



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 **01338-24 E.T.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C079522015 (OCEAN COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner EA benefits, contending that she had exhausted her lifetime limit of EA benefits, plus all available extensions, and did not qualify for a further extension of EA benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On February 7, 2024, the Honorable Sarah G. Crowley, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

On February 8, 2024, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination. Here, the ALJ found, Petitioner acknowledged, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner has received 42 months of EA benefits, which included numerous extensions, and as such, she has exhausted her lifetime limit of EA benefits, and did not qualify for any further extension of any kind. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-3, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (d). Of note, the record also reflects that Petitioner did not meet the criteria for an extension of EA benefits under the Emergency Assistance for Special Groups ("EASG") pilot program. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibits R-1, R-7, and the State of New Jersey Senate Bill, No. S866, P.L. 2018, c. 164, effective December 20, 2018 ("S866"), now codified at N.J.S.A. 44:10-51(a)(3), also known as EASG (extending EA benefits eligibility for certain categories of individuals, including, but not limited to WFNJ recipients who are permanently disabled, as documented by a twelve-month MED-1 Form, and Supplemental Security Income benefits recipients), and Division of Family Development Instruction ("DFDI") No. 19-02-01. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1. I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, DFD, Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, I concur with the ALJ's final conclusion in this matter and hereby ADOPT the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law.

By way of comment, the transmittal in this matter also indicates a contested issue regarding the Agency's denial of EA benefits on the basis that Petitioner had failed to verify that her emergent situation was due to circumstances beyond her control. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. However, the ALJ found that the Agency had withdrawn its denial of EA benefits to Petitioner on that basis, and as such, that issue is moot, and not addressed in the Initial Decision. See Initial Decision at 2. Therefore, that issue has also not been addressed in this Final Agency Decision.

By way of further comment, the Agency shall refer Petitioner to any and all agencies and organizations that may be able to assist with her current needs, including Social Services for the Homeless.



Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED.

Officially approved final version. February 21, 2024

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

