



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 **08879-23 C.M.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C141745015 (OCEAN COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner EA benefits, contending that she failed to provide all required documentation to the Agency needed to determine her eligibility for said benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On September 12, 2023, the Honorable Rebecca C. Lafferty, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

On September 13, 2023, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination. The ALJ in this matter issued a very thorough and comprehensive Initial Decision, providing a detailed and well thought out analysis, applying law to fact. See Initial Decision at 2-8. Specifically, although Petitioner claimed that she had provided the Agency with all requested documentation, the ALJ found that Petitioner's testimony in that regard was not credible, and that she had failed to provide any documentary evidence to substantiate her claim. *Id.* at 4-6. Conversely, the ALJ found the Agency's testimony credible, that the documentary evidence provided supported its contention that Petitioner had failed to provide the documentation required to determine her eligibility for EA benefits, and further, that she had failed to request EA benefits in the form of storage rental costs on her July 7, 2023, application for EA benefits. *Id.* at 2-6; see also Exhibits R-2, R-3. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of Petitioner's July 7, 2023, application for EA benefits was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 7-9; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.6(a), -2.2(a)(5), (d). I 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, the record indicates that Petitioner reapplied for EA benefits in the form of a security deposit and storage rental on August 31, 2023, which appears to still be pending receipt of required documentation. See Initial Decision at 3, 7. Petitioner is advised that her eligibility for EA benefits is contingent upon her providing all required documentation to the Agency. *Ibid.*; see also



N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.6(a) -2.2(a)(5), (d). The Agency is instructed to assist Petitioner with acquiring such documentation, as appropriate.

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

Officially approved final version. September 21, 2023

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

