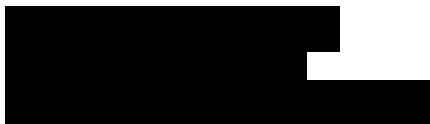


STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 201248658
Issue No: 1003
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: May 31, 2012
BERRIEN COUNTY DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: COREY A. ARENDT

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before me pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 upon Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, a hearing was held on May 31, 2012. The Claimant and Agency appeared by telephone and provided testimony.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly closed the Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits due to noncooperation with child support?

FINDINGS OF FACT

I find as material fact, based upon the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record:

1. As of January 19, 2012, the Claimant was an active FIP recipient.
2. On January 19, 2012, the Berrien County Prosecuting Attorney sent the Claimant an appointment letter. The appointment was to begin child support action for two of the Claimant's children. The letter indicated the appointment was to take place on February 16, 2012.
3. On February 16, 2012, the Claimant did not appear for the scheduled appointment. At some point on February 16, 2012, the Claimant called the Berrien County Prosecuting Attorney office and rescheduled her appointment.
4. On February 22, 2012, the Berrien County Prosecuting Attorney sent the Claimant a new appointment letter. The letter indicated the appointment was to take place on March 12, 2012.
5. On March 12, 2012, the Claimant did not appear for the scheduled appointment.

6. On March 19, 2012, the Berrien County Prosecuting Attorney sent the Claimant a notice of noncooperation.
7. On March 19, 2012, the Department sent the Claimant a notice of case action. The notice indicated the Claimant's FIP benefits were to close on April 1, 2012 due to noncooperation with the office of child support.
8. On April 1, 2012, the Department closed the Claimant's FIP benefits.
9. On April 23, 2012, the Claimant requested a hearing to dispute the Department's closure of her FIP case.

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. BAM 600. The department will provide an administrative hearing to review the decision and determine the appropriateness. BAM 600.

The 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 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).

Families are strengthened when children's needs are met. Parents have a responsibility to meet their children's needs by providing support and/or cooperating with the department including the Office of Child Support (OCS), the Friend of the Court and the prosecuting attorney to establish paternity and/or obtain support from an absent parent. BEM 255, p. 1.

Clients must comply with all requests for action or information needed to establish paternity and/or obtain child support on behalf of children for whom they receive assistance, unless a claim of good cause for not cooperating has been granted or is pending.

Absent parents are required to support their children. Support includes all the following:

- . Child support

- . Medical support
- . Payment for medical care from any third party.

Failure to cooperate without good cause results in disqualification. Disqualification includes member removal, denial of program benefits, and/or case closure, depending on the program.

Exceptions to the cooperation requirement are allowed for all child support actions except failure to return court-ordered support payments received after the payment effective date. Grant good cause only if:

- . requiring cooperation/support action is against the child's best interests, and
- . there is a specific "good cause" reason.

If good cause exists, cooperation is excused as an eligibility requirement for the child involved. It can still be required for another child in the same family. BEM 255, pp. 1-2.

Cooperation is a condition of eligibility. The following persons in the eligible group are required to cooperate in establishing paternity and obtaining support, unless good cause has been granted or is pending.

- . Grantee and spouse.
- . Specified relative/person acting as a parent and spouse.
- . Parent of the child for whom paternity and/or support action is required.

Cooperation is required in all phases of the process to establish paternity and obtain support and includes all of the following:

- . Contacting the SS when requested.
- . Providing all known information about the absent parent.
- . Appearing at the office of the prosecuting attorney when requested.
- . Taking any actions needed to establish paternity and obtain child support (e.g., testifying at hearings or obtaining blood tests).

In this case, the Claimant was not cooperative as the Claimant did not appear for either of the scheduled appointments. Each of the appointment notices clearly indicated what the repercussions were if the Claimant didn't appear. Although the Claimant has a good cause reason as to why she missed the first interview, the Claimant did not provide a

reason as to why she didn't attend the second interview. Further complicating the matter was the fact the Claimant had little recollection of the dates, times and events in question.

Therefore, based on the evidence presented during the hearing, I find the Department properly closed the Claimant's FIP benefits for failure to comply with the Office of Child Support.

DECISION AND ORDER

I find, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, that the Department properly closed the Claimant's FIP benefits due to child support noncooperation.

Accordingly, the Department's actions are **AFFIRMED**.

/s/ _____
Corey A. Arendt
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: June 1, 2012

Date Mailed: June 1, 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 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.

CAA/cr

cc:

