



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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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 13764-25 B.S.

AGENCY DKT. NO. S552751009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits, at recertification. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for SNAP benefits, at recertification, contending that Petitioner failed to provide the Agency with required income verification in a timely manner pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:87-2.27. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On September 22, 2025, the Honorable Mumtaz Bari-Brown, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On October 15, 2025 the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination.

Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received from the Agency on October 27, 2025.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby MODIFY the ALJ's Initial Decision, REVERSE the Agency's determination, and REMAND the matter to the Agency, based on the discussion below.

Here, the record reveals that, on May 30, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner a Request for Verification Form requesting information as to how he was meeting his expenses without income. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. On July 3, 2025, the Agency denied Petitioner's SNAP benefits, effective July 31, 2025. Ibid. At the time of the hearing, Petitioner testified that he provided the information requested to the Agency, via email, and provided confirmation of his email, sent June 22, 2025, and the attached written statement as to his financial situation. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit P-1.

Based upon the credible testimonial and documentary evidence presented, the ALJ found that Petitioner had submitted the documentation requested to the Agency. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also Exhibit P-1. Accordingly, the ALJ reversed the Agency's denial. Ibid. I note that in order to reject the ALJ's finding of fact as to the issue of Petitioner's credibility, the credibility finding would have to be arbitrary, capricious or unreasonable, or not supported by sufficient, competent and credible evidence in the record. N.J.S.A. 52:14B-10(c); N.J.A.C. 1:1-18.6(c). I do not find that to be the case in this instance.

As I agree with the ALJ's ultimate conclusion, I am therefore remanding this matter back to the Agency. The Agency shall expedite the substantive evaluation of the documentary evidence submitted into the record, at the time of the hearing, in this matter. See Exhibit P-1. Based on that evaluation, if Petitioner is determined to be eligible for SNAP benefits, Petitioner is to then be provided with retroactive SNAP benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-8.18. If documentation is lacking, the Agency shall directly contact Petitioner, who shall timely provide such requested documentation to the Agency within 15



days of such request. Should the substantive evaluation of the submitted documentary evidence result in another denial of SNAP benefits, Petitioner may request another fair hearing on that substantive denial. The Initial Decision is modified to reflect these findings.

By way of comment, I have reviewed the Agency's Exceptions, and find that the arguments made therein do not alter my decision in this matter as to whether or not Petitioner submitted the requested documentation.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby MODIFIED, the Agency's determination is REVERSED and the matter is REMANDED to the Agency for action, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. December 04, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

