



State of New Jersey

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 716

STEPHEN CHA, MD, MHSR
Commissioner

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lt. Governor

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 20394-25 S.S.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C201650020 (UNION COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)

Petitioner challenges the determination by the Respondent Agency of the effective date of her recertification application for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits. Petitioner contends that she should be eligible for benefits retroactive to October 1, 2025, after submission of her SNAP recertification application on September 9, 2025, asserting that she never received the original recertification notice from the Agency. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On January 14, 2026, the Honorable Sandra L. Lascari, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence. The record was held open to allow for the submission of additional documentation and closed on January 20, 2026. On February 3, 2026, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision, reversing 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 considered the ALJ's Initial Decision and following an independent review of the record, the ALJ's Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED and the Agency determination is REVERSED, based on the discussion below.

Here, the record indicates that the Agency sent Petitioner a SNAP recertification application on or about August 1, 2025, which included information regarding a telephone interview scheduled for August 12, 2025, however, the notice was sent to the incorrect address. See Initial Decision at 2. Due to the notice being sent to the incorrect address, Petitioner missed the August, 2025 telephone interview. Thereafter, on September 1, 2025, Petitioner received the SNAP recertification application, and mailed her application, and all required documents, to the Agency, who received the application on September 9, 2025. Ibid. On October 16, 2025, the Agency conducted the recertification telephone interview with Petitioner. See Initial Decision at 3. The Agency recertified Petitioner for SNAP benefits, however, her SNAP benefits were prorated from October 16, 2025 to October 31, 2025. Ibid.

Pursuant to regulatory authority, no household may participate beyond the expiration date of its certification period without a determination of eligibility for the new certification period. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.1(a). However, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:87-9.2(c)(1), "Households which have submitted an application for recertification in a timely manner but, due to [Agency] error, are not determined eligible in sufficient time to provide for issuance of benefits by the household's next normal issuance date shall receive an immediate opportunity to participate upon being determined eligible, and the allotment shall not be prorated." See Initial Decision at 4. The ALJ therefore concluded that Petitioner timely completed her SNAP recertification application, once it was received at the correct address, and, as a result, her application was properly and timely submitted to the Agency for processing, which is an Agency error, and thus, Petitioner was eligible



for SNAP benefits from October 1, 2025, and her benefits should not have been prorated to the date of her recertification interview. Ibid. Based upon an independent review of the record, I agree.

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

Officially approved final version. March 05, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

