



## State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PO BOX 716

SARAH ADELMAN  
*Commissioner*

TAHESHA L. WAY  
*Lt. Governor*

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 **07246-23 J.J.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C268840009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner 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 October 3, 2023, the Honorable Mumtaz Bari-Brown, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. On October 17, 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 November 4, 2022, and that Petitioner's SNAP household is comprised of one person. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 1. The record further shows that Petitioner's household earned income, in the monthly amount of \$3,051, exceeds the allowable maximum gross income amount for a household of one person, which was \$2,096. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 and DFD Instruction ("DFDI") 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 February 16, 2023, the Agency denied Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 1. Petitioner maintains the Agency did not explain to her how her income exceeded the maximum allowable, and she further represents that her circumstances have now changed since the Agency's denial, as she is now unemployed and gave birth to a child in June, 2023. See Initial Decision at 2. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ in this matter found that the Agency's February 16, 2023, denial, based on excess income over the gross income threshold, was proper and must stand. Id. at 4. I agree.

By way of comment, Petitioner is without prejudice to reapply for SNAP benefits, if she has not already done so. Ibid.

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.      October 31, 2023

---

Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

