State of New Jersey

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Lt. Governor

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

AMENDED DECISION

OAL DKT. NO. HPW **16958-26 C.L.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C096863008** (**GLOUCESTER COUNTY DIV. OF SOC. SVCS.**)

A Final Agency Decision ("FAD") was issued in this matter on October 15, 2026. This Amended FAD is being issued to recognize receipt of Exceptions filed by the Petitioner's counsel, but not received, nor reviewed, by this office prior to the issuance of the FAD in this case.

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 voluntarily quit her employment, thereby causing her own homelessness. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On October 6, 2026, the Honorable William T. Cooper III, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On October 7, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received on October 15, 2026.

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 determinations, based on the discussion below.

N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3) states, in pertinent part, that EA benefits shall not be provided for a period of six months "when an actual or imminent state of homelessness exists as a direct result of the voluntary cessation of employment by the adult member without good cause," including situations in which an applicant has been discharged from employment due to an action or inaction on his or her part in violation of the employer's written rules or policies, or lawful job related instructions. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.15.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner voluntarily ceased employment, and from that time to the present has remained unemployed. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibit R-1. Based on the testimony and evidence presented, the ALJ found that Petitioner's homelessness was a direct result of her voluntary cessation of employment, without good cause. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.14(c). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner caused her own emergent situation, and as such, further concluded that the Agency's denial of EA benefits to Petitioner, 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). I agree.

By way of comment, Petitioner is advised that the six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall run through February 6, 2027. See Exhibit R-1 at 5-6.

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.

By way of final comment, I have reviewed the Exceptions submitted on behalf of Petitioner, and I find that the arguments made therein do not alter my decision in this matter. Petitioner's counsel is reminded that, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 1:10-12.2(a)(5), Exceptions in an emergent matter must be made to the Division of Family Development no later than the first business day following the issuance of the Initial Decision.

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