petitioner's adult daughter, who resides in the household, does not work and presently receives UIB. Ibid. The calculations sheet from April 12, 2021, shows that, after inclusion of the standard deduction for a household of three people of \$167, and factoring in Petitioner's rent, together with the inclusion of the Heating and Cooling Standard Utility Allowance ("HCSUA") of \$548, the household's net income, for SNAP eligibility purposes, was calculated to be \$2,217.40. See Exhibit R-1 at 3; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(b)(8). The maximum allowable net income for a household of three persons is \$1,810, and therefore, Petitioner's household does not meet the net income test for receipt of SNAP benefits. See DFD Instruction 20-09-04 at 12. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner's household net income exceeds the maximum net income level allowable, and therefore, Petitioner is ineligible for SNAP benefits. See Initial Decision at 4. Accordingly, the Agency's termination of Petitioner's SNAP benefits in this matter was proper and must stand. Ibid. I agree.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision in this matter is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

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Officially approved final version.

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

