



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Division of Family Development
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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 12996-15 J.H.

AGENCY DKT. NO. GA593258 (ESSEX COUNTY DIVISION OF WELFARE)

Petitioner appeals from Respondent Agency's denial of her application for Work First New Jersey/General Assistance ("WFNJ/GA") benefits. The Agency denied Petitioner WFNJ/GA benefits for allegedly failing to complete her 28-day work requirement. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On September 29, 2015, the Honorable Gail M. Cookson, Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents into evidence.

On September 30, 2015, the ALJ issued an Initial Decision reversing the Agency's denial of Petitioner's WFNJ/GA benefits for failure to complete the 28-day work requirement in the given time frame. See Initial Decision at 3. Specifically, the ALJ found that Petitioner had complied with the 28-day work requirement by completing the requisite job searches, but had to travel to Florida to attend a brother-in-law's funeral before she was provided with a letter of completion. *Id.* at 2. Based upon the foregoing, the ALJ concluded that Petitioner became eligible for WFNJ/GA benefits on June 18, 2015, the day Petitioner had come into compliance with her 28-day employment related activity, and directed that Petitioner be provided with retroactive benefits to that date. *Id.* at 3. I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

As Director of the Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the record for this matter and the ALJ's Initial Decision. Following an independent evaluation of the record, I concur with the ALJ's decision in this matter and I hereby accept and adopt the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law as contained in the Initial Decision.

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

OCT 29 2015

Signed Copy on File
at DFD, BARA

Natasha Johnson
Director