State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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STEPHEN CHA, MD, MHSR
Commissioner

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 **09425-26 A.D.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S720162009** (**HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS**)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of her Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits due to Petitioner's failure to participate with the mandatory Supportive Assistance to Individuals and Families ("SAIF") program. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On August 14, 2026, the Honorable Mindy Gensler, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. Following the hearing, the record was reopened to admit two spreadsheets from the Agency into evidence and then closed again on August 17, 2026. On September 4, 2026, 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, 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.

The SAIF program assists eligible WFNJ recipients to become self-sufficient before they exhaust their 60-month WFNJ lifetime limit. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(a). The 24-month program offers intensive case management to individuals who have received 48 months of WFNJ benefits, who have complied with WFNJ requirements, have not become self-sufficient, and who do not appear to be exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit under N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4. Ibid. SAIF participants are eligible for an extension of WFNJ cash benefits, social, and work support services for up to 12 additional months beyond the 60-month lifetime limit, or a maximum of 72 months. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(c) and (g). Failure to begin, or continue to participate in an assigned activity, without good cause, shall be considered a refusal to cooperate and result in sanctioning and penalties being imposed, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13 through N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.18. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(f).

Here, the record reveals that on May 20, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner correspondence informing her that she was approaching her forty-eighth month of WFNJ/GA benefits and that she would be able to continue receipt of benefits through enrollment in the SAIF program. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. On October 28, 2025, the Agency additionally requested that Petitioner apply for, and participate in, the SAIF program. See Initial Decision at 3. As of October 2025, Petitioner had received 48 months of WFNJ/GA benefits, and she did not apply, nor fully participate, in the SAIF program as no application was ever submitted. Ibid. As a result, on December 1, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner a Notification Form advising that her WFNJ/GA benefits would be terminated for failure to participate in the SAIF program. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibit R-1.

On April 2, 2026, Petitioner submitted information to the Agency that she should be exempted from the work requirements of the WFNJ/GA benefits program, due to her age, at which time the Agency approved such exemption. See Initial Decision at 4.

The ALJ in this matter found that Petitioner had not provided any good cause for failing to comply with SAIF, and as such, the Agency's December 2025, termination of Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits was proper and must stand and Petitioner is not entitled to any retroactive benefits for the months between the termination and the subsequent approval in April 2026. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(f). I agree.

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

Officially approved final version. October 21, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner