



State of New Jersey

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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 **20409-25 S.F.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C472175007 (ESSEX COUNTY DIVISION OF WELFARE)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's denial of Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner's application for WFNJ/GA benefits, contending that Petitioner failed to provide information necessary to determine eligibility for said benefits. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law ("OAL") for a hearing. On January 12, 2026, the Honorable Sandra L. Lascari, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. On January 26, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination.

Here, the record reveals that Petitioner applied for WFNJ/GA benefits in December, 2024. See Initial Decision at 4. Having received no response from the Agency regarding her WFNJ/GA application, at some point in August, 2025, Petitioner contacted the Agency regarding her application. See Initial Decision at 4. The record is devoid of any testimonial or documentary evidence regarding the delay in the processing of Petitioner's application. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.4. On October 16, 2025, the Agency sent Petitioner a Notice of Verification, dated October 6, 2025, indicating that she needed to return a signed original GA addendum by October 15, 2025. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit P-2. On October 22, 2025, Petitioner submitted a new WFNJ/GA benefits application. See Initial Decision at 4. On October 23, 2025, Petitioner was denied WFNJ/GA benefits by the Agency, citing that she had failed to provide necessary documentation in a timely manner. *Ibid.*; see also Exhibit R-1 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5). On October 30, 2025, Petitioner engaged in a telephone conversation with an Agency representative, and on October 31, 2025, Petitioner was sent another denial notification from the Agency, citing that her application for WFNJ/GA was denied based upon a telephone interview during which the Agency concluded that Petitioner had sufficient resources which surpassed the eligibility limit for receipt of WFNJ/GA benefits for a household of one person. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.10, -3.19, -3.20.

In order to determine eligibility for WFNJ benefits, mandatory verification of certain information is required. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2. Eligibility for WFNJ/GA benefits requires the applicant to provide all necessary documentation. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5) (stating that "As a condition of eligibility for WFNJ benefits, the applicant shall, subject to good cause exceptions, be required to provide all necessary documentation."). Based on the credible testimony and documentary evidence provided, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner had not provided all information required to be verified to determine eligibility, and as such, the Agency's denial of WFNJ/GA benefits on October 23, 2025, was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-2.2(a)(5). I agree.

An Exception to the Initial Decision was received on February 2, 2026, from Legal Services. There is no indication in the record that Legal Services represented Petitioner at any point during the pendency of the fair hearing matter, nor at the



time of the telephone hearing. As such, counsel is reminded that a letter of representation must be submitted regardless of the status of the administrative fair hearing proceeding.

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, Petitioner is without prejudice to reapply for WFNJ/GA benefits, if she has not already done so, but is reminded that she must provide all information and documentation requested in order to determine eligibility.

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

Officially approved final version. March 12, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

