



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 13297-25 S.S.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C131407003 (BURLINGTON COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits, contending that she failed to cooperate with child support requirements. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On November 3, 2025, the Honorable Joan M. Burke, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. Following the hearing, the record was held open to allow for the submission of documentation by Petitioner, however, no such documentation was submitted, and the record was closed on November 6, 2025. On November 20, 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 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. 10:90-16.2, the first step in the application process for WFNJ/TANF eligibility, is cooperation with the child support requirements set out in N.J.A.C. 10:90-16.3, and the good faith effort requirement set out in N.J.A.C. 10:90-16.4. WFNJ/TANF applicants and recipients are required to make a good faith effort to identify the non-custodial parent and failing to make such effort shall make an applicant/recipient ineligible for WFNJ benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(d).

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner, a recipient of WFNJ/TANF benefits, informed the Agency of the birth of a new child on January 26, 2025. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-A. In order to add the child to her case, Petitioner provided the Agency a copy of the baby's crib card, as well as a social security number. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-B. The child support unit requested information from Petitioner in order to fulfill her obligation to the Agency regarding cooperation with child support and, in response, Petitioner provided minimal information. See Initial Decision at 4. On April 4, 2025, the Petitioner signed an Affidavit of Cooperation and on May 5, 2025, the Child Support Unit mailed Petitioner a Notice to Meet Ongoing Child Support Requirements, requesting information to allow the Agency to contact the non-custodial parent, however, no response was received. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-C. Petitioner provided the Agency with a name and address for the non-custodial parent, after which the Agency conducted a search at the address provided and determined that no one by the name given resided at the address. See Initial Decision at 4. The Agency therefore concluded that Petitioner failed to provide sufficient information to locate the non-custodial parent. Ibid. On July



2, 2025, the Agency notified Petitioner she was no longer eligible for WFNJ/TANF benefits, effective August 1, 2025, due to her non-cooperation. See Exhibit R-D; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-16.2.

At the hearing, Petitioner maintained that it is not her fault the Agency could not locate the non-custodial parent. See Initial Decision at 4. The ALJ found, however, that the testimonial and documentary evidence presented supported the Agency's determination that Petitioner had failed to cooperate with the Agency's Child Support Unit, and as such, the termination of Petitioner's WFNJ/TANF benefits, effective August 1, 2025, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also Exhibit R-D. I agree.

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

Officially approved final version. December 31, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

