



## State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
PO BOX 716

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0716

SARAH ADELMAN  
*Commissioner*

TAHESHA L. WAY  
*Lt. Governor*

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 12757-25 M.P.

AGENCY DKT. NO. S644222012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that she refused appropriate shelter offered and failed to comply with her EA service plan ("SP"). Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On October 28, 2025, the Honorable Deirdre Hartman-Zohlman, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On October 28, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received from Petitioner on November 3, 2025.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development ("DFD"), 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 determinations, based on the discussion below.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(a)(1), the "agency shall determine the most appropriate form of emergency housing which is required to address the need and authorize payment of the costs of adequate emergency shelter/housing, taking into consideration individual/family circumstances and services provided." Such emergency housing may include placement in a shelter. *Ibid.*

Here, Petitioner was receiving EA benefits, and had executed service plans ("SPs") on January 29, 2025 and May 8, 2025, wherein she agreed, among other things, to accept placements as offered by the Agency, and to complete affordable housing searches in her endeavor to find permanent housing. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibits R-1, R-3, and N.J.A.C. 10:90- 6.3(a)(1), -6.6(a). The Agency offered Petitioner two separate rooming homes, both of which Petitioner refused. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibits R-5, R-6. Thereafter, by notice dated June 30, 2025, the Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, effective July 31, 2025, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty due to her EA placement refusals and failure to comply with the terms of her SP. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-8.

Based on the testimony and record provided, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(a)(1). -6.6(a). I agree.



By way of comment, I have reviewed Petitioner's Exceptions, and I find that the arguments made therein do not alter my decision in this matter.

By way of further comment, because Petitioner has received continued assistance pending the outcome of this fair hearing, her six-month EA penalty will begin to run as of the date of the issuance of this Final Agency Decision.

By way of final comment, the Agency shall refer Petitioner to any and all agencies and organizations that may be able to assist with her current needs, including Social Services for the Homeless.

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

Officially approved final version. December 17, 2025

---

Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

