



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 **07922-25 A.P.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C231117020 (UNION COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner challenges the Respondent Agency's calculation of the amount of his Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. Petitioner contends that the Agency should have considered whether he is entitled to retroactive benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On July 14, 2025, the Honorable Leslie Z. Celentano, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), began the plenary hearing, at which time Petitioner testified that the issue was not regarding calculation of benefits, but rather seeking retroactive benefits for a one-month time lapse when the Agency was unable to contact him regarding his SNAP benefits. The hearing continued on July 30, 2025, at which time the ALJ took testimony and admitted documents into evidence. On August 14, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination that Petitioner is not entitled to retroactive SNAP benefits.

Here, the record reflects that the Agency began Petitioner's recertification for SNAP benefits on January 23, 2025, when an Agency representative attempted to schedule an interview with Petitioner via telephone. See Initial Decision at 2. Being unable to reach Petitioner via telephone, the Agency representative sent a letter requesting a return phone call, however, the letter was returned to the Agency, marked "unable to deliver" on February 3, 2025. Ibid. With no other means to contact Petitioner, the SNAP case closed. Ibid.

Thereafter, on April 1, 2025, Petitioner applied for SNAP benefits, which were immediately issued by the Agency. See Initial Decision at 2. Petitioner informed the Agency he had moved during June, 2024, however, the documentation presented to the Agency, including a housing authority letter from July, 2024, confirmed the address that the Agency used in attempting to contact Petitioner regarding his benefits recertification. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-1. Petitioner never informed the Agency of any address change, nor telephone number change, as was his responsibility under the applicable regulatory authority. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.19, -2.22, -9.5. Based on the record presented, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had not demonstrated that he is entitled to retroactive benefits, as he failed to timely provide the Agency with his updated contact information. See Initial Decision at 3; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.14, -2.19, -2.22. I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

As the Assistant Commissioner of the 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 ADOPT the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision in this matter is hereby ADOPTED and the Agency determination is AFFIRMED.



Officially approved final version. September 04, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

