

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

██████████
██████████
██████████

██████. No. 2013-43145
Issue No. 1038; 3029
Case No. ██████████
Hearing Date: May 23, 2013
County: Wayne (76)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Susan C. Burke

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge upon Claimant's request for a hearing made pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37, which govern the administrative hearing and appeal process. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on May 23, 2013, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Claimant. Participants on behalf of Department of Human Services (Department) included ██████████, Medical Contact Worker, ██████████, PATH Coordinator, and ██████████, Case Manager from Ross.

ISSUE

Whether the Department properly closed Claimant's case for benefits under the Family Independence Program (FIP) and decreased Claimant's benefits under the Food Assistance Program (FAP) based on Claimant's failure to participate in employment-related activities without good cause.

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. Claimant was an ongoing recipient of FIP and FAP and was required to participate in employment-related activities.
2. On April 15, 2013, the Department sent Claimant a Notice of Noncompliance informing Claimant of a failure to participate in employment-related activities and setting a triage date of April 23, 2013.
3. On April 15, 2013, the Department sent Claimant a Notice of Case Action closing Claimant's FIP case and decreasing Claimant's FAP benefits,

effective May 1, 2013, due to failure to participate in employment-related activities without good cause.

4. Claimant attended the triage, where the Department found no good cause due to Claimant not submitting job search hours three weeks in a row.
5. Claimant had good cause for not submitting job search hours.
6. On April 23, 2013, Claimant filed a hearing request disputing the Department's action.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

The Family Independence Program (FIP) was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, 42 USC 601, *et seq.* The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FIP pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and 1999 AC, Rule 400.3101 through Rule 400.3131. FIP replaced the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program effective October 1, 1996.

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 (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and 1999 AC, Rule 400.3001 through Rule 400.3015.

The Department requires Work Eligible Individuals (WEI) seeking FIP to participate in employment and self-sufficiency-related activities. BEM 233A Failing, without good cause, to participate in employment or self-sufficiency-related activities results in the WEI being penalized. *Id.* Good cause is a valid reason for noncompliance that is based on factors that are beyond the control of the noncompliant person. *Id.*

PATH participants will not be terminated from a program without the Department first scheduling a triage meeting with the client to jointly discuss noncompliance and good cause. *Id.* Good cause must be based on the best information available at the triage and must be considered even if the client does not attend the triage. *Id.*

In the present case, on April 15, 2013, the Department sent Claimant a Notice of Noncompliance informing Claimant of a failure to participate in employment-related

activities and setting a triage date of April 23, 2013. On April 15, 2013, the Department sent Claimant a Notice of Case Action closing Claimant's FIP case and decreasing Claimant's FAP benefits, effective May 1, 2013, due to failure to participate in employment-related activities without good cause.

Claimant attended the triage, where the Department found no good cause due to Claimant not submitting job search hours three weeks in a row. However, both Claimant and the case manager for the PATH contractor testified credibly that Claimant and Claimant's group member were allowed to combine hours to arrive at thirty-five hours per week of job search. The case manager for the PATH contractor further testified that there was confusion on the part of Claimant and a group member as to when each person was required to turn in hours. It was apparent from Claimant's testimony that she was willing to participate in employment-related activities, but was not given clear direction on how to participate in the activities.

Based on the above discussion, I find that Claimant had good cause to not participate in work-related activities, as the unclear direction from the PATH contractor was beyond her control. Therefore, the Department was not correct in closing Claimant's FIP case and decreasing Claimant's FAP benefits due to failing to participate in work-related activities.

Based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, the Administrative Law Judge concludes that the Department ☐ properly closed Claimant's FIP case. ☒ improperly closed Claimant's FIP case and decreased Claimant's FAP benefits.

DECISION AND ORDER

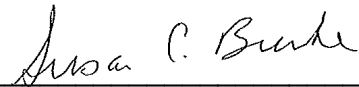
The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, finds that the Department ☐ did act properly. ☒ did not act properly.

Accordingly, the Department's decision is ☐ AFFIRMED ☒ REVERSED for the reasons stated on the record.

☒ THE DEPARTMENT IS ORDERED TO:

1. Remove the sanction from Claimant's case.
2. Initiate reinstatement of Claimant's FIP case and restoration of Claimant's FAP benefits, effective May 1, 2013, if Claimant is otherwise eligible for FIP and FAP.

3. Issue FIP and FAP supplements for any payment Claimant was entitled to receive, in accordance with Department policy.



Susan C. Burke
Administrative Law Judge
For Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: May 28, 2013

Date Mailed: May 28, 2013

NOTICE: Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) 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. MAHS 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. (60 days for FAP cases)

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 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.

2013-43145/SCB

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

cc:

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