State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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STEPHEN CHA, MD, MHSR
*Commissioner*

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 **07332-26 N.M.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S675498012** (**MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.**)

Petitioner challenges the correctness of the Respondent Agency's calculation of her monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”) benefits allotment. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On August 11, 2026, the Honorable Tama B. Hughes, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents. On August 25, 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 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.

Regulatory authority applicable to SNAP benefit cases, defines income as “all income from whatever source unless such income is specifically excluded.” See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.3. Additionally, for SNAP benefits cases, unearned income includes child support payments made directly to the household from non-household members. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.5(a)(5).

N.J.A.C. 10:87-6.16(b) outlines the procedures used to calculate both gross and net income for SNAP benefits purposes, and the applicable benefit levels, if eligible. The regulation provides that the applicant's monthly net income is determined by adding together all earned and unearned income, then subtracting all income exclusions. Ibid. Then, the standard deduction, based upon the size of the household, is subtracted from the income. Ibid.

Thereafter, the household is evaluated to determine if a medical deduction is appropriate, which is if the household has medical expenses that exceed $35.00. Ibid. If the household is entitled to a medical deduction, then the amount in excess of $35.00 is subtracted from the applicant's income. Ibid. Then, the applicant is evaluated for an excess shelter deduction. Such a deduction is permitted when the individual's shelter costs exceed 50% of their net income. If this deduction is allowable, then the difference between the shelter costs and the 50% net income, or up to the maximum allowable amount, is subtracted from the individual's income. The remaining figure is Petitioner's net income for SNAP benefits purposes. This net income is then compared against the maximum allowable net income amount for the household’s size, as outlined at N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.3, to determine eligibility. If eligible, the household's monthly SNAP allotment shall be equal to the maximum food stamp allotment for the household's size, reduced by 30 percent of the household's net monthly income. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-12.6(a)(1).

Here, the record reflects that Petitioner applied for SNAP benefits on March 4, 2026. See Initial Decision at 7. On April 6, 2026, the Agency denied her application, indicating that Petitioner had failed to provide verification of payments of voluntary child support. Ibid. Petitioner was given thirty days to provide such verifications and subsequently submitted documentation to the Agency. Ibid.; see also Exhibit R-1. Upon review of the documentation provided, the Agency determined that Petitioner received child support from two separate individuals, whereby payments were received through both the child support portal from one individual, as well as direct payments by the second individual ("D.V."). Ibid. Petitioner provided the Agency with a letter from D.V. stating that he paid Petitioner $300 per week in child support. Ibid. Petitioner also provided bank statements to the Agency from December, 2025 through March, 2026, which evidenced $1,700 in deposits and included more than $300 in deposits from D.V. Ibid. As a discrepancy existed between the letter submitted from D.V. and the bank statements, the Agency averaged the money received from D.V. to be $2,140, and included $508 from the other child support payee, and concluded that Petitioner received monthly child support payments totaling $2,648. Ibid.

At the hearing, Petitioner also testified that she did not provide all the shelter cost bills she had to the Agency, however no documentary evidence was presented to support such testimony. See Initial Decision at 7; see also Exhibit R-2. Based upon the documentation that was provided, the Agency averaged the shelter cost bills, and deducted Petitioner's pro rata share (as she, herself, is ineligible for receipt of SNAP benefits), and determined that Petitioner's budgeted shelter cost, per month, were $1,766. See Initial Decision at 3, 7-8; see also Exhibits R-1, R-2, R-3. Additionally, the Agency was aware that Petitioner received some other income, specifically $100 from her mother. See Initial Decision at 8; see also Exhibits R-1, R-3. Petitioner's monthly SNAP benefits were then calculated and determined to be $601 per month. Ibid.; see also Exhibits R-2, R-3. Petitioner's monthly SNAP benefit amount was increased following the receipt of information from her mother that her monetary support was not recurring. Ibid. Upon recalculation, Petitioner's monthly SNAP benefit, based upon a total net income of $1,643, was found to be $690 per month. Ibid.

Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency had properly calculated Petitioner's monthly SNAP benefits allotment in this matter. See Initial Decision at 9-10. I agree.

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

Officially approved final version. October 20, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner