



# State of New Jersey

MIKIE SHERRILL  
*Governor*

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 14614-25 H.M.

AGENCY DKT. NO. S574522012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, contending that he failed to comply with his EA service plan ("SP"). Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. The hearing in this matter was initially scheduled for November 25, 2025, however, an adjournment was granted to allow for Petitioner to become compliant with his SP. Petitioner did not come into compliance, and on January 26, 2025, the Honorable Deirdre Hartman-Zohlman, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On February 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 considered the ALJ's Initial Decision, and following an independent review of the record, I hereby MODIFY the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

The purpose of EA is to meet the emergent needs of public assistance recipients, such as imminent homelessness, so that the recipient can participate in work activities without disruption and continue on a path to self-sufficiency. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(a). In order to maintain eligibility for EA benefits, the recipient must take reasonable steps to resolve his or her emergent situation. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Reasonable steps include, but are not limited to, the EA benefits recipient participating in the development of, and complying with, a written and signed SP. Ibid. Failure to comply with the requirements identified in the SP, without good cause, shall result in the termination of EA benefits and the imposition of a six-month period of EA ineligibility. Ibid.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner executed an SP, and EA verification list, on April 15, 2025, wherein he agreed, among other things, to submit proof of weekly housing searches and attend case review meetings with his Agency representative. See Initial Decision at 2-5; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-6, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). The ALJ found that Petitioner had not submitted any housing searches for 10 weeks, and that he failed to attend his scheduled case review at the Agency. See Initial Decision at 3. Thereafter, the Agency notified Petitioner that his EA benefits would terminate for failure to comply with his SP. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-6. Based on the facts presented, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4. I agree.

A review of the July 31, 2025 termination notice indicates that the following language was included, "N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a) Failure to comply with the mandatory activities of the service plan without good cause shall result in the termination of



EA benefits for a period of 6 months.” See Exhibit R-6. In addition, the SP and verification list include language that put Petitioner on notice regarding the imposition of a six-month period of EA ineligibility for failing to comply with the terms therein. See Exhibits R-2, R-3. Therefore, as I agree with the ALJ’s conclusion, that the EA termination was proper, in accordance with regulatory authority set forth at N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a), and that Petitioner received notice that the disqualification may be made due to non-compliance with his SP, I hereby also affirm the Agency’s imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty upon Petitioner. See Exhibits R-2, R-3, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). The Initial Decision is modified to reflect this finding.

By way of comment, as Petitioner has received continued benefits pending the fair hearing, Petitioner’s six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall begin to run upon issuance of this Final Agency Decision.

By way of further 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 MODIFIED, and the Agency’s determination is AFFIRMED, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. March 24, 2026

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

