



State of New Jersey

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0716

STEPHEN CHA, MD, MHSR
Commissioner

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
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 **08469-26 A.F.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C290551009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM SVCS)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, contending that she had exhausted her lifetime limit of EA benefits, and did not qualify for any further extension of EA benefits at the present time. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On July 21, 2026, the Honorable Gerard Hughes, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On July 28, 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 ("DFD"), Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussed below.

EA benefits are limited to 12 months, plus limited extensions for "extreme hardship" where the recipient has taken "all reasonable steps to resolve the emergent situation but the emergency nonetheless continues or a new emergency occurs, which causes extreme hardship to the family." See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (d); N.J.S.A. 44:10-51. Specifically, a Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") recipient may qualify for an additional six months of EA when an "extreme hardship" exists. Ibid. In the event the recipient's extreme hardship continues to exist at the expiration of the six-month extension period, an additional six months of EA may be provided. Ibid. Thus, the maximum amount of EA a WFNJ/TANF recipient may receive is 24 months.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner, a WFNJ/TANF benefits recipient, has received in excess of twenty-four months of EA benefits, including hardship extensions, which exceeds her lifetime limit of EA benefits, and that she currently does not qualify for any further extension of any kind. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (d). Petitioner did previously submit a MED-1 form; however, it was for a period shorter than 12 months, lasting from March 24, 2026 to September 24, 2026. Ibid. Of note, the record also reflects that, at the time of the EA termination in this matter, Petitioner did not meet the criteria for an extension of EA benefits under the Emergency Assistance for Special Groups ("EASG") program, as she had not submitted a completed MED-1 form indicating that she could not work for one-year, which is needed to establish permanent disability. Ibid.; see also State of New Jersey Senate Bill, No. S866, P.L. 2018, c. 164, effective December 20, 2018 ("S866"), now codified at N.J.S.A. 44:10-51(a)(3), also known as Emergency Assistance for Specific Groups ("EASG"), and extended pursuant to State of New Jersey Assembly Bill, No. 5549, which extends EA benefits eligibility for certain categories of



individuals, including, but not limited to WFNJ recipients who are permanently disabled, as documented by a twelve (12) month MED-1 Form, and Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits recipients. See Division of Family Development Instruction ("DFDI") No. 25-02-01. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of EA benefits to Petitioner was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. I agree.

By way of comment, should Petitioner's circumstances change, and she is able to present a 12-month MED-1 form to the Agency, she is without prejudice to reapply for EA benefits.

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, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. September 02, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

