



State of New Jersey

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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 **03693-26 L.H.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S563562012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's suspension of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency suspended Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits because Petitioner failed to take necessary steps to lift a sanction. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On July 9, 2026, the Honorable Samantha L. Price, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On July 23, 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 reviewed the ALJ's Initial Decision and the record, and I hereby ADOPT the ALJ's Initial Decision, and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

In order to maintain eligibility for receipt of WFNJ benefits, a recipient must cooperate with, and participate in, the WFNJ work activity requirements. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.1(a). If a WFNJ recipient fails to comply with their work activities without good cause, the recipient is subject to a sanction resulting in a pro-rata reduction of WFNJ benefits for the first month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b). Thereafter, if the WFNJ benefits recipient is still non-compliant, without good cause, the WFNJ benefits will be suspended for one month. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b)(1). If the non-compliance continues, the recipient's case will close the month after the suspension of WFNJ benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(b)(2).

Following the loss of WFNJ cash assistance benefits due to noncompliance with work activities, the individual must re-apply for WFNJ benefits, satisfactorily complete sanction obligations, and comply with work activities in order to be eligible for WFNJ benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(e).

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner failed to participate in the work activity required by regulation to maintain receipt of WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 2; see Exhibits R-1, R-2; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.1(a), -4.13. Petitioner was scheduled for appointments related to his work activity on November 17, 2025, and December 29, 2025, both of which he failed to attend. Ibid. Petitioner provided no explanation to the Agency as to why he failed to attend the scheduled meetings and he did not attempt to reschedule such meetings. Ibid. On January 6, 2026, the Agency sent Petitioner a letter indicating a sanction would be imposed upon his WFNJ/GA case, effective February 1, 2026, for failure to comply with WFNJ program work requirements. Ibid.; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13.



At the time of the hearing, Petitioner testified that he may have been ill on the scheduled meeting dates, however, he never notified anyone at the Agency of his inability to attend the scheduled meetings. See Initial Decision at 3.

Without good cause, as defined at N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.11, a WFNJ/GA recipient must comply with the required work activity in order to receive benefits, and the Agency must impose a sanction upon Petitioner for failure to participate in the required work activity and suspend WFNJ/GA benefits. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's determination to suspend Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits, for failure to lift the sanction, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 3-4; see also Exhibit R-2, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13. I agree.

By way of comment, the documentary record in this matter indicates that Petitioner was able to lift the sanction upon his WFNJ/GA benefits effective April 1, 2026, however, his WFNJ/GA benefits case had been closed for an alternate reason by the time the sanction was lifted. See Exhibit R-3.

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

Officially approved final version. September 02, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

