

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No: 2011-28477
Issue No: 2006, 3008

[REDACTED]
Kent County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Suzanne L. Morris

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 29, 2011. The claimant appeared and provided testimony.

ISSUE

Did the department properly close the claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) and Medical Assistance (MA) benefits for failure to return the required verifications?

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's was mailed a Semi-Annual Contact Report (DHS-1046) on February 1, 2011. This was due back to the department by March 1, 2011. The claimant returned the form on February 24, 2011. (Department Exhibit 1 - 3)
2. On March 10, 2011, the claimant reported that her job with [REDACTED] had ended at the end of October, 2010. (Department Exhibit 4)
3. On March 10, 2011, the claimant was mailed a Verification Checklist (DHS-3503), along with a Verification of Employment (DHS-38), to verify her job stop with [REDACTED] and her last 30 days of paycheck stubs from her new employer, Sheldon Company. These items were due back to the department by March 21, 2011. (Department Exhibit 5 - 8)

4. On March 22, 2011, the claimant was mailed a Notice of Case Action (DHS-1605) informing her that her MA and FAP was closing for failure to provide the required verifications. (Department Exhibit 9 – 13)
5. The claimant submitted paycheck stubs from Sheldon Company on April 5, 2011. (Department Exhibit 14 – 17)
6. The claimant submitted a hearing request on April 5, 2011.

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).

The Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is implemented by Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Human Services (DHS or department) administers the MA program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MCL 400.105. 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 105.

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 105.

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 105.

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 105.

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

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 130.

The client must obtain required verification, but you must assist if they need and request help.

If neither the client nor you can obtain verification despite a reasonable effort, use the best available information. If **no** evidence is available, use your best judgment. BAM 130.

Timeliness Standards

FIP, SDA, CDC, FAP

Allow the client 10 calendar days (**or** other time limit specified in policy) to provide the verification you request. BAM 130.

Exception: For CDC only, if the client cannot provide the verification despite a reasonable effort, extend the time limit at least once.

Verifications are considered to be timely if received by the date they are due. For electronically transmitted verifications (fax, email), the date of the transmission is the receipt date. Verifications that are submitted after the close of business hours through the drop box or by delivery of a DHS representative are considered to be received the next business day.

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 130.

Note: For FAP only, if the client contacts the department prior to the due date requesting an extension or assistance in obtaining verifications, you must assist them with the verifications but do not grant an extension. Explain to the client they will not be given an extension and their case will be denied once the VCL due date is passed. Also, explain their eligibility will be determined based on their compliance date if they return required verifications. Re-register the application if the client complies within 60 days of the application date; see BAM 115, Subsequent Processing. BAM 130.

Claimants are required to comply with the local office to allow the department to determine initial or ongoing eligibility. BAM 105. The department informs the client what verification is required, how to obtain it, and the due date by using the Verification Checklist form (DHS-3503). BAM 130. Clients are provided ten days to return the verifications. BAM 130. If the time period to provide the verifications elapses and the verifications have not been provided, the department is directed to send a negative action notice. BAM 130.

In this case, the claimant is disputing the closure of her MA and FAP benefits for failing to provide the requested verifications. On March 10, 2011, the department mailed the claimant a Verification Checklist and a Verification of Employment form to verify her job

stop with [REDACTED] and her most current 30 days of paycheck stubs. These were due back to the department by March 21, 2011.

The department reports that they never received any verification of the job stop from [REDACTED]. The department further indicates that the claimant did not return the paycheck stubs until April 5, 2011, after the March 21, 2011 due date.

The claimant did testify that she gave the Verification of Employment form to her former employer at Gill Staffing to complete and that she believed they had faxed it to the department. However, the claimant was unable to provide a copy of the completed form or a fax confirmation sheet. The claimant does not dispute the date the department received the paycheck stubs, which was after the required due date.

The undersigned finds that the claimant did not provide the required verifications to the department by the due date as required. Thus, when the time period to provide the verifications elapsed, the department properly closed the claimant's FAP and MA, as they were unable to determine continued eligibility.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department properly closed the claimant's FAP and MA benefits for failure to turn in the required verifications.

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

_____/s/_____
Suzanne L. Morris
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 7/5/11

Date Mailed: 7/5/11

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 mailing 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.

SM/ds

■ [REDACTED]