



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 **1010-26 T.M.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C101247018 (SOMERSET COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, contending that he had exhausted his lifetime limit of EA benefits, and did not qualify for a further extension of EA benefits at the present time. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On February 13, 2026, the Honorable Michael R. Stanzione, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a telephonic plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record was closed. On February 17, 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 following an independent review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and AFFIRM the Agency's determination, based on the discussion below.

EA benefits are limited to 12 months, plus limited extensions for an "extreme hardship" where the recipient has taken "all reasonable steps to resolve the emergent situation but the emergency nonetheless continues or a new emergency occurs, which causes extreme hardship to the family." N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(b); see also N.J.S.A. 44:10-51. Specifically, a Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") recipient may qualify for an additional six months of EA when an "extreme hardship" exists. *Ibid.* Thus, the maximum amount of EA that a WFNJ/GA benefits recipient may receive is 18 months.

Here, the ALJ found, and the record substantiates, that Petitioner, a WFNJ/GA benefits recipient, received his 12-month lifetime limit of EA benefits from July 2024 through June 2025. See Exhibit R-1. In July 2025, Petitioner applied for, and received, a six-month hardship extension of EA benefits. *Ibid.* On November 26, 2025, the Agency advised Petitioner that his EA benefits would end effective December 31, 2025, as he had received 18 months of EA benefits, and did not qualify for any further extension of any kind. See Initial Decision at 2-5; see also Exhibit R-1 and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.4(a), (b), (c). Based on the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of Petitioner's EA benefits was proper and must stand. See Initial Decision at 2-5; see also Exhibit R-1. I agree.

By way of comment, the Agency shall refer Petitioner to any and all agencies and organizations that may be able to assist with his 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. February 24, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

