



State of New Jersey

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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 **20465-25 H.L.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C073162008 (GLOUCESTER COUNTY DIV. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits application, contending that Petitioner failed to provide information necessary to determine eligibility for said benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On February 20, 2026, the Honorable Carl V. Buck III, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. On March 12, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing the Agency's determination.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and REVERSE Agency's determinations, based on the discussion below.

An applicant for WFNJ benefits may be required to apply for various benefits including Supplemental Security Income ("SSI"). N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.12. An applicant who refuses or neglects to apply for these benefits within 30 days of written notification, without good cause, shall be ineligible to receive cash assistance. N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.12.

In order to determine eligibility for WFNJ benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2. Eligibility for WFNJ/GA benefits requires the applicant to provide all necessary documentation. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5) (stating that "As a condition of eligibility for WFNJ benefits, the applicant shall, subject to good cause exceptions, be required to provide all necessary documentation.").

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner completed an application for WFNJ/GA benefits on September 9, 2025. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. On September 12, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner a request for additional information, specifically requesting an update regarding his SSI application, and information regarding payments made to him by his mother, which information was due to the Agency by September 26, 2025. Ibid. On September 25, 2025, Petitioner supplied a letter from his mother, as well as a letter from the Social Security Administration ("SSA"), dated July 8, 2025, which acknowledged that Petitioner was represented by legal counsel in his SSI claim/appeal. Ibid. Such acknowledgement of counsel in the SSI claim clearly signifies that the appeal is proceeding and constitutes an appropriate update of the matter. The record further reflects that, on May 15, 2025, the Agency had also been advised of Petitioner's representation by counsel in his SSI claim/appeal. Ibid. On October 9, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner notification that his WFNJ/GA application was denied for failure to provide information. Ibid.



Here, the ALJ found that Petitioner supplied the requested letter from his mother, as well as the most recent correspondence from the SSA, and that Petitioner believed he had complied with the requests of the Agency to fulfill the obligations set forth in N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5). See Initial Decision at 5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.12. Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency should process his WFNJ/GA application based upon the documentation submitted and issue an eligibility determination. Ibid. I agree, and as such, I direct that the Agency is to expeditiously review Petitioner's WFNJ/GA application and, if Petitioner is found to be eligible for the receipt of benefits, is to issue benefits retroactive to the date of his application. Should Petitioner be denied WFNJ/GA benefits, based upon the review of his application, Petitioner is without prejudice to request another fair hearing on that substantive denial.

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

Officially approved final version. May 07, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

