



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 **02345-23 J.C.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C272721020 (UNION COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's SNAP benefits, contending that Petitioner's countable 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 21, 2023, the Honorable Susana E. Guerrero, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. On May 3, 2023, 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 benefit cases, defines income as "all income from whatever source unless such income is specifically excluded." See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.3. "Earned income" is defined, in pertinent part, as "[a]ll wages and salaries received as compensation for services performed as an employee[.]" See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.4(a)(1).

In order to determine an applicant's eligibility for SNAP, the applicant's income and resources must be below a certain threshold. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(d)(1), households which contain an elderly or permanently disabled individual, as defined by N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.34, must meet the net income test for SNAP eligibility. 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.



Gross income is determined by adding together the household's monthly earned and unearned income, minus any earned income exclusions. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(b), (b)(1). That total gross income amount is then utilized to determine a household's SNAP eligibility in accordance with N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(d)(1) and (2).

Here, the record reflects that Petitioner applied for SNAP benefits on or about July 26, 2022, and that Petitioner's SNAP household is comprised solely of one person, Petitioner herself. See Initial Decision at 2. The record further shows that Petitioner's household has earned income in the bi-weekly gross amount of \$4,339.38, or a monthly gross amount of \$9,403. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-2. The allowable maximum gross income amount for a household of one person, at the time of Petitioner's SNAP application was \$1,986, and at the time of the Agency's denial on October 15, 2022, was \$2,096. See Initial Decision at 2; see also DFD Instructions ("DFDI") 21-09-01 at 15, and 22-09-02 at 14. There is no indication in the record that any household member is handicapped, disabled or elderly, and as such, the household must meet the both the gross and net income tests for SNAP eligibility. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.34(a)(1), (2), and N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(d)(1), (2). As Petitioner's household's gross income is over the maximum allowable threshold, Petitioner's household was determined to be ineligible for SNAP benefits, and by notice dated October 15, 2022, the Agency denied Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. Based on the evidence presented, the ALJ found that the Agency's denial of SNAP benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4. I agree. Additionally, I also agree with the ALJ that, contrary to Petitioner's assertions, in accordance with applicable regulatory authority, a salary is earned income which was properly utilized in the Agency's eligibility determination in this matter. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.4(a)(1).

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

Officially approved final version. June 06, 2023

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

