



State of New Jersey

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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 05528-25 D.S.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C887770007 (ESSEX COUNTY DIVISION OF WELFARE)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner WFNJ/TANF benefits because she had exhausted the 60-month lifetime limit for WFNJ benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On June 17, 2025, the Honorable William J. Courtney, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On that date, the matter was adjourned to July 11, 2025, to allow the Agency to gather further information concerning the matter, as Petitioner had originally received WFNJ/TANF in a different county. The hearing concluded and the record was closed on July 11, 2025. On July 15, 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, Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby ADOPT the ALJ's Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.3(a), "eligibility for cash assistance benefits shall be limited to a lifetime total of 60 cumulative months for an adult individual recipient." See also N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.1(d) ("Assistance benefits provided under WFNJ are time-limited and considered a temporary cash subsidy[.]"). However, an individual may receive additional months of cash assistance if he/she qualifies for an exemption from, or extension of, the time limit, as set forth at N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4 and -2.5 respectively. The goal of WFNJ is help the recipient achieve self-sufficiency through obtaining employment and removal from the program. See N.J.S.A. 44:10-62(a).

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner relocated from Middlesex County to Essex County during December, 2024, and applied for WFNJ/TANF benefits from Essex County on January 3, 2025. See Initial Decision at 2. At the time of her application, Petitioner had received a total of 85 months of WFNJ/TANF benefits, in addition to previous receipt of WFNJ/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits, and as such, she had exceeded the 60-month lifetime limit for receipt of WFNJ benefits. Ibid. The Agency denied Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF application on February 25, 2025. Ibid. During the hearing, Petitioner testified that she was a victim of domestic violence ("DV"), and should therefore be exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit for benefits. Ibid. A review of Petitioner's case file by the Agency did not indicate that Petitioner was a victim of DV, and the matter was adjourned to determine whether Petitioner may be eligible for benefits pursuant to the Family Violence Option ("FVO") Initiative. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-20.1(b)(1)(i). On June 17, 2025, the Agency arranged to have Petitioner interviewed in order to determine her eligibility for an FVO waiver, and the designated victim service representative concluded that Petitioner did not qualify for FVO participation. Ibid. Further, the Agency confirmed with



Middlesex County that the prior extension of benefits to Petitioner was granted due to a disability, and not due to an FVO waiver. See Initial Decision at 2-3. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ in this matter found that the Agency appropriately denied Petitioner WFNJ/TANF benefits as there was no evidence presented that Petitioner would qualify for an exemption from, or extension of, the lifetime limit of benefits. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4, -2.5. I agree.

By way of comment, should Petitioner's circumstances change, and she is able to present a 12-month MED-1 to the Agency, she is without prejudice to reapply for WFNJ/TANF benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4(a)(3).

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency's determinations are AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. August 27, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

