

STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Claimant,

Reg No: 2009-29405

Issue No: 3008

Case No:

Load No:

Hearing Date:

August 25, 2009

Genesee County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Steven M. Brown

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 upon Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, a telephone hearing was conducted from [REDACTED] on August 25, 2009.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly terminated Claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) and Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits based upon her failure to provide requested verification(s)?

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the competent, material, and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

- (1) Claimant was a FAP and FIP recipient.
- (2) On April 20, 2009, a REDETERMINATION Notice was sent to Claimant at [REDACTED]. (Exhibit 1)

(3) On April 22, 2009, the mailing was returned to the Department marked FORWARD TIME EXP RTN TO SEND – [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. (Exhibit 2)

(4) On May 15, 2009, the Department mailed a Notice of Case Action to Claimant at the [REDACTED] and it was returned in the same manner. (Exhibits 3-4)

(5) On May 21, 2009, the Department mailed a Verification Checklist to Claimant at the [REDACTED] and it was returned in the same manner. (Exhibits 5-6)

(6) Claimant reported a change from the [REDACTED] to the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to the Department in February 2008. The new address did not get picked up by the computer when the system was switched to BRIDGES in April 2009.

(7) On July 8, 2009, the Department received Claimant's hearing request protesting the termination of her FAP and FIP benefits.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) (formerly known as the Food Stamp (FS) program, is established by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Human Services (DHS or department), administers the FAP program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MAC R 400.3001-3015. Departmental policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and the Bridges Reference Manual (BRM).

The Family Independence Program (FIP) was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, 8 USC 601, *et seq.* The Department of Human Services (DHS or department)

administers the FIP program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MAC R 400.3101-3131. The FIP program replaced the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program effective October 1, 1996. Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Bridges Reference Manual (BRM).

Clients must cooperate with the local office in determining initial and ongoing eligibility. This includes the completion of necessary forms. BAM 105, p. 5 Verification means documentation or other evidence to establish the accuracy of the client's verbal or written statements. BAM 130, p.1 Verification is usually required at application/redetermination and for a reported change affecting eligibility or benefit level when it is required by policy, required as local office option or information regarding an eligibility factor is unclear, inconsistent, incomplete or contradictory. BAM 130, p.1 The Department uses documents, collateral contacts or home calls to verify information. BAM 130, p.1 A collateral contact is a direct contact with a person, organization or agency to verify information from the client. BAM 130, p. 2 When documentation is not available, or clarification is needed, collateral contact may be necessary. BAM 130, p. 2

Clients are allowed 10 calendar days (or other time limit specified in policy) to provide the verifications requested by the Department. BAM 130, p. 4 If the client cannot provide the verification despite a reasonable effort, the time limit should be extended no more than once. BAM 130, p. 4 A negative action notice should be sent when the client indicates a refusal to provide the verification or the time period provided has lapsed and the client has not made a reasonable effort to provide it. BAM 130, p.4

Clients are allowed a reasonable opportunity to resolve any discrepancy between statements and information obtained through another source. BAM 130, p. 6
Disagreements and misunderstandings should be resolved at the lowest possible level to avoid unnecessary hearings. BAM 600, p. 11

In the instant case, the Claimant did everything she was supposed to do in terms of reporting an address change to the Department. With that said, I do not find that the Department established that it acted in accordance with policy in terminating Claimant's FAP and FIP benefits based on her failure to provide requested verifications.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, does not find that the Department acted in accordance with policy in terminating Claimant's FAP and FIP benefits based on her failure to provide requested verifications.

Accordingly, the Department's FAP and FIP eligibility determination(s) are REVERSED, it is SO ORDERED. The Department shall:

- (1) Reinstate Claimant's FAP and FIP benefits retroactive to the closure date.
- (2) Issue Claimant supplemental benefits she is entitled to, if any.

/S/

Steven M. Brown
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: August 31, 2009

Date Mailed: September 2, 2009

NOTICE: Administrative Hearings may order a rehearing or reconsideration on either its own motion or at the request of a party within 30 days of the mailing date of this Decision and Order. Administrative Hearings will not order a rehearing or reconsideration on the Department's motion where the final decision cannot be implemented within 60 days of the filing of the original request.

The Claimant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt of the Decision and Order or, if a timely request for rehearing was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the rehearing decision.

SMB/db

cc:

