



State of New Jersey

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DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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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 **21655-25 S.S.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **S626067012 (MIDDLESEX COUNTY BD. OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance benefits ("EA"). The Agency terminated Petitioners' EA benefits, contending that she had exhausted her 12-month lifetime limit of EA benefits, plus all available hardship extensions. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On March 10, 2026, the Honorable Judith Lieberman, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On March 30, 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, Department of Human Services, I have considered the ALJ's Initial Decision and hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

Under the Work First New Jersey ("WFNJ") regulations, EA benefits are limited to 12 cumulative months during the lifetime of a case, plus limited extensions. See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a) and -6.4(b). A WFNJ/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("TANF") recipient may qualify for up to two six-month extensions of EA benefits when an "extreme hardship" exists pursuant to the criteria set forth in N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(b)(1). See N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(d). Thus, the maximum amount of EA benefits that a WFNJ/TANF benefits recipient may receive is 24 months.

Here, the record reveals that, as of January, 2024, Petitioner had received twelve months of EA benefits, and that, thereafter, she received two hardship extensions, through January, 2025. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibits R-5, R-9. Petitioner then applied for an additional extension pursuant to the Emergency Assistance for Specific Groups ("EASG") program. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-6 and see also State of New Jersey Senate Bill, No. S866, P.L. 2018, c. 164, effective December 20, 2018 ("S866"), now codified at N.J.S.A. 44:10-51(a)(3), also known as Emergency Assistance for Specific Groups ("EASG"), and recently extended pursuant to State of New Jersey Assembly Bill, No. 5549, which extends EA benefits eligibility for certain categories of individuals, including, but not limited to WFNJ recipients who are permanently disabled, as documented by a twelve (12) month MED-1 Form, and Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits recipients who are at least 18 years of age. See Division of Family Development Instruction ("DFDI") No. 25-02-01. The Agency denied Petitioner's EASG application, finding she was ineligible for any such extension and on December 15, 2025, Petitioner was notified that her last EA payment would issue January 14, 2026. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-8.



Following the testimonial and documentary evidence presented at the hearing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner did not qualify for any of the specified EASG groups for whom additional benefits may be made available. See Initial Decision at 2-4. Accordingly, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibits R-6, R-7, R-8, R-9, R-10, R-13. I agree.

By way of comment, should Petitioner's circumstances change, such that she is able provide documentation that she falls within a category of individuals who may be considered eligible for receipt of EASG, she is without prejudice to apply for same.

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, as outlined above.

Officially approved final version. May 13, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

