

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED] Reg.
[REDACTED] Issue
Hearing

No: 2013-43857
Case No: [REDACTED]
No: 1038
Date: May 30, 2013
County: Crawford

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Vicki L. Armstrong

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 received on April 15, 2013. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on May 30, 2013. Claimant and her husband personally appeared and provided testimony. Family Independence Specialist [REDACTED] Michigan Works [REDACTED] and Assistance Payment Supervisor [REDACTED] testified on behalf of the department.

ISSUE

Whether the department properly closed Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits?

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. On April 8, 2013, Claimant was mailed a Notice of Noncompliance for failing to participate as required in employment or self-sufficiency activities. A Notice of Case Action was also mailed to Claimant informing her that her FIP benefits would be closed and her FAP benefits decreased effective 5/1/13 because Claimant or a group member failed to participate in employment or self-sufficiency activities. Triage was scheduled for April 18, 2013, at 1:00pm. (Ex 4).
2. On April 18, 2013, Claimant attended the Triage. The department found no good cause for his failure to meet his scheduled hours in March, 2013. (Ex 8).
3. Claimant submitted a hearing request on May 3, 2013, protesting the closure of her FIP benefits and decrease in FAP benefits. (Request for a Hearing).

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, Rules 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. Mich Admin Code, Rule 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 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 Dependent Children (ADC) program effective October 1, 1996. Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), Reference Table Manual (RTM), and the Reference Tables Manual (RTM).

Department policy states that Clients must be made aware that public assistance is limited to 48 months to meet their family's needs and they must take personal responsibility to achieve self-sufficiency. This message, along with information on ways to achieve independence, direct support services, non-compliance penalties, and good cause reasons, is initially shared by DHS when the client applies for cash assistance. The work participation program requirements, education and training opportunities, and assessments will be covered by the work participation program when a mandatory work participation program participant is referred at application. BEM 229.

Federal and state laws require each work eligible individual (WEI) in the FIP group to participate in Partnership Accountability Training Hope (PATH) or other employment-related activity 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 employment. PATH is administered by the Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan through the Michigan one-stop service centers. PATH serves employers and job seekers for employers to have skilled workers and job seekers to obtain jobs that provide economic self-sufficiency. PATH case managers use the One-Stop Management Information System (OSMIS) to record the clients' assigned activities and participation. BEM 230A (1/1/13).

A Work Eligible Individual (WEI) and non-WEIs who fails, without good cause, to participate in employment or self-sufficiency-related activities, must be penalized. Depending on the case situation, penalties include the following:

- Delay in eligibility at application.
- Ineligibility (denial or termination of FIP with no minimum penalty period).

- Case closure for a minimum of three months for the first episode of noncompliance, six months for the second episode of noncompliance and lifetime closure for the third episode of noncompliance. BEM 233A (1/1/13).

Noncompliance of applicants, recipients, or member adds means doing any of the following without good cause:

- Failing or refusing to:
 - Appear and participate with PATH or other employment service provider.
 - Appear for a scheduled appointment or meeting related to assigned activities.
 - Provide legitimate documentation of work participation.
 - Appear for a scheduled appointment or meeting related to assigned activities.
 - Participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities.
 - Participate in required activity.
 - Accept a job referral.
 - Complete a job application. BEM 233A (1/1/13).

Good cause is a valid reason for noncompliance with employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities that are based on factors that are beyond the control of the noncompliant person. BEM 233A (1/1/13).

In this case, Claimant's spouse failed to submit his assignments for the month of March. A Notice of Case Action was mailed to Claimant on 4/8/13. Claimant attended Triage and explained that her children were sick for four weeks straight and submitted medical documentation. The department found no good cause and closed Claimant's FIP case.

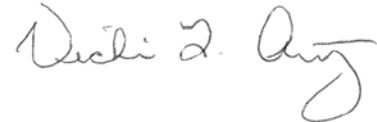
Claimant testified that her children were sick and her husband was unable to complete the assignments due to her and the children being sick and the children going to the hospital two or three times. She stated her son was hospitalized overnight. When asked about whether she had documentation showing herself or her children were sick, she stated that she had brought the documentation with her to Triage, but had taken it with her when she left, and did not bring it to the hearing.

The Administrative Law Judge finds that Claimant's spouse did not complete the assignments as required. Furthermore, Claimant failed to show good cause at the Triage and at the hearing as to why Claimant's spouse could not have completed the assignments. Therefore, based on the material and substantial evidence presented during the hearing, the department properly closed Claimant's FIP benefits and decreased the FAP benefits for noncompliance.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the department properly closed Claimant's FIP benefits and decreased Claimant's FAP benefits. Accordingly, the department's decision is **UPHELD**.

It is SO ORDERED.



Vicki L. Armstrong
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: June 17, 2013

Date Mailed: June 17, 2013

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 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.

Claimant may request a rehearing or reconsideration for the following reasons:

- A rehearing **MAY** be granted if there is newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision.
- A reconsideration **MAY** be granted for any of the following reasons:
 - misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision,
 - typographical errors, mathematical error, or other obvious errors in the hearing decision that effect the substantial rights of the claimant:
 - the failure of the ALJ to address other relevant issues in the hearing decision.

Request must be submitted through the local DHS office or directly to MAHS by mail at
Michigan Administrative Hearings
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request
P. O. Box 30639
Lansing, Michigan 48909-07322

2013-43857/VLA

VLA/las

cc:

