



State of New Jersey

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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 **14084-23 J.P.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C279338009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Petitioner's application for an extreme hardship extension of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner an extension of EA benefits, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that she failed to comply with her EA service plan ("SP"). Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On January 5, 2024, the Honorable Susana E. Guerrero, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary telephonic hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

On January 8, 2024, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's denial off EA benefits and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits. Here, the record reflects that Petitioner has received 12 months of EA benefits, and as such, she has exhausted her lifetime of EA benefits, which is not at issue here. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 5. Petitioner then applied for an extreme hardship extension of EA benefits. Ibid. The record also reflects that Petitioner had executed an SP wherein she agreed, among other things, to provide the Agency with proof of 40 job searches per month, proof of her PSE&G bills, and proof of applications for public and Section 8 housing. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 8-9. Petitioner admitted that she had failed to provide such proofs, and based on the credible testimony of the Agency, as well as the documentary evidence provided, the ALJ found that Petitioner had failed to comply with her SP when she failed to provide said aforementioned proofs, without good cause. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-1 at 1, 10, 15-17, 18-21. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of an extension of EA benefits to Petitioner, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1 at 1, 4-7, 8-9, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, 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, Petitioner's six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall run from November 22, 2023, the date of the Agency's denial, through May 22, 2024. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 1.

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 in this matter is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED.



Officially approved final version. January 23, 2024

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

