



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 **08665-24 A.D.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C191058009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/TANF benefits, contending that Petitioner had failed to provide the documentation necessary to complete her application for said benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On October 8, 2024, the Honorable Ernest M. Bongiovanni, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On October 10, 2024, 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 reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby MODIFY the ALJ's Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determinations, based on the discussion below.

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner applied for WFNJ/TANF on February 22, 2024, and was interviewed by the Agency via telephone on February 26, 2024. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-3. On February 26, 2024, the Agency mailed Petitioner correspondence, requesting, among other documents, a signed Agreement to Repay form, which was required to complete the processing of Petitioner's application. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. Petitioner testified that she may or may not have received the Agency's letter, however, she submitted some of the documents requested by the due date included on the correspondence. See Initial Decision at 4. A deadline of March 18, 2024, was set for the return of all requested documentation, but Petitioner failed to submit the entirety of the documentation by the deadline. See Initial Decision at 3. The Agency thereafter denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/TANF benefits on April 18, 2024, for failure to provide information. See Initial Decision at 3-4. Petitioner did receive, at the same address used for prior Agency correspondence, the Agency's Notice of Denial letter of March 25, 2024, which prompted Petitioner to begin a new WFNJ/TANF application and to complete and submit an Agreement to Repay form during April, 2024. Ibid. Petitioner has been receiving WFNJ/TANF benefits since May 2024. See Initial Decision at 3.

In order to determine eligibility for WFNJ/TANF benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5) (stating that "As a condition of eligibility for WFNJ benefits, the applicant shall, subject to good cause exceptions, be required to provide all necessary documentation."). Based on the credible testimony and documentary evidence provided, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had not provided the documentation required to be submitted to complete her application, and as such, the Agency's denial of WFNJ/TANF benefits to Petitioner, based upon her February 22, 2024 application, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4-6; see also Exhibit R-4, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5). Based on an independent review of the record, I agree, but the Initial Decision is modified to



correct the use of GA ("General Assistance") throughout the text of the Initial Decision, as Petitioner was denied WFNJ/TANF benefits, due to her household including six members, and not GA benefits, which are only available to individuals and couples without dependents.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby MODIFIED, and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. October 31, 2024

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

