

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: 2010-33091
Issue No: 1038
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
June 15, 2010
Kent County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Gary F. Heisler

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 June 15, 2010. Claimant and her [REDACTED] [REDACTED] appeared and testified.

ISSUE

Did the Department of Human Services properly sanction Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) case for failure to participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities?

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 Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits. Claimant's benefit group includes her 17 year old [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- (2) On February 16, 2010, the Department received verification that [REDACTED] was not

attending High School.

(3) On February 24, 2010, [REDACTED] was referred to the Michigan Works Agency/Jobs Education and Training Program (JET).

(4) On April 9, 2010, [REDACTED] attended a triage meeting and it was determined that she had failed to participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities without good cause. [REDACTED] signed a First Non-Compliance Letter (DHS-754) and agreed to conduct 40 hours of job search activities between April 12 and 23, 2010, instead of having the Family Independence Program (FIP) case sanctioned.

(5) On April 15, 2010, the JET program terminated [REDACTED] case because she had not turned in any job search verifications for April 13, 14, or 15, 2010. [REDACTED] did not complete 40 hours of job search activity within the required time.

(6) On April 16, 2010, Claimant was sent a Notice of Case Action (DHS-1605) stating her Family Independence Program (FIP) case would be sanctioned.

(7) On April 26, 2010, Claimant submitted a timely request for hearing.

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 (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) 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 Program Reference Manual (PRM).

Department policy provides the following guidance for case workers. The Department's policies are available on the internet through the Department's website.

EMPLOYMENT AND/OR SELF-SUFFICIENCY RELATED ACTIVITIES: FIP/RAP CASH

DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

FIP, RAP Cash

The Family Independence Program (FIP) and Refugee Assistance Program (RAP) are temporary cash assistance to support a family's movement to self-sufficiency. The recipients of FIP and RAP engage in employment and self-sufficiency related activities so they can become self-supporting.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

FIP, RAP Cash

Federal and state laws require each work eligible individual (WEI) in the FIP and RAP group to participate in Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Program or other employment-related activity 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 employment. Apply FIP policy to RAP cash clients unless a separate RAP cash policy is mentioned in PEM 233C.

JET is a program administered by the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth (DELEG) 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. JET case managers use the One-Stop Management Information System also known as the OSMIS to record the clients assigned activities and participation. In this item the OSMIS is referred to as the MIS.

WEIs not referred to JET will participate in other activities to overcome barriers so they may eventually be referred to JET or other employment service provider. DHS must monitor these

activities and record the client's participation in the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP).

A WEI who refuses, without good cause, to participate in assigned employment and/or other self-sufficiency related activities is subject to penalties. For more about penalties refer to:

- BEM 233A - FIP-related penalties.
- BEM 233C - RAP Cash penalties.

See BEM 230B and BEM 233B for FAP employment requirements.

MANDATORY

PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

All WEIs, unless temporarily deferred, must engage in employment that pays at least state minimum wage or participate in employment services.

WEIs who are temporarily deferred are required to participate in activities that will help them overcome barriers and prepare them for employment or referral to an employment service provider.

Special Needs Participants

Determine appropriate participation and types of supports for the following groups considering Reasonable Accommodations earlier in the item. Reasonable accommodations are selected from the verification for the deferral reason on the *Employment Services - Details* screen.

Dependent Children

A dependent child age 16 or 17, who is **not** deferred or otherwise meeting participation requirements, must be referred to JET if the child has not completed high school and either quits school and refuses to return or the school system will **not** permit the child to return.

Note: Do **not** impose a penalty on a dependent child for **not** attending school. Refer the child to JET. If the child does **not** comply with JET, apply penalties per BEM 233A. (BEM 230A)

**FAILURE TO MEET EMPLOYMENT AND/OR
SELSUFFICIENCY- RELATED REQUIREMENTS: FIP**

DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

FIP

DHS requires clients to participate in employment and self-sufficiency related activities and to accept employment when offered. Our focus is to assist clients in removing barriers so they can participate in activities which lead to self-sufficiency. However, there are consequences for a client who refuses to participate, without good cause.

The goal of the FIP penalty policy is to obtain client compliance with appropriate work and/or self-sufficiency related assignments and to ensure that barriers to such compliance have been identified and removed. The goal is to bring the client into compliance.

Noncompliance may be an indicator of possible disabilities. Consider further exploration of any barriers.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

FIP

All Work Eligible Individual (WEI) and adult non-WEIs (except ineligible grantees, clients deferred for lack of child care (DC) and disqualified aliens), see [BEM 228](#), who fail, without good cause, to participate in employment or self-sufficiency-related activities, must be penalized.

Depending on the case situation, penalties include the following:

- Delay in eligibility at application.
- Ineligibility (denial or termination of FIP with no minimum penalty period).
- Case closure for a minimum of three or 12 months.

See [BEM 233B](#) for the Food Assistance Program (FAP) policy when the FIP penalty is closure. For the Refugee Assistance Program (RAP) penalty policy, see [BEM 233C](#).

NONCOMPLIANCE

WITH EMPLOYMENT AND/OR SELSUFFICIENCYRELATED ACTIVITIES

As a condition of eligibility, all WEIs and non-WEIs must work or engage in employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities.

Noncompliance of applicants, recipients, or member adds means doing **any** of the following **without** good cause:

Exception: Do not apply the three or 12 month penalty to ineligible caretakers, clients deferred for lack of child care (DC) and disqualified aliens. Failure to complete a FAST or FSSP results in closure due to failure to provide requested verification.

Clients can reapply at any time.

- Failing or refusing to:
 - Appear and participate with the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Program or other employment service provider.
 - Complete a Family Automated Screening Tool (FAST), as assigned as the first step in the FSSP process.

Note: FIS should clear the FAST Fall Out Report and any FAST confirmation information the client has obtained before considering a client noncompliant for FAST non-completion.

- Develop a Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP) or a Personal Responsibility Plan and Family Contract (PRPFC).

Note: FIS must have scheduled a FSSP completion appointment with the client and the client failed to attend before considering a client noncompliant for FSSP non-completion.

- Comply with activities assigned to on the Family Self Sufficiency Plan (FSSP) or PRPFC.
- Provide legitimate documentation of work participation.

- Appear for a scheduled appointment or meeting.
- Participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities.
- Accept a job referral.
- Complete a job application.
- Appear for a job interview (see the exception below).
- Stating orally or in writing a definite intent not to comply with program requirements.
- Threatening, physically abusing or otherwise behaving disruptively toward anyone conducting or participating in an employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activity.
- Refusing employment support services if the refusal prevents participation in an employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activity.

GOOD CAUSE FOR NONCOMPLIANCE

Good cause is a valid reason for noncompliance with employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities that are based on factors that are beyond the control of the noncompliant person. A claim of good cause must be verified and documented for member adds and recipients.

NONCOMPLIANCE

PENALTIES FOR ACTIVE FIP CASES AND MEMBER ADDS

The penalty for noncompliance without good cause is FIP closure.

Effective April 1, 2007, the following minimum penalties apply:

- For the first occurrence on the FIP case, close the FIP for 3 calendar months unless the client is excused from the noncompliance as noted in “ [First Case Noncompliance Without Loss of Benefits](#)” below.

- For the second occurrence on the FIP case, close the FIP for 3 calendar months.
- For the third and subsequent occurrence on the FIP case, close the FIP for 12 calendar months.

The penalty counter also begins April 1, 2007 regardless of the previous number of noncompliance penalties.

Begin the sanction period with the first pay period of a month. Penalties are automatically calculated by the entry of noncompliance without good cause on the FSSP. This applies to active FIP cases, including those with a member add who is a WEI JET participant.

TRIAGE

JET participants will not be terminated from a JET program without first scheduling a “triage” meeting with the client to jointly discuss noncompliance and good cause. Locally coordinate a process to notify the MWA case manager of triage meetings including scheduling guidelines.

Clients can either attend a meeting or participate in a conference call if attendance at the triage meeting is not possible. If a client calls to reschedule an already scheduled triage meeting, offer a phone conference at that time. Clients must comply with triage requirements within the negative action period.

When a phone triage is conducted for a first noncompliance and the client agrees to comply, complete the DHS-754, First Noncompliance Letter, as you would complete in a triage meeting. Note in the client signature box “Client Agreed by Phone”. Immediately send a copy of the DHS-754 to the client and phone the JET case manager if the compliance activity is to attend JET.

Determine good cause based on the best information available during the triage and prior to the negative action date. Good cause may be verified by information already on file with DHS or MWA. (BEM 233A)

In accordance with the policy cited above, [REDACTED] was properly referred to the Michigan Works Agency/Jobs Education and Training Program (JET) and was required to meet the participation requirements she was assigned. [REDACTED] testified that she did not complete 40 hours

of job search activity during the compliance test. No further analysis is required to decide the case.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides the Department of Human Services properly sanctioned Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) case for failure to participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities.

It is ORDERED that the actions of the Department of Human Services, in this matter, are UPHELD.

/s/

Gary F. Heisler
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: June 16, 2010

Date Mailed: June 18, 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.

2010-33091/GFH

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.

GFH/alc

cc:

