



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

SARAH ADELMAN
Commissioner

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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 **09305-25 T.D.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C125910011 (MERCER COUNTY BOARD 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 failed to comply with several terms of her EA service plan ("SP"), including failing to pay her 30 percent share of her rent. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On June 2, 2025 the Honorable Dean J. Buono, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On June 3, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

Here, the record reflects that Petitioner executed an SP, wherein she agreed, among other things, to pay 30 percent of her monthly rent. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-2, R-3, R-7. However, Petitioner failed to pay her required portion of the rent, in violation of the terms of her SP, as well as failed to submit required housing searches. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibits R-2, R-3, R-7, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.5(a). As a result, the Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, effective May 21, 2025 and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-8, R-9, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). The ALJ found that Petitioner, while apologetic, did not refute any of the testimony against her, and offered no good cause for her failure to comply. See Initial Decision at 2-4. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. Id. at 4-5; see also Exhibits R-2, R-3, R-7, R-8, R-9 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3)(ix), -6.6(a). I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, I concur with the ALJ's final conclusion in this matter and hereby ADOPT the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law.

By way of comment, Petitioner's six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall run from May 22, 2025, the effective date of the EA termination, through November 22, 2025. See Exhibit R-8.

By way of further 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.



Officially approved final version. June 13, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

