

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 201217988
Issue No: 6015
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: March 1, 2012
Ionia County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Christopher S. Saunders

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 1, 2012. Claimant personally appeared and provided testimony.

ISSUE

Whether the department properly closed the claimant's case for Child Development and Care (CDC) benefits for failure to submit 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 was a recipient of Child Development and Care (CDC) benefits.
2. The department sent the claimant a verification checklist on August 16, 2011, with a due date of August 26, 2011. (Department Exhibit 1).
3. The department did not receive the requested verification form by the due date of August 26, 2011.
4. The claimant was sent a notice of case action on August 30, 2011 stating that her case would be closed due to her failure to submit the required verifications.
5. The claimant filed a hearing request on November 15, 2011.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The regulations governing the hearing and appeal process for applicants and recipients of public assistance in Michigan are found in the Michigan Administrative Code, MAC R 400.901-400.951. An opportunity for a hearing shall be granted to an applicant who requests a hearing because his claim for assistance is denied. MAC R 400.903(1).

Clients have the right to contest a department decision affecting eligibility or benefit levels whenever it is believed that the decision is incorrect. The department will provide an administrative hearing to review the decision and determine the appropriateness. BAM 600.

The Child Development and Care program is established by Titles IVA, IVE, and XX of the Social Security Act, the Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1990, and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The program is implemented by Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 98 and 99. The Department of Human Services (DHS or Department) provides services to adults and children pursuant to MCL 400.14(1) and MAC R 400.5001-5015. Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), Reference Table Manual (RFT), and the Bridges Reference Manual (BRM).

In relation to the claimant's responsibilities to provide the required verifications for the department to properly determine eligibility, department policy states as follows:

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.

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, but can request an extension of time to provide 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 the case at hand, the claimant contends that she did not submit the requested verification because she does not run her business in a way that would allow her to readily access the information requested by the department's verification form. She further testified that in the past, she had been allowed to submit a different form that was easier for her to fill out. The claimant further testified that she attempted to contact the department in relation to which form she would need to complete for the verifications. The department representative did testify that the claimant had left her a message around the 19th of August regarding the verification checklist but could not state with certainty what specifically the message said.

The Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant provided credible testimony that she made several attempts to contact the department in relation to the requested verifications and whether she could use the same form that she had been allowed to submit. Accordingly, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant made reasonable efforts to contact the department and to comply with the verification requirements. Therefore, this Administrative Law Judge finds that the claimant did not refuse to cooperate with the department by not submitting the requested verifications.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that that the department did not properly close the claimant's case for CDC benefits for refusal to submit the requested verifications.

Accordingly, the department's actions are **REVERSED**.

It is HEREBY ORDERED that the department shall allow the claimant to submit verifications required to determine her eligibility for CDC benefits. The department shall the determine the claimant's eligibility for CDC benefits. If the claimant is found to be otherwise eligible, the department shall issue any benefits due and owing that the claimant is otherwise eligible to receive back to the date of negative action.

/s/
Christopher S. Saunders
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: March 30, 2012

Date Mailed: April 2, 2012

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.

CSS/cr

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