State of New Jersey

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Lt. Governor

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 **14155-26 L.S.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C090969015** (**OCEAN COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.**)

Petitioner Agency charges Respondent with committing an intentional program violation ("IPV") of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP"), as defined in N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.3 and 7 C.F.R. 273.16(c). The Agency asserts that Respondent intentionally failed to report receipt of earned income, while she received SNAP benefits, thus causing Respondent to receive an overissuance of benefits to which she was not entitled. Respondent was properly noticed of the Administrative Disqualification Hearing, the charges against her, and the proposed disqualification penalty, via personal service, on July 24, 2026. See Exhibit P-1 at 1, 2-3; see also N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.5(a)(3)(i) and 7 C.F.R. 273.16(e)(3)(i). Because Respondent failed to execute and return the waiver of her right to a hearing, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing as a contested case. Id. at 4-5. On September 8, 2026, the Honorable Gauri Shirali Shah, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ,") held a plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record then closed.

On September 15, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, which found that the Agency had met its burden in establishing, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent had deliberately and intentionally withheld information from the Agency, which resulted in Respondent receiving an overissuance of SNAP benefits, to which she was not entitled. See Initial Decision at 2, 4; see also Exhibits P-2, P-3, P-4, P-5, and N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.3(a), -11.5(a)(6), 7 C.F.R. 273.16(c)(1), 7 C.F.R. 273.16(e)(4). Specifically, the ALJ found that Respondent failed to disclose to the Agency that she had started new employment on April 11, 2025, while also certifying to the Agency in an Interim Reporting Form, dated June 15, 2025, that she had no changes in her income greater than $25, resulting in an overissuance of SNAP benefits to Respondent in the amount of $2,726, for the period of August, 2025, through January, 2026. See Initial Decision at 2, 4; see also Exhibits P-2, P-3, P-4, P-5, and N.J.A.C. 10:87-5.2(a)(1), -5.4(a)(1), -9.5.

As this was the first IPV committed by Respondent, the ALJ ordered the mandatory regulatory penalty of a 12-month disqualification from receipt of SNAP benefits, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.2(a)(1). See Initial Decision at 5.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

As Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have considered the Initial Decision in this matter, and following an independent evaluation of the record, I concur with the ALJ's decision and hereby adopt the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law in this matter.

I direct that the Agency proceed to recoup the overissuance.

Accordingly, based upon the foregoing, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision in this matter, and ORDER that Respondent is disqualified from receipt of SNAP benefits for a period of 12 months. I further ORDER that the Agency is to recoup the overissuance.

Officially approved final version. October 01, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner