

STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No.: 201040829
Issue No.: 1005
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Load No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: July 28, 2010
Macomb County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Aaron McClintic

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 upon the Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on July 28, 2010. The Claimant appeared and testified. [REDACTED] appeared on behalf of the Department.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly 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 and was referred to JET/Work First.
2. In April 2010 Claimant did not make any in-person employment contacts, which was assigned to her.
3. Notice of Noncompliance alleging missed assignments was sent to Claimant with notice of a May 12, 2010 triage meeting.
4. At the triage meeting on May 12, 2010, the Department found that Claimant did not have good cause for failing to participate with Work First by missing assignments.
5. On January 20, 2010 Claimant's benefits were put into negative action and a notice was sent to Claimant informing her that FIP were closing effective May 25, 2010.

6. Claimant requested a hearing on May 25, 2010 contesting the proposed closure of FIP benefits.

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 Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 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. BEM 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. BEM 230 A. A mandatory participant in the JET program who fails without good cause to participate in employment activity must be penalized. BEM 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. BEM 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. BEM Manual Item 230(a), BEM Manual Item 230(b); 7 CFR Parts 272 and 273.

In the present case, Claimant was an ongoing recipient of FIP and was referred to Work First/JET. Claimant was sent a notice of noncompliance for missing assignments and being in non-compliance with Work First. A triage meeting was held on May 12, 2010. Claimant was found to not have good cause for noncompliance.

Claimant credibly testified that her Work First worker told her that she would be assessed absence hours for not making in-person employment contacts but that so long

201040829/AM

as she did not exceed the limit for absence hours she would not be held in noncompliance. Claimant did not exceed the limit for absence hours. No direct testimony was presented by the Department to refute Claimant's testimony. The Work First worker was not available to testify. Claimant further credibly testified that had she been told that in-person employment contacts were required, she would have completed that assignment.

This Administrative Law Judge finds that the Department has not provided sufficient proof that Claimant refused to cooperate and was in noncompliance with Work First/JET rules. Accordingly, the Department's closure of FIP 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. Claimant's FIP benefits shall be reinstated as of the date of closure, the negative action shall be deleted and any missed benefits shall be paid to the Claimant in the form of a supplement.

/s/



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

Date Signed: August 3, 2010

Date Mailed: August 3, 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 of the rehearing decision.

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201040829/AM

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