

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: 2010-20255
Issue No: 3008
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
March 11, 2010
Jackson County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Suzanne L. Keegstra

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 held on March 11, 2010. The claimant personally appeared and provided testimony, through the aid of an interpreter, [REDACTED].

ISSUE

Did the department properly terminate the claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits for failure to return the required verification materials in January, 2010?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. The claimant was mailed a Verification Checklist (DHS-3503) on November 12, 2009, requesting verification of Workers' Compensation benefits received by

██████████. The verification was due back to the department by November 23, 2009.
(Department Exhibit 8 – 9).

2. The department did not receive the verification request and the claimant was mailed a Notice of Case Action (DHS-1605) on January 19, 2010, that indicated the claimant's FAP case would close on March 1, 2010. (Department Exhibit 4 – 7).

3. The claimant submitted a hearing request on February 3, 2010.

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. Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Program Reference Manual (PRM).

Department policy states:

CLIENT OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility to Cooperate

All Programs

Clients must cooperate with the local office in determining initial and ongoing eligibility. This includes completion of the necessary forms. BAM, Item 105, p. 5.

Refusal to Cooperate Penalties

All Programs

Clients who are able but refuse to provide necessary information or take a required action are subject to penalties. BAM, Item 105, p. 5.

Verifications

All Programs

Clients must take actions within their ability to obtain verifications. DHS staff must assist when necessary. See BAM 130 and BEM 702. BAM, Item 105, p. 8.

Assisting the Client

All Programs

The local office must assist clients who ask for help in completing forms (including the DCH-0733-D) or gathering verifications. Particular sensitivity must be shown to clients who are illiterate, disabled or **not** fluent in English. BAM, Item 105, p. 9.

Verification is usually required at application/redetermination **and** for a reported change affecting eligibility or benefit level. BAM, Item 130, p. 1.

Obtaining Verification

All Programs

Tell the client what verification is required, how to obtain it, and the due date (see “**Timeliness Standards**” in this item). Use the DHS-3503, Verification Checklist, or for MA redeterminations, the DHS-1175, MA Determination Notice, to request verification. BAM, Item 130, p. 2.

The client must obtain required verification, but you must assist if they need and request help. BAM, Item 130, p. 2.

Timeliness Standards

All Programs (except TMAP)

Allow the client 10 calendar days (**or** other time limit specified in policy) to provide the verification you request. If the client cannot provide the verification despite a reasonable effort, extend the time limit at least once. BAM, Item 130, p. 4.

Send a negative action notice when:

- . the client indicates refusal to provide a verification, **or**
- . the time period given has elapsed and the client has not made a reasonable effort to provide it. BAM, Item 130, p. 4.

The claimant testified that she did receive the Verification Checklist (DHS-3503) that the department mailed on November 12, 2009, requesting documentation of Workers' Compensation for [REDACTED]. The claimant testified that she was using a different translator than [REDACTED] at that time, and the translator told her that she didn't need to send in the information. It appears that the translator may have been mistaken in identifying a Verification of Employment that the claimant did complete and mailed back to the department in September, 2009.

The claimant did have a translator to help her with the documentation. The claimant did not request any translation help from the local DHS office. Thus, there is no way the department could have known that the claimant's translator was not giving her proper information.

Department policy requires a claimant to cooperate with the local office in determining initial and ongoing eligibility. This includes completion of the necessary forms. BAM 105. Department policy directs the department to send a negative action notice when the time period has elapsed and the claimant has not provided the requested information. BAM 130. In this case, the department received no information to cause them to consider an extension or to cause the department to have knowledge the claimant needed assistance. Thus, when the time period elapsed, the department properly terminated the claimant's FAP benefits.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department properly terminated the claimant's FAP benefits because the claimant had not returned the required verification as requested.

Accordingly, the department's actions are UPHeld. SO ORDERED.

/s/

Suzanne L. Keegstra
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: April 7, 2010

Date Mailed: April 15, 2010

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.

SLK 

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