



## State of New Jersey

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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 **01794-22 R.W.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C151250020 (UNION COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits in the form of a furniture voucher. The Agency denied Petitioner said EA benefits, contending that he did not have an emergent situation, and that his loss of furniture was not the result of a natural disaster. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On April 1, 2022, the Honorable Evelyn J. Marose, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. The record remained open until April 4, 2022, for the submission of documents relating to the denial of benefits and then closed.

On April 6, 2022, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination. Here, the ALJ found, and the Agency acknowledged, that in December 2020, and January 2021, Petitioner had received a total of two furniture vouchers, and that, in accordance with the relevant regulatory authority, Petitioner had qualified for a third furniture voucher. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibits R-5 through R-7, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(a)(4). Petitioner applied for his third furniture voucher in November 2021. See Initial Decision at 2-4. Nevertheless, the Agency denied Petitioner a third furniture voucher, contending that he had not requested said voucher for living room furniture (couch) until many months after the occurrence of his December 2020, emergent situation, and that he must now demonstrate that a new emergency had occurred in order to be eligible for his third furniture voucher. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-3. The ALJ found that applicable regulatory authority did not require that Petitioner experience a new emergent situation in order to be eligible for a third furniture voucher, and moreover, that Petitioner had good cause, more specifically, rodent and bug infestation which had not been resolved until November 2021, which had kept him from requesting the third furniture voucher until such time as said infestations had been resolved. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(a)(4). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner in the form of a furniture voucher was improper and must be reversed. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-3. 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.

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

Officially approved final version.

April 28, 2022

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

