



# State of New Jersey

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DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
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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 **03179-22 D.C.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C066776009 (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 WFNJ/TANF benefits, contending that she could not verify the blood relationship and/or guardianship status of the dependent children that resided with her. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On May 12, 2022, the Honorable Julio C. Morejon, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

On May 18, 2022, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination. Here, the ALJ found that the children's familial/blood relationship to Petitioner was established by the Superior Court of New Jersey on January 18, 2022, when it awarded sole legal and residential custody of the two minor children to Petitioner, recognizing her as the children's second cousin, and as such, also found that Petitioner clearly met the WFNJ/TANF "parent-person" "living together and functioning as one economic unit" eligibility requirements set out in N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.7(a)(1), (3). See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-5. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ found that the Agency could not deny Petitioner WFNJ/TANF benefits on the basis that she could not verify her blood relationship to and/or guardianship status of the dependent children. See Initial Decision at 4-6; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.7(a)(1), (3). Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of WFNJ/TANF benefits to Petitioner was improper and must be reversed. See Initial Decision at 6; see also Exhibit R-1. 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 in this matter.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision in this matter is hereby ADOPTED and the Agency's determination is REVERSED.

Officially approved final version.

May 25, 2022

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

