



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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 **10034-25 T.M.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C228793020 (UNION COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner EA benefits, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that she abandoned her housing in New York ("NY"), and moved to New Jersey ("NJ") without a plan for permanent housing, thereby causing her own homelessness. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On June 12, 2025, the Honorable Patrice E. Hobbs, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. The record was held open to allow for the submission of documents by Petitioner, and closed the following day. On June 13, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

Here, the ALJ found that Petitioner had abandoned her employment and housing in NY, and had moved to NJ without a plan for employment or permanent housing. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits P-1, R-1. Petitioner applied for EA on May 27, 2025, and provided the Agency with a letter from her mother stating she could not live with her for personal and household reasons, without any further specificity or explanation. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. While the Agency provided testimony that Petitioner had left her NY apartment to care for her mother, who was sick, during August 2024, the Petitioner provided documentation from her landlord stating she vacated the apartment due to an eviction proceeding. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit P-1. The ALJ concluded that Petitioner left NY without any plan and did not provide the Agency with sufficient proof as to why she could not reside with her mother. See Initial Decision at 3. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had caused her own homelessness, without good cause, and as such, the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner, and its imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. *Id.* at 3-4; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3)(vii). 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, 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 17, 2025

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

