State of New Jersey
TMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
SION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Family Development
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Elizabeth Connolly
Acting Commissioner

Natasha Johnson
Director
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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 278-17 M.R.

AGENCY DKT. NO. C137032 (MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF SOC. SVCS.)

Petitioner appeals from the Respondent Agency's termination of her Emergency Assistance ("EA") benefits. The Agency terminated Petitioner's EA benefits, and imposed a six-month period of EA ineligibility, contending that she had caused her own homelessness by failing to comply with the Work First New Jersey ("WFNJ") mandatory work requirement. Because Petitioner appealed, the matter was transmitted to the Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. On January 24, 2017, the Honorable Laura Sanders, Acting Director and Chief Administrative Law Judge ("CALJ"), held a plenary hearing, took testimony, and admitted documents.

On February 3, 2017, the CALJ issued an Initial Decision, affirming the Agency's determination. Here, Petitioner entered into an EA service plan with the Agency under which she agreed to comply with all Work First New Jersey ("WFNJ") program requirements. See Initial Decision at 2; see also Exhibit R-2. However, Petitioner's WFNJ/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("WFNJ/TANF") benefits were sanctioned three times, and eventually closed, because she had failed to attend the mandatory work activity. See Initial Decision at 3; see also Exhibits R-5, R-6 and R-7, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.13(a). As a result, Petitioner became ineligible for EA benefits, and those benefits were initially terminated on November 1, 2016, and finally terminated on January 6, 2017. See Initial Decision at 2-3; see also Exhibits R-1 and R-4. Based on the foregoing, the CALJ found that Petitioner had caused her own homelessness, without good cause, by refusing to comply with the WFNJ program requirements. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibit R-2, and N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.1(c)(3)(ix). Therefore, the CALJ concluded that the Agency's termination of

Petitioner's EA benefits, and the imposition of a six-month EA ineligibility penalty, were proper and should be affirmed. See Initial Decision at 4; see also Exhibits R-1 and R-4. I agree.

No Exceptions to the Initial Decision were filed.

As the Director of the Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services, I have reviewed the record and the CALJ's Initial Decision and, following an independent evaluation of the record, I agree with the Initial Decision and hereby adopt the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in this matter.

By way of comment, because Petitioner has been receiving continued assistance of EA benefits pending the outcome of the fair hearing, the six-month EA ineligibility penalty shall begin to run as of the date of this Final Agency Decision.

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

Signed Copy on File
at DFD, BARA

MAR 0 7 2017

Natasha Johnson
Director