



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 **00979-26 D.G.**

AGENCY DKT. NO. **C265691020 (UNION COUNTY DIVISION OF SOC. SVCS.)**

Petitioner Agency charges Respondent with committing an intentional program violation ("IPV"), as defined by N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.3 and 7 C.F.R. 273.16(c), of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") and, as defined by N.J.A.C. 10:90-11.1(a), the Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance to Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") Program. The Agency asserts that Respondent intentionally provided incomplete, misleading, false, or inaccurate information regarding her income in order to obtain benefits at the time of her redetermination applications, and while she received SNAP and WFNJ/TANF benefits, thus causing Respondent to receive overissuances 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 penalties, via Certified Mail, on December 26, 2025. See Exhibit P-1; 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. On January 21, 2026, the Honorable Marianne B. Ortega, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ,") held a plenary hearing, took testimony, admitted documents, and the record closed. Respondent did not appear for the hearing, and the matter proceeded ex parte, which is permissible pursuant to regulation. See N.J.A.C. 1:10-14.1(d), N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.5(a)(4)(i), and 7 C.F.R. 273.16(e)(4). Respondent was given ten days following the hearing to present good cause for her failure to appear. See 7 C.F.R. 273.16(e)(4). Respondent did not respond.

On January 30, 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, as well as an overissuance of WFNJ/TANF benefits, to which she not entitled. See Initial Decision at 2-6; see also Exhibit P-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.3(a), -11.5(a)(6), N.J.A.C. 10:90-11.1(a), 7 C.F.R. 273.16(c)(1), 7 C.F.R. 273.16(e)(4). Specifically, the ALJ found that Respondent intentionally provided false or misleading statements and misrepresented facts, and/or intentionally withheld or concealed facts relating to her claims that she was unemployed, in order to receive benefits to which was not entitled. Ibid. I agree. Such misrepresentations resulted in an overissuance of SNAP benefits to Respondent in the amount of \$5,388 for the period of April, 2022 through January, 2023 as well as an overpayment of WFNJ/TANF benefits of \$3,400 for the period of April, 2022 through November, 2022. See Initial Decision at 2-6; see also Exhibit P-1, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-1.13(b).

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 also 7 C.F.R. 273.16(b)(1)(i)) and the mandatory regulatory penalty of a 6-month disqualification from receipt of WFNJ benefits. See Initial Decision at 5; see also N.J.A.C. 10:90-11.11(a)(1). I also agree.



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. See 7 C.F.R. 273.16(e)(6).

I direct that the Agency proceed to recoup the overissuances of SNAP and WFNJ/TANF benefits. See N.J.A.C. 10:87-11.20; see N.J.A.C. 10:90-3.21(a), see also 7 C.F.R. 273.18.

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 and disqualified from receipt of WFNJ benefits for a period of 6 months. I further ORDER that the Agency is to recoup the overissuances of SNAP and WFNJ/TANF benefits.

Officially approved final version. March 12, 2026

Natasha Johnson
Assistant Commissioner

