



State of New Jersey

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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 16961-25 M.T.

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S486951014 (MORRIS CO. OFFICE OF TEMP ASSISTANCE)**

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 she failed to comply with several terms of her EA service plan ("SP"). Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. This matter was initially scheduled for a hearing on November 13, 2025, but was adjourned, following a conference on the matter, to November 24, 2025. On November 24, 2025, the matter was again adjourned and rescheduled for December 11, 2025, at which time a further conference was held and the hearing was adjourned again. On December 18, 2025, the Honorable Susana Guerrero, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On December 30, 2025, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determinations.

Here, the record reflects that Petitioner has received EA benefits since February, 2025, and that on September 15, 2025, the Agency issued a Notification Form terminating Petitioner's EA benefits for failing to pay her required 30 percent contribution to her motel placement, an issue which has since been remedied, and for violating her EA SP. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-1. The Agency contends that Petitioner failed to communicate with her Agency social worker, had improperly altered and/or declined to sign Agency forms related to her EA benefits, and failed to comply with the Agency's referral for mental health services. Ibid. On July 16, 2025, Petitioner executed an SP, however, she made written strike-outs and/or alterations to the SP and other Agency forms. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibit R-1. The Agency has attempted, on multiple occasions, to have Petitioner properly execute the SP and other necessary documents. Ibid. Further, Petitioner has failed to complete an assessment with the Work First New Jersey Substance Abuse Initiative/Behavioral Health Initiative ("SAI/BHI"), which led to her SAI/BHI case being closed on June 27, 2025. Ibid.

As a result, the Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits and imposed a six-month EA ineligibility penalty. See Initial Decision at 2-4; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6(a). The ALJ found that Petitioner has failed to cooperate with the Agency by refusing to communicate with her Agency social worker, failing to complete and sign required paperwork related to receipt of her EA benefits, and refusing to complete required documents and the intake assessment for SAI/BHI. See Initial Decision at 4. 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 penalty, were proper and must stand. Id. at 4; see also Exhibit R-1 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3)(ix), -6.6(a). I agree.

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 concur with the ALJ's final conclusion in this matter and hereby ADOPT the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law.

By way of comment, because Petitioner has received continued assistance pending the outcome of this fair hearing, Petitioner's six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall begin to run as of the date of the issuance of this Final Agency Decision.

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

