

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 2012-19235  
Issue No: 3008  
Case No: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date:  
January 12, 2012  
Genesee County DHS #5

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Landis Y. Lain

**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 January 12, 2012.

**ISSUE**

Did the Department of Human Services (the department) commit error when it closed claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) case?

**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 a FAP benefit recipient.
- (2) On November 3, 2011, the department caseworker received a wage match Client notice (Exhibit 1).
- (3) On November 3, 2011, the department caseworker sent claimant a DHS-4638 verification checklist (VCL) with information due by December 5, 2011.
- (4) On December 5, 2011, no completed DHS 4638 was returned, nor was the department provided any paystubs as requested.
- (5) On December 7, 2011, the department caseworker sent claimant notice that his case would close effective December 31, 2011 for failure to provide requested verification information.

- (6) On December 14, 2011, claimant filed a request for a hearing to contest the department's negative action.

### **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 or her claim for assistance has been 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 of that decision. BAM 600.

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 Program Administrative Manual (PAM), the Program Eligibility Manual (PEM) and the Program Reference Manual (PRM).

Pertinent Department policy dictates:

#### **Cooperation, Verification, and Eligibility Determination DEPARTMENT POLICY**

##### **All Programs**

Clients have rights and responsibilities as specified in this item.

The local office must do **all** of the following:

- . Determine eligibility.
- . Calculate the level of benefits.
- . Protect client rights. BAM, Item 105, p. 1.

#### **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. PAM, Item 105, p. 5.

### **Client Cooperation**

The client is responsible for providing evidence needed to prove disability or blindness. However, you must assist the client when they need your help to obtain it. Such help includes the following:

- . Scheduling medical exam appointments
- . Paying for medical evidence and medical transportation
- . See PAM 815 and 825 for details. PEM, Item 260, p. 4.

A client who refuses or fails to submit to an exam necessary to determine disability or blindness **cannot** be determined disabled or blind and you may deny or close the case. PEM, Item 260, p. 4.

### **All Programs**

Clients must completely and truthfully answer all questions on forms and in interviews. PAM, Item 105, p. 5.

The client might be unable to answer a question about himself or another person whose circumstances must be known. Allow the client at least 10 days (or other timeframe specified in policy) to obtain the needed information. PAM, Item 105, p. 5.

### **FAP Only**

Do **not** deny eligibility due to failure to cooperate with a verification request by a person **outside** the group. In applying this policy, a person is considered a group member if residing with the group and is disqualified. PAM, 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. PAM, Item 105, p. 5.

Explain reporting requirements to all clients at application, redetermination and when discussing changes in circumstances. PAM, 105, p. 8.

### **Verifications**

#### **All Programs**

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

## **LOCAL OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **All Programs**

Ensure client rights described in this item are honored and that client responsibilities are explained in understandable terms. Clients are to be treated with dignity and respect by all DHS employees. PAM, Item 105, p. 8.

## **VERIFICATION AND COLLATERAL CONTACTS**

## **DEPARTMENT POLICY**

### **All Programs**

**Verification** means documentation or other evidence to establish the accuracy of the client's verbal or written statements.

Obtain verification when:

- . required by policy. PEM items specify which factors and under what circumstances verification is required.
- . required as a local office option. The requirement **must** be applied the same for every client. Local requirements may **not** be imposed for MA, TMA-Plus or AMP without prior approval from central office.

- . information regarding an eligibility factor is unclear, inconsistent, incomplete or contradictory. The questionable information might be from the client or a third party. PAM, Item 130, p. 1.

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

Verification is **not** required:

- . when the client is clearly ineligible, or
- . for excluded income and assets **unless** needed to establish the exclusion. PAM, 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. PAM, Item 130, p. 2.

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

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.

***Exception:*** Alien information, blindness, disability, incapacity, incapability to declare one's residence and, for FIP only, pregnancy must be verified. Citizenship and identity must be verified for clients claiming U.S. citizenship for applicants and recipients of FIP, SDA and MA. PAM, Item 130, p. 3.

### **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. PAM, Item 130, p. 4.

In the instant case claimant did not provide verification of employment to the department. The department's actions must be upheld under the circumstances.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department has established by the necessary competent, material and substantial evidence on the record that it was acting in compliance with department policy when it determined that claimant's FAP case should close based upon failure to provide employment verification in a timely manner.

Accordingly, the Department's decision is AFFIRMED.

/s/

Landis Y. Lain  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 1/13/12

Date Mailed: 1/13/12

**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.

LYL/ ds

