



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 **11508-25 A.H.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C071606006 (CUMBERLAND COUNTY BD OF SOC SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of her application for Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits, contending that Petitioner had failed to provide information and documentation necessary to determine eligibility. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On August 27, 2025, the Honorable Robert D. Herman, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony and admitted documents. The record was then held open until August 29, 2025 for the submission of documents, and the record was closed on that date. On September 3, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination.

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner completed an application for SNAP benefits, on behalf of herself and her two minor children, aged sixteen and fourteen, on May 14, 2025. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-2 at 1. Thereafter, the Agency denied Petitioner's application, citing the Petitioner's failure to provide requested information pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.14. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1 at 2. At the time of her application, Petitioner had received a "conditional offer" of employment, which was provided to the Agency. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibits R-1 at 9, 18 and R-3 at 2. On May 21, 2025, the Agency requested further information and documentation, specifically an employer letter including her hourly rate, hours per week, and frequency of her pay, a Schedule C tax form for Petitioner's company or bookkeeping records for the past year, and an employer letter from her child's employer as well as student verification (school schedule/student identification). See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit R-1 at 8. Petitioner submitted the requested tax information, a letter from her new employer, and her minor child's school records. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibits R-1 at 2, 7, 9, and 11 and R-3 at 2. Petitioner did not provide a copy of her minor child's paystubs. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit R-1 at 7. On June 13, 2025, the Agency denied Petitioner's SNAP benefits application, due to her failure to provide the requested number of hours worked and payment rate necessary to calculate her income, as well as her failure to provide pay stubs for her minor child. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit R-1 at 2. At the time of the hearing, Petitioner provided testimony that at the time of her SNAP application, and thereafter, she was in training due to the offer of employment and was not receiving any earned income. See Initial Decision at 6. Further, Petitioner testified that she was released from the employer before receiving any income. Ibid.

In order to determine eligibility for SNAP benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required, such as household income, including both earned and unearned income. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.14, -2.19, -2.20. Without said verification of required information, SNAP eligibility cannot be determined or granted. Ibid.



As to the failure of Petitioner to provide her minor child's paystubs, as the minor child is a full-time student living within the SNAP household, the minor child's wages should not be included for income calculation purposes. See Initial Decision at 9; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.9(a)(12), -10.2(b)(3). Therefore, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner was not required to provide the information/documentation requested to determine eligibility, and as such, the Agency's denial of SNAP benefits based upon the failure to submit her minor child's paystubs was improper and must not stand. See Initial Decision at 9; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.14, -2.20. I agree.

As to Petitioner providing her own income information or documentation, the ALJ found that Petitioner provided information from Petitioner's perspective employer, through the conditional employment letter, including an anticipated start date, hourly rate upon hire, and hours per week. See Initial Decision at 10. On May 21, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner a Request for Verification seeking further information regarding Petitioner's employment. See Initial Decision at 11; see also Exhibit R-1 at 8. Petitioner thereafter provided the letter, although the date on which submission was made may be unclear, prior to the date of the Agency's denial. See Initial Decision at 11; see also Exhibit R-1 at 2. The ALJ found that submission of the letter by Petitioner fulfilled the Request for Verification made by the Agency and that the Agency was unable to proffer any reasonable explanation as to why there was no further outreach to Petitioner for further explanation regarding her employment and/or the letter submitted to the Agency. See Initial Decision at 11. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner acted reasonably and timely in fulfilling the Agency's request and as such, the Agency's denial of SNAP benefits based upon the failure to submit employer/income information was improper and must not stand. See Initial Decision at 11-12; see also Exhibit R-1 at 2, and N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.14, -2.20. I also 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 subsequently began receiving SNAP benefits, and her case is currently active. Based upon the outcome of this matter, the Agency shall process retroactive benefits from the date of her initial application of May 14, 2025, until July 8, 2025 (the date of benefits approval contained in the July 14, 2025 notification). See Initial Decision at 12; see also Exhibit R-2, R-1 at 15.

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

Officially approved final version. September 26, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

