



State of New Jersey

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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 15998-25 S.S.

AGENCY DKT. NO. S629200012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's SNAP benefits, contending that she failed to timely provide verifications as requested and required to determine her eligibility for continued SNAP benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On November 19, 2025, the Honorable Joan M. Burke, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony and admitted documents. On November 21, 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 considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, the ALJ's Initial Decision is hereby MODIFIED and the Agency determination is AFFIRMED, based on the discussion below.

Households determined eligible for SNAP benefits are certified for said benefits for a definite period of time. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.20. County Social Service Agencies ("CSSAs") assign the longest certification periods possible based upon the predictability of the household's circumstances. Ibid. N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.5(a) states, in pertinent part, "Simplified reporting cases consist of earned income and unearned income households. The certification period is for 12 months with a six-month interim contact." An Interim Reporting Form ("IRF") is sent to the household at the six-month interim contact point for a household with a 12-month certification period. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.5(a)(3). The CSSA shall mail the IRF to the SNAP benefits recipient in the fifth month. Ibid. If a change is reported on the IRF, the CSSA shall obtain the required

verification. Ibid. If the required verification is received timely, the case will continue the certification period until the 12th month. If the IRF is not received timely, the case shall go into suspension for a month. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.5(a)(3)(i). If no contact is made or the required verification is not received during the suspension month, the case will close. Ibid. An IRF must be completed in all cases. Ibid. If the recipient's case closes, a new application must be filed by the household in order to receive SNAP benefits. Ibid.

Here, the record reveals that the Agency sent Petitioner IRF on March 3, 2025, which was due to the Agency by April 15, 2025, or her SNAP case would close June 1, 2025. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1. On May 19, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner an Interim Reporting Closing Notice, informing her that her NJ SNAP benefits would end on June 1, 2025, due to her IRF not being returned to the Agency. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-3. Petitioner did not submit the IRF until May 28, 2025, only several days before Petitioner's SNAP case was due to close. See Exhibit R-1. The submitted IRF showed changes in income, both earned and unearned, as well household composition and



shelter expenses, which therefore required verification of information by the Agency. See Exhibit R-1; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.5(a)(3)(i). While some supporting documentation was submitted on May 30, 2025, adequate substantiating documentation with respect to one particular employer was not submitted. See Exhibit R-6; see also Initial Decision at 4. Petitioner contacted the Agency on July 10, 2025, after receiving a letter, terminating her SNAP benefits, and provided the required verification from the remaining employer. See Exhibit R-4. The Agency then informed Petitioner that she would have to submit a new application for SNAP benefits, as her SNAP benefits case had closed when the required verification documents had not been received. See Exhibits R-5, R-6; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.5(a)(3)(i). Petitioner then submitted a new application for SNAP benefits, and was approved as of July 11, 2025. See Exhibits R-6, R-7. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency correctly closed Petitioner's SNAP benefits case for failure to timely provide the required verifications for continued SNAP benefits eligibility. See Initial Decision at 2-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.5(a)(3)(i). I agree, but hereby modify the Initial Decision to include the applicable legal basis for timely submission of the IRF, as well as required verification due to changes reported in the IRF, as referenced above.

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

Officially approved final version. December 30, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

