



# State of New Jersey

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*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 **21033-25 J.B.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C055400008 (GLOUCESTER COUNTY DIV. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, contending that she failed to comply with her EA service plan ("SP"). Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On March 20, 2026, and continuing on March 23, 2026, the Honorable Tama B. Hughes, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On April 8, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Exceptions to the Initial Decision were received from Petitioner on May 13, 2026, more than a month after the Initial Decision in this case was issued. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 1:10-18.2, Exceptions to an Initial Decision must be received by the Division of Family Development no later than seven days after the date the Initial Decision was mailed to the parties, and as such, the Exceptions received from Petitioner are untimely and shall be not be considered.

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 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. 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. 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 a six-month period of EA ineligibility. *Ibid.*

To provide clarity, as outlined in the Initial Decision in this matter, both the Initial Decision and Final Agency Decision are written in relation to the termination of Petitioners' EA benefits on August 26, 2025. See Initial Decision at 2 (footnote).

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner, and her household member, W.W., hereinafter collectively referred to as Petitioners, applied for EA on January 6, 2025, and, on February 6, 2025, Petitioners executed an EA SP, wherein they agreed, among other things, to submit proof of weekly employment searches and monthly housing searches. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). On March 19, 2025, the



Agency sent Petitioners a termination notice due to their failure to provide the weekly employment searches and monthly housing searches. Ibid. During April, 2025, the termination was rescinded by the Agency, when Petitioners submitted housing searches evidencing compliance with their SP. See Initial Decision at 3.

Petitioners later executed an additional EA SP on April 25, 2025, containing the same terms as the prior SP. See Initial Decision at 7. On July 30, 2025, the Agency sent a notification to Petitioners reminding them of their obligation to provide their monthly housing searches and weekly employment searches as well as reminding Petitioners of an upcoming meeting at the Agency on August 19, 2025, where they were required to present proof of their application for Supplemental Security Income (“SSI”). See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. Petitioners did not submit any housing searches for August, 2025, and further, never submitted any employment searches. Ibid. Petitioners failed to appear for their appointment at the Agency on August 19, 2025, and thereafter, on August 26, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioners a termination notice, effective October 1, 2025, due to Petitioner’s failure to provide the employment and housing searches required by the SP. Ibid. Petitioners never responded to the Agency regarding the termination notice. Ibid. In November, 2025, Petitioners came to the Agency to reapply for EA benefits, which application was denied on November 21, 2025, citing the same reasons as the prior termination, and imposing a six-month ineligibility period for receipt of EA benefits. Ibid.

The ALJ found, and the record reflects, that Petitioners failed to comply with a number of requirements contained in their SP, with no good cause credibly shown, by continually failing to provide proof of housing and employment searches, by failing to attend their meeting with the Agency on August 19, 2025, and by failing to provide the required SSI application documentation. See Initial Decision at 7-8; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency’s termination of Petitioners’ EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and must stand. Ibid. I agree.

By way of comment, as Petitioners’ six-month EA ineligibility penalty has since lapsed, Petitioners are without prejudice to reapply for EA benefits, if they have not already done so.

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

Officially approved final version. May 20, 2026

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

