



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 17892-24 C.L.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C145715002 (BERGEN COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of her Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits because Petitioner is an ineligible student. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On March 28, 2025, the Honorable Irene Jones, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On May 2, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination, and finding Petitioner eligible for SNAP benefits.

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner's household consists of herself and her adult son, both of whom are college students. See Initial Decision at 2. The Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits based upon their determination that Petitioner did not meet the requirements of N.J.A.C. 10:87-3.14, as Petitioner was not receiving federal work study, or employed twenty hours a week. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit P-1. Petitioner contended that her program of study is an approved program pursuant to Title 1 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act ("WIOA"), and that her enrollment was through the County One Stop Career Center. See Initial Decision at 2. At the hearing, a representative from the County One Stop Career Center testified that he inadvertently failed to document Petitioner's enrollment in the America's One Stop Operating System ("AOSOS"), which was the program the Agency reviewed when determining that Petitioner was not enrolled in an approved program, however, he further testified that the Agency could have verified Petitioner's enrollment in a WIOA program through two alternative sources. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits P-2, P-3. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:87-3.14(d)(7)(i-iv), a student may be in compliance if enrolled in a qualifying program, such as a program pursuant to Title 1 of the WIOA. In direct contrast to the testimony of the One Stop representative, the Agency contended that Petitioner is not enrolled in a WIOA program. See Initial Decision at 4. Based upon the testimony of the One Stop Career Center representative, the ALJ found that Petitioner was enrolled in a qualified WIOA program, and should therefore be considered eligible for SNAP benefits, reversing the Agency's termination of benefits. See Initial Decision at 4; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-3.14(d).

Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed by the Agency on May 5, 2025. The Exceptions assert contradictory facts, unsubstantiated by evidence put into the record, in contravention of N.J.A.C. 1:1-18.4(c) ("Evidence not presented at the hearing shall not be submitted as part of an exception, nor shall it be incorporated or referred to within exceptions."). It appears from the contradictory information contained in the Agency's Exceptions that the testimony provided by the One Stop Career Center employee at the time of the hearing may be inaccurate, as represented in the Exceptions by the employee's superior, such that the program at issue is not considered a qualifying WIOA program. Had the ALJ been presented with the facts raised in the Agency's Exceptions, properly substantiated through testimony and documentation, a different ultimate conclusion may have been made by the ALJ. Whether or not the program is, in fact, a qualified WIOA



program is the central issue in this matter. Failure to accurately and properly determine this issue could result in an overissuance of SNAP benefits to Petitioner, due to an ineligibility for same, for which Petitioner would be responsible to repay.

As such, I am remanding this matter to the OAL for further factfinding with the following directives. As the information in the Exceptions directly contradicts the testimony provided at the time of the hearing, and was not made available at the hearing, on remand, the Agency must produce evidence of the facts asserted in the Exceptions to the ALJ. Additionally, Petitioner, upon remand, is to provide an updated or revised SNAP-200 form.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have considered the record in this matter and the ALJ's Initial Decision, and having made an independent evaluation of the record, I REJECT the Initial Decision and REMAND the matter to the OAL for further fact finding.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is REJECTED and the matter is REMANDED to the OAL for further fact finding, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. June 06, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

