

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.: 2009-34305

Issue No: 1005

Case No.: [REDACTED]

Load No.: [REDACTED]

Hearing Date:

October 7, 2009

Macomb County DHS (12)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Aaron McClintic

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge upon pursuant to MCL 400. 9; MCL 400.37 upon claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice a telephone hearing was held on October 7, 2009 claimant was present and testified, [REDACTED] FIS appeared for the department and testified.

ISSUE

Whether the Department is properly proposing to close claimant's Family Independence Program ("FIP") benefits case for non-compliance with the Work First/Jobs Education and Training ("JET") program?

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 an ongoing recipient of FIP benefits.
2. Claimant was required to attend Work First and participate with the JET program.

3. The Department was notified on April 1, 2009 that claimant's hours of training did not meet her obligations for the program.
4. Notice of Noncompliance was sent to claimant on April 4, 2009 with a notice of an April 16, 2009 triage meeting.
5. Claimant did not appear at the April 16, 2009 triage meeting and her case was closed on April 28, 2009.
6. Claimant requested a hearing on May 19, 2009 contesting the proposed closure.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

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 Dependant Children (ADC) program effective October 1, 1996. Department policies are found in the Program Administrative Manual (PAM), the Program Eligibility Manual (PEM) and the Program Reference manual (PRM).

The Family Independence Program (FIP) provides temporary cash assistance to support a family's movement to self-sufficiency. The recipients of FIP engage in employment and self-sufficiency-related activities so they can become self-supporting. Federal and State laws require each work eligible individual (WEI) in the FIP group to participate in the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Program or other employment-related activities unless temporarily deferred or engaged in activities that meet participation requirements. These clients must participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities to increase their employability and obtain stable employment. PEM 230A.

JET is a program administered by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) through the Michigan Works Agencies (MWAs). The JET program serves employers and job seekers for employers to have skilled workers and job seekers to obtain jobs that provide economic self-sufficiency. PEM 230 A. A mandatory participant in the JET program who fails without good cause to participate in employment activity must be penalized. PEM 233(a). The penalty for the first occurrence of noncompliance in the JET program is a closure for a minimum of three calendar months under the FIP program. PEM 233(a). Good cause is a valid reason for noncompliance with employment related activities. A claim of good cause must be verified and documented for applicants, members, and recipients. PEM Manual Item 230(a), PEM Manual Item 230(b); 7 CFR Parts 272 and 273.

In the present case, the claimant was an ongoing recipient of FIP benefits and was referred to Work First/JET. The claimant was sent a notice of noncompliance on April 4, 2009 for failing to comply and being in non-compliance with work first because her hours of training did not meet her obligations for the program. The claimant lost hours on March 20, 23 and 24. A triage meeting was scheduled for April 16, 2009. The claimant failed to appear at the triage meeting on April 16, 2009 and her case was closed.

At the hearing, the claimant testified that she had numerous issues that prevented her from participating with work first, including the death of her sister on March 19, 2009, a car accident on March 23, 2009 and the birth of her grandchild on March 24, 2009. The claimant submitted documentation reflecting these events. The claimant testified that she attempted to contact her worker regarding her difficulties.

This administrative law judge finds that the claimant does have good cause for failing to fulfill the work first requirements and that closure of her benefits was improper.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law decides that the department was incorrect in the closure of FIP benefits, and it is ORDERED that the department's decision in this regard be and is hereby REVERSED.



Aaron McClintic
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 11/02/09

Date Mailed: 11/02/09

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 90 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.

AM/jlg

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