



## State of New Jersey

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*Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
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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 **05995-23 A.H.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C130991008 (GLOUCESTER COUNTY DIV. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner EA benefits, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that she had abandoned affordable housing in Pennsylvania ("PA") and Atlantic County, New Jersey ("NJ"), thereby causing her own homelessness, and that she failed to provide documentation needed to determine her eligibility for EA benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On July 13, 2023, the Honorable William T. Cooper, III, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

On July 14, 2023, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination. Here, the ALJ found that, prior to applying for EA benefits in Gloucester County, Petitioner had abandoned housing in PA where she had been residing with her daughter, and thereafter abandoned Agency placed housing in Atlantic County, NJ, without good cause. See Initial Decision at 2-5; see also Exhibit R-1 at 1, 20-23. Further, the ALJ found that Petitioner had failed to provide the Agency with documentation regarding said abandonments, such that the Agency was unable to determine Petitioner's eligibility for EA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3-5; see also Exhibit R-1 at 1, 21-23, 27-30, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.6. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ found that Petitioner had caused her own homelessness, and accordingly, concluded that the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 6-7; see also Exhibit R-1 at 7, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3). I agree. Furthermore, because I concur with the ALJ's finding that Petitioner caused her own homelessness, without good cause, I also affirm the Agency's imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits. See Initial Decision at 7; see also Exhibit R-1 at 7, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3). Petitioner's EA ineligibility penalty shall run from June 22, 2023, the effective date of the Agency's denial, through December 21, 2023. See Exhibit R-1 at 7.

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, 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 determination is AFFIRMED.



Officially approved final version. July 25, 2023

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

