



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 **11918-24 A.N.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S975546009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM 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 November 14, 2024, the Honorable Mumtaz Bari-Brown, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony and admitted documents. Following completion of the hearing, OAL staff advised the ALJ that the recording equipment had seemingly malfunctioned. As a result, a supplemental proceeding was scheduled for December 10, 2024, in order to reconstruct the record. On that date, the Agency representative appeared, but Petitioner did not. No additional testimony was presented and the record closed on that date. On December 16, 2024, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

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 hereby MODIFY the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

Based on an independent review of the record, Petitioner filed an application for SNAP benefits on April 1, 2024. See Exhibit R-1. On that application, Petitioner indicated that she was an employed college student. Ibid. The record further shows that an Agency representative spoke with Petitioner on or about April 10, 2024, not September 10, 2024, as stated in the Initial Decision, to discuss her application, and the Agency case notes state "pending proof of income." Ibid. On November 15, 2024, the Agency denied Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits for failure to provide required information. Ibid. In order to determine eligibility for SNAP benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required, such as household income, both earned and unearned income, as well as residency. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.19, -2.20. Without said verification of required information, SNAP eligibility cannot be determined or granted. Ibid. Additionally, Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits indicates that she is a college student, however, it is unclear if Petitioner meets the regulatory eligibility criteria applicable to college students. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-3.14(d) and Division of Family Development Instruction No. 19-01-06. While Petitioner states that she never received any notice requesting necessary documentation, the record does show that an Agency representative spoke with Petitioner to discuss her application, and that income verification was "pending." See Exhibit R-1. The ALJ found that Petitioner had not provided the requested information required to be verified to determine eligibility, and as such, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of SNAP benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.19,



-2.20. Based on an independent review of the record, as outlined above, I agree. The Initial Decision is modified to reflect these findings.

By way of comment, Petitioner is without prejudice to reapply for SNAP benefits, if she has not already done so, but must provide all information and documentation requested in order to determine eligibility.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby MODIFIED, and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. January 17, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

