



State of New Jersey

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DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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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 **07019-26 H.T.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C167279015 (OCEAN COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Emergency Assistance benefits ("EA"). The Agency denied Petitioner's application for EA benefits, contending that he had exhausted his 12-month lifetime limit of EA benefits, plus all available hardship extensions and does not qualify for any further extension. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On May 11, 2026, the Honorable Kim C. Belin, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On May 12, 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 hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

Under the Work First New Jersey ("WFNJ") regulations, EA benefits are limited to 12 cumulative months during the lifetime of a case, plus limited extensions. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a) and -6.4(b). A WFNJ/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("TANF") recipient may qualify for up to two six-month extensions of EA benefits when an "extreme hardship" exists pursuant to the criteria set forth in N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(b)(1). See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(d). Thus, the maximum amount of EA benefits that a WFNJ/TANF benefits recipient may receive is 24 months.

Here, the record reveals that, as of February, 2021, Petitioner had received twelve months of EA benefits, and that, thereafter, he received two hardship extensions, through February, 2022. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-2. Petitioner then applied for an additional extension pursuant to the Emergency Assistance for Specific Groups ("EASG") program. See Initial Decision at 4; 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 recently 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 who are at least 18 years of age. See Division of Family Development Instruction ("DFDI") No. 25-02-01. The Agency denied Petitioner's EASG application, finding he was ineligible for any such extension. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1.



Following the testimonial and documentary evidence presented at the hearing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner did not qualify for any of the specified EASG groups for whom additional benefits may be made available. See Initial Decision at 2-4. Additionally, while Petitioner's daughter receives SSI benefits, she is under the age of eighteen, and therefore is ineligible for an EASG extension. See DFDI 25-02-01. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of Petitioner's EA benefits application was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4. I agree.

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, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. May 19, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

