



State of New Jersey

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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 **09224-23 D.S.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C177989007 (ESSEX COUNTY DIVISION OF WELFARE)**

Petitioner appealed from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner WFNJ/GA benefits, contending that she had exhausted her cumulative 60-month lifetime limit for receipt of said benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. A telephonic plenary hearing was scheduled for November 21, 2023, before the Honorable R. Tali Epstein, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"). On that date, Petitioner called into the scheduled telephonic hearing, and during a prehearing discussion, before the record opened, Petitioner acknowledged that she had received 105 months of WFNJ/GA benefits, well above the 60-month lifetime limit, and as such, also acknowledged that she was no longer eligible for WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 2. Regardless, Petitioner proceeded to complain that the "law" needed to be changed and, then abruptly hung up. Ibid. The ALJ and the Agency representative remained on the line to continue the hearing, but Petitioner failed to call back. Ibid. As a result, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had abandoned the hearing. Ibid. On November 22, 2023, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, finding that Petitioner had abandoned her appeal, and the ALJ thereby dismissed Petitioner's appeal.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby ADOPT the ALJ's Initial Decision, as I find that Petitioner abandoned her appeal in this matter. As such, the Agency's denial of WFNJ/GA benefits to Petitioner, due to exhaustion of the lifetime limit for said benefits, remains in force as issued.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and Petitioner's appeal is hereby dismissed.

Officially approved final version. December 27, 2023

Natasha Johnson



