State of New Jersey

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DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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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

FINAL DECISION

OAL DKT. NO. HPW **16773-26 J.F.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C143099013** (**MONMOUTH COUNTY DIV. OF SOC. SVCS**)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance, and Emergency Assistance ("EA"), benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's GA benefits for failing to comply with WFNJ program requirements, and terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, because he was no longer a WFNJ/GA cash benefits recipient, nor a Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits recipient. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On October 5, 2026, the Honorable Gauri Shirali Shah, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On October 6, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

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 determinations, based on the discussion below.

The Supportive Assistance for Individuals and Families ("SAIF") program, assists eligible WFNJ recipients to become self-sufficient before they exhaust their 60-month WFNJ lifetime limit. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(a). The 24-month program offers intensive case management to individuals who have received 48 months of WFNJ benefits, who have complied with WFNJ requirements, have not become self-sufficient, and who do not appear to be exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit under N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4. Ibid. SAIF participants are eligible for an extension of WFNJ cash benefits, social, and work support services for up to 12 additional months beyond the 60-month lifetime limit, or a maximum of 72 months. N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.20(c) and (g). Further, "[t]he individual shall fully participate in the SAIF program to continue receiving case assistance benefits. If a SAIF participant fails to cooperate with SAIF requirements without good cause, the WFNJ case shall be closed."

Only WFNJ cash assistance recipients and Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits recipients are eligible for EA benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.2(a).

EA benefits shall not be provided for a period of six months to adult recipients who are terminated from an EA placement when the termination is the result of the recipient's actions, without good cause, which may include, but are not limited to, "[t]hreatening and/or disruptive behavior that affects the operations of the shelter or the safety of other residents." See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(c)(3).

The ALJ in this matter issued a very thorough and comprehensive Initial Decision, providing a detailed and well-thought-out analysis, applying law to fact. See Initial Decision at 2-7. Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner was in receipt of monthly WFNJ/GA benefits, when his cash assistance case was closed, effective September 29, 2026. See Initial Decision at 5. I take official notice that the records of this office reflect that Petitioner had reached 48-months of WFNJ cash assistance, and had failed to sign and return required SAIF paperwork or to return the required MED-1 or MED-5 form to excuse him from the required work activity. On September 1, 2026, the Agency social worker went to the Petitioner's motel placement to deliver the WFNJ/GA termination notification, and experienced Petitioner reacting in an aggressive and verbally abusive manner. See Initial Decision at 5-6; see also Exhibit R-4. The experience of the Agency worker was further confirmed via accounts from another motel resident, as well as motel management, who the ALJ found provided further credible testimony at the hearing. See Initial Decision at 6; see also Exhibits R-9, R-11.

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ found that, because Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits case had been closed, he was not a WFNJ, nor an SSI, benefits recipient, and as a result, the assistance unit was ineligible for EA benefits, and therefore concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits was proper and must be affirmed. See Initial Decision at 7; see also Exhibit R-4, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.2(a). I agree. Additionally, I find that based on the record presented, no evidence was presented by Petitioner that he had submitted the required SAIF paperwork, or the applicable MED-1 or MED-5 form, and as such, the closure of Petitioner's WFNJ/GA case was also proper. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(d). The Initial Decision is modified to reflect this finding.

Further, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner's EA benefits were terminated for violating shelter rules by engaging in threatening/disruptive actions, without good cause, resulting in the Agency imposing a six-month EA ineligibility penalty upon Petitioner. See Initial Decision at 7; see also Exhibits R-4, R-6, R-7, R-9, R-11 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.3(c)(3). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had engaged in disruptive behaviors, without good cause, and as such, that the Agency had met its burden and therefore, the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month period of EA ineligibility, were proper and must stand. Ibid. I also agree.

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

Officially approved final version. October 15, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner