



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

SARAH ADELMAN
Commissioner

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
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 **04640-23 L.B.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C159694015 (OCEAN COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner Agency charges Respondent with committing an intentional program violation ("IPV") of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP"), and the Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") program. The Agency asserts that Respondent intentionally failed to accurately report her household income, while she received SNAP and WFNJ/TANF benefits, thereby causing Respondent to receive overissuances of benefits to which she was not entitled. Respondent was properly noticed of the SNAP and WFNJ Administrative Disqualification Hearings, the charges against her, and the proposed disqualification penalties, via certified mail, return receipt requested, on April 21, 2023. See Exhibit P-1 at 1, 2-3, 6-7. Because Respondent failed to execute and return either waiver of her right to a hearing, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing as a contested case. *Id.* at 4-5, 8-9. On June 27, 2023, the Honorable Tricia M. Caliguire, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. Respondent did not appear for the hearing, and the matter proceeded *ex parte*, which is permissible pursuant to our regulatory scheme. See N.J.A.C. 1:10-14.1(d). Respondent was given ten days to present good cause for her failure to appear. Respondent did not respond, and the record then closed on July 7, 2023.

On July 11, 2023, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, which found that the Agency had met its burden in establishing, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent had deliberately and intentionally withheld information from the Agency, which resulted in Respondent receiving an overissuance of SNAP and WFNJ/TANF benefits, to which she was not entitled. See Initial Decision at 5. The ALJ found that Respondent, while receiving SNAP and WFNJ/TANF benefits, deliberately and intentionally did not report changes in her household income, specifically, that she received unearned income in the form of monthly annuity checks, which resulted in an overissuance to Respondent in the amount of \$6,824 in SNAP benefits, for the periods of March, 2019, through August, 2019, and December, 2019, through January, 2021, and an overissuance of \$1,819 in WFNJ/TANF benefits, for the period beginning May, 2020, through September, 2020. *Id.* at 3-4, 5; see also Exhibits P-2, P-3, P-4, P-5, P-6, P-7; and N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.5, -9.5, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.9(c), -3.21(a)(1).



As this was the first IPV committed by Respondent, the ALJ ordered the mandatory regulatory penalties of a 12-month disqualification from receipt of SNAP benefits, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.2(a)(1), and a 6-month disqualification from the WFNJ program, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:90-11.11(a)(1). See Initial Decision at 6.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have considered the Initial Decision in this matter, and following an independent evaluation of the record, I concur with the ALJ's decision, and hereby adopt the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law in this matter.

I direct that the Agency proceed to recoup the overissuances.

Accordingly, based upon the foregoing, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision in this matter, and ORDER that Respondent is disqualified from receipt of SNAP benefits for a period of 12 months, and from receipt of WFNJ benefits for a period of six months. I further ORDER that the Agency is to recoup the overissuances.

Officially approved final version. July 19, 2023

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

