

**BEFORE THE ALASKA OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS ON REFERRAL
BY THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Q. N.	)	OAH No. 25-3383-SNA
_____	)	

DECISION

I. Introduction

On October 23, 2025, Q. N. applied for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”) benefits.¹ On October 24, 2025, the Division of Public Assistance (the “division”), requested additional information from Ms. N.. The division requested that Ms. N. submit termination-of-employment and payroll information for herself and an additional household member.² Ms. N. was given a deadline of November 3, 2025 to respond. When Ms. N. failed to do so, on November 4, 2025, the division denied her application.³

Ms. N. contended that she had, in fact, emailed the requested information to the division. However, at a contested merits hearing, it became apparent that Ms. N. was mistaken – and that due to her own clerical error, she had erroneously emailed the requested information to an incorrect, inoperative email box – despite being given the correct address by a division employee in an audio-recorded telephone call.

Because Ms. N. did not submit the information the division sought – and which it is required by law to obtain and review as a condition of eligibility⁴ -- the division’s denial of Ms. N.’s SNAP application is AFFIRMED.

II. Facts

The facts of this case are not open to reasonable dispute. In prehearing filings, the division stated that it received Ms. N.’s SNAP application on October 23, 2025. The next day, October 24, 2025, the division mailed a notice to Ms. N. informing her that the division required additional

¹ Exhibits 1, 2-2.14.

² Exhibit 4.

³ Exhibit 6.

⁴ See 7 C.F.R. §273.2; 7 C.F.R. §273.10; *Alaska Division of Public Assistance SNAP Manual*, §601 & §602 (generally).

information. Specifically, the division requested verification of recent employment termination and wage history for Ms. N. and another member of her household.⁵

The notice stated,

Your application for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was received on October 23, 2025. It is being held because we need more information or proof. Please give us the information listed at the bottom of this notice by 11/03/2025 or your application may be denied.⁶

When the division received no response to this request, the division denied Ms. N.'s application on November 4, 2025. The division mailed a notice to Ms. N. informing her of its decision.⁷

Ms. N. filed a timely fair hearing request on November 25, 2025.⁸ In her fair hearing request, Ms. N. stated, "I've emailed the information they asked for."⁹

A telephonic merits hearing was convened on December 23, 2025. The division representative testified consistently with the factual summary appearing above.

In response, Ms. N. testified that on November 3, 2025 -- the very day of her then-pending deadline -- she had called the division call center. Ms. N. contended that she had, in fact, submitted the requested information to the division at an email address which she asserted she had been given by a division employee during that November 3, 2025 telephone call. Ms. N. testified that she had been told to email the requested information to, "hss.offices@alaska.gov."¹⁰

At the hearing, the division representative testified that this was an invalid email address. The division representative provided a screenshot of a test email she (the division representative) had sent to this address in mid-December 2025, along with an automated reply message informing her that the address was invalid.¹¹

⁵ Exhibit 4.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Exhibit 6.

⁸ Exhibit 7.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Exhibit 9.7; *see also Division position statement (December 19, 2025)*, at p. 2. (documenting Ms. N.'s claims regarding her responsive email as well as the specific address to which she contended she had sent the supplemental information).

¹¹ Exhibits 10 & 11.

Ms. N. insisted that she had been provided this email address by a division employee on November 3. In rebuttal, the division representative queried her agency's call center logs, rapidly identified this exact telephone call, and played the pertinent dialog for the hearing participants.

In the audio excerpt published during the hearing, the division's call center employee is clearly heard telling Ms. N. that she should send the documents to, "hss.dpa.offices@alaska.gov." The division representative is heard patiently spelling this address, letter-by-letter, to Ms. N. -- twice.

In response, Ms. N. agreed that the excerpt was accurate. Ms. N. was asked if, as it appeared, the agency had given her an email address beginning with, "hss.*dpa*.offices", (emphasis added) -- and that she had mistakenly omitted the middle three characters from this address when formatting the email which she intended as a response to the division's October 24 notice. Ms. N. agreed and conceded that the mistake was hers.¹² It was apparent that Ms. N. was unaware of her error until she was confronted with the sound of her own voice at the December 23 hearing.

Thus, at the conclusion of hearing testimony, it was uncontested that the division was correct, and that Ms. N. had failed to timely submit the payroll and wage documentation the division had requested on October 24, 2025.

III. Discussion

Ms. N. appeals the division's denial of an application for a new benefit. In such cases, the burden falls upon the applicant to establish that the agency action was incorrect. That burden is a preponderance.¹³

Here, the evidence is not disputed. The division sought wage and employment status information in support of Ms. N.'s October 2025 application. The division is required by federal and state law to request this information, and Ms. N. does not suggest otherwise.¹⁴

The conclusion in this case is quite clear: Ms. N. made a simple clerical error when she failed to accurately record the valid email address the division employee provided to her on November 3, 2025. This case turns on that error.

¹² Hearing testimony.

¹³ 7 AAC 49.135.

¹⁴ See footnote 4, *supra*.

The result was that the division correctly denied Ms. N.'s SNAP application because she failed to timely provide the division with the supplemental employment and payroll information it was legally obligated to solicit and legally required to review.

X

X

X

X

X

IV. Conclusion

Ms. N. failed to sustain her burden to establish, by a preponderance, that the division's denial was incorrect. Therefore, the division's November 2025 denial of Ms. N.'s SNAP application is AFFIRMED. Nothing in this decision impedes or affects Ms. N.'s ability to re-apply for benefits, and she is encouraged to do so.

Dated: January 13, 2026

SIGNED
James Fayette
Administrative Law Judge

Adoption

The undersigned, by delegation from the Commissioner of Health, adopts this Decision, under the authority of AS 44.64.060(e)(1), as the final administrative determination in this matter.

Judicial review of this decision may be obtained by filing an appeal in the Alaska Superior Court in accordance with Alaska R. App. P. 602(a)(2) within 30 days after the date of this decision.

DATED this 27th day of January, 2026.

By: SIGNED

Name: James Fayette

Title: Administrative Law Judge

[This document has been modified to conform to the technical standards for publication. Names have been changed to protect privacy.]