



State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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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 **01899-26 B.H.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C264709009 (HUDSON COUNTY DEPT OF FAM 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, contending that he caused his own homelessness by signing a lease with rent in excess of his Section 8 housing voucher, and for failure to pay such excess rent. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On February 5, 2026, the Honorable Patrice E. Hobbs, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On February 5, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

Here, the record reflects that Petitioner was approved for a Section 8 housing voucher, on April 9, 2025, in the amount of \$3,000, and thereafter signed a lease, on April 14, 2025, which indicated his rent was \$3,800 per month, exclusive of the cost of water, sewer, trash, and renter's insurance. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. Beginning May 1, 2025, Petitioner was required to pay the additional amount of his rent of \$800, as outlined in his lease. See Exhibit R-1. Petitioner failed to pay said full rent for the months of May, June, July, August, and September, 2025, and thereafter, his landlord filed a complaint for non-payment of rent in the Superior Court Landlord/Tenant Division on September 11, 2025. Ibid. The record is unclear as to whether Petitioner has been evicted from his apartment. Ibid. Petitioner applied for EA benefits and, on January 7, 2026, the Agency denied such benefits, citing that the maximum rental amount approved by Section 8 was \$3,000, and Petitioner had entered into a lease for \$3,800, plus additional fees for water, sewer, trash, and renter's insurance, thus making him responsible for any monies due above the amount paid by Section 8. See Exhibit R-1.

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3) (stating, in relevant part, that EA benefits shall not be provided for a period of six months when an applicant "has caused his or her own homelessness, without good cause"). 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 his 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. February 10, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

