



State of New Jersey

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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 **20513-25 M.L.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S605471012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits, contending that he had exhausted his 60-month cumulative lifetime limit of WFNJ cash benefits, and did not qualify for an exemption from said lifetime limit. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On March 18, 2026, the Honorable Judith Lieberman, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On April 6, 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 ("DFD"), 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.

"Eligibility for cash assistance benefits shall be limited to a lifetime total of 60 cumulative months for an adult individual." See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.3(a). "At the end of an individual adult recipient's 60 cumulative months of receipt of cash assistance, the assistance unit shall no longer be eligible to receive [WFNJ] assistance." See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.3(a) (1). However, an individual may receive additional months of cash assistance if he/she qualifies for an exemption from, or extension of, the time limit, as set forth at N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4 and -2.5, respectively. In relevant part, a recipient is exempt from the 60-month cumulative lifetime WFNJ limit if a "physical or mental impairment, defect or injury prevents him or her from engaging in full-time employment for a period of 12 or more months on a minimum of one WFNJ/MED-1, Examination Report." See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4(a)(3)(i).

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner has received in excess of seventy-six (76) months of WFNJ/GA benefits, and as such, has exhausted his 60-month lifetime limit for said benefits. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-3, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.3(a). The Agency issued a notice advising Petitioner that his GA would be terminated effective November 1, 2025. As Petitioner's prior MED-1 form had expired on September 10, 2025, Petitioner's doctor submitted a new MED-1 form on December 18, 2025, indicating that Petitioner could not work for six months. Based upon the discrepancy in the forms received, the Agency contacted the physician's office and was verbally informed that the office does not mark patients as permanently disabled. See R-3 at 1.



As a regulatory condition for an exemption from the WFNJ/TANF benefits 60-month lifetime limit, Petitioner was required to provide the Agency with a MED-1 form indicating a 12-month permanent disability. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(3), -2.4(a)(3)(i). As the December 18, 2025, MED-1 indicated a temporary disability, the Agency terminated Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits for exceeding the lifetime limit for cash assistance benefits. See Initial Decision at 5; see also Exhibit R-3.

Based on the record presented, the ALJ concluded that the December 18, 2025, MED-1 form received by the Agency indicates that Petitioner is temporarily disabled and unable to participate in a work activity for less than 12 months, meaning that he would not qualify for an exemption of the 60-month cumulative lifetime limit. See Initial Decision at 3-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4(a)(3). Accordingly, the ALJ found that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits, for exceeding the lifetime limit for such benefits, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4-5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.4(a)(3). I agree.

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

Officially approved final version. May 19, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

