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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 **09748-25 B.H.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C132890008** (**GLOUCESTER COUNTY DIV. OF SOC. SVCS.**)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits, contending that Petitioner's countable household income exceeded the maximum permissible level for receipt of said benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On July 18, 2025, the Honorable Tama B. Hughes, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony and admitted documents. On July 31, 2025, 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 ("DFD"), Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, the ALJ's Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED and the Agency determination is AFFIRMED, based on the discussion below.

Regulatory authority applicable to SNAP benefit cases, defines income as "all income from whatever source unless such income is specifically excluded." See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.3. "Earned income" is defined, in pertinent part, as "[a]ll wages and salaries received as compensation for services performed as an employee[.]" See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.4(a)(1). In order to determine an applicant's eligibility for SNAP, the applicant's income and resources must be below a certain threshold. N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(d)(2), states that households that do not contain an elderly or permanently disabled household member must meet both the gross income test, as well as the net income test, meaning that the respective income amounts must be below the established standards. See also N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.3, -12.4.

Gross income is determined by adding together the household's monthly earned and unearned income, minus any earned income exclusions. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(b), (b)(1). That total gross income amount is then utilized to determine a household's SNAP eligibility in accordance with N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(d)(1) and (2). The maximum allowable gross income level for a household of three persons for SNAP benefits eligibility is $3,981. See DFD Instruction ("DFDI") 24-10-04 at 14.

Here, the record reflects that on April 25, 2025, a member of Petitioner's three-person household, C.R., phoned the Agency to report that he had begun working and provided his hourly pay and hours worked per week, which resulted in a newly reported household earned income of $4,680 per month. See Initial Decision at 2, 8. Based upon the amount reported, the Agency requested paystubs or a letter from C.R.'s employer indicating start date, hours worked per week, and hourly rate in order to verify the information for continued SNAP eligibility. See Initial Decision at 2, 9; see also Exhibit R-1 at 12. No documentation was submitted to the Agency and, on May 16, 2025, an Agency representative phoned Petitioner to advise that no employer verification or paystubs were received, and that the SNAP case would be

closed without such documentation. See Initial Decision at 3, 9; see also Exhibit R-1 at 4. The Agency representative testified that, during the call on May 16, 2025, Petitioner confirmed C.R. worked 40 hours per week, at an hourly rate of $27 per hour, or $1,080 weekly, totaling $4,680 monthly. Ibid. The Agency never received any of the requested documentation and on June 1, 2025, the household's SNAP benefits were terminated. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.4, -5.5, -5.7, -5.10, -6.9. In addition to C.R.'s earned income, the household additionally received unearned income in the amount of $559 per month in Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits, which was adjusted accordingly within regulatory guidelines following the report of C.R.'s employment and earned income. See Initial Decision at 2-4. After June 1, 2025, Petitioner did provide two paystubs to the Agency, from pay period May 5, 2025 to May 18, 2025, and from pay period May 19, 2025 to June 1, 2025, both of which included hours worked, gross pay and year-to-date gross amounts. See Initial Decision at 10. The weekly pay amount, as previously provided via telephone, was substantiated by the paystubs. Ibid. There is no indication in the record that Petitioner, or anyone in the SNAP household, is handicapped, disabled or elderly, and as such, the household must meet the both the gross and net income tests for SNAP eligibility. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.34(a)(1), (2), and N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(d)(1), (2). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ found that Petitioner's household failed to meet the gross income test, which ended the Agency's analysis regarding eligibility for SNAP benefits. See Initial Decision at 4, 11. Accordingly, the ALJ found that the Agency's termination of SNAP benefits to was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 11. I agree.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision in this matter is hereby ADOPTED and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. September 03, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner