



State of New Jersey

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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 **01707-26 J.S.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S668222012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of a hardship extension of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner further EA benefits, contending that she had exhausted her lifetime limit of EA benefits, and that she did not qualify for a further extension of EA benefits at the present time. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On February 3, 2026, the Honorable Gauri Shirali Shah, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On February 3, 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 ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

EA benefits are limited to 12 months, plus limited extensions for an "extreme hardship" where the recipient has taken "all reasonable steps to resolve the emergent situation but the emergency nonetheless continues or a new emergency occurs, which causes extreme hardship to the family." N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(b); see also N.J.S.A. 44:10-51.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner has received her 12-month lifetime limit of EA benefits, and currently does not qualify for any further extension of any kind. See Initial Decision at 2-5; see also Exhibits R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7, R-9, R-10. Petitioner did submit a Hardship Extension application, however, upon review, the Agency determined that she did not meet the criteria for a hardship extension of EA benefits. *Ibid.*; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (c). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's denial of a hardship extension of EA benefits, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit R-10. I agree.

By way of further comment, the Agency shall refer Petitioner to any and all agencies and organizations that may be able to assist with her current needs, including Social Services for the Homeless.

Accordingly, the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED, and the Agency's determination is AFFIRMED.



Officially approved final version. February 10, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

