



## 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 **04002-26 J.W.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C487780004 (CAMDEN-CCBSS)**

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 he had caused his own homelessness. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On March 13, 2026, the Honorable Joan M. Burke, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On March 16, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing 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 ADOPT the Initial Decision, and REVERSE the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

In order to be eligible for EA benefits, the assistance unit must be in a state of homelessness or imminent homelessness due to circumstances beyond their control or the absence of a realistic capacity to plan. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c). Additionally, EA benefits shall not be provided for a period of six months when an applicant "has caused his or her own homelessness, without good cause." See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3).

Here, Petitioner was involved in an alleged incident at a shelter with another shelter resident on February 17, 2026. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2. On February 18, 2026, the Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, and imposed a six-month period of ineligibility for EA benefits, citing that he had caused his own homelessness after being involved in the alleged incident with another shelter resident, which resulted in the involvement of law enforcement. *Ibid.*; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3).

Petitioner disputed the claims that he had engaged in disruptive and threatening behavior, testifying that another individual engaged in the behaviors, and the ALJ found Petitioner's testimony to be credible that Petitioner himself did not engage in the alleged behaviors, particularly in light of the police report presented. See Initial Decision at 3-7; see also Exhibit R-2.

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility period, were improper and must be reversed. See Initial Decision at 6-7. I agree.

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



Officially approved final version. March 25, 2026

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Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

