

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 201353203  
Issue No.: [REDACTED]  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: July 11, 2013  
County: Ogemaw

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Kevin Scully

**HEARING DECISION**

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 following Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on July 11, 2013, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Participants on behalf of Department of Human Services (Department) included [REDACTED].

**ISSUE**

Whether the Department of Human Services (Department) properly sanctioned the Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) case for noncompliance with employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities?

**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 an ongoing Family Independence Program (FIP) recipient.
2. The Department referred the Claimant to the Partnership Accountability Training Hope (PATH) program as a condition of receiving FIP benefits.
3. The Claimant was previous deferred from PATH participation, but on January 3, 2013, the Medical Review Team (MRT) determined that the Claimant is capable of participating in PATH (Work First) programing.

4. The Claimant was noncompliant with the PATH program when she failed to submit verification that she had completed her assignments by April 30, 2013.
5. The Department conducted a triage meeting on May 9, 2013.
6. On April 30, 2013, the Department notified the Claimant that it would sanction her FIP benefits as of June 1, 2013.
7. The Department received the Claimant's request for a hearing on June 12, 2013, protesting the sanctioning of her FIP benefits.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

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 (RFT), and the Bridges Reference Manual (BRM).

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 Partnership. Accountability Training. Hope. (PATH) program requirements, education and training opportunities, and assessments will be covered by PATH when a mandatory PATH participant is referred at application. Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 229 (January 1, 2013), p 1.

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. Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 230A (January 1, 2013), p 1.

WEIs not referred to PATH will participate in other activities to overcome barriers so they may eventually be referred to PATH or other employment service provider. DHS must monitor these activities and record the client's participation in the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP). BEM 230A, p 1.

A WEI who refuses, without good cause, to participate in assigned employment and/or other self-sufficiency related activities is subject to penalties. BEM 230A, p 1.

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.
- Complete a Family Automated Screening Tool (FAST), as assigned as the first step in the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP) process.
- Develop a FSSP.
- Comply with activities assigned on the FSSP.
- 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.
- Appear for a job interview.
- Stating orally or in writing a definite intent not to comply with program requirements.
- Threatening, physically abusing or otherwise behaving disruptively toward anyone conducting or participating in an employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activity.
- Refusing employment support services if the refusal prevents participation in an employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activity.

- Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 233A (January 1, 2013), pp 2-3.

The Department will follow the procedures outlined below for processing the FIP closure:

- On the night that the one-stop service center case manager places the participant into triage activity, OSMIS will interface to Bridges a noncooperation notice. Bridges will generate a triage appointment at the local office as well as generating the DHS-2444, Notice of Employment And/Or Self-Sufficiency Related Noncompliance, which is sent to the client. The following information will be populated on the DHS-2444:
  - The name of the noncompliant individual
  - The date of the initial noncompliance. (For individuals being served by PATH, this is the date the client was considered to be noncompliant by the one-stop service center and placed into the triage activity in OSMIS.)
  - All the dates, if addressing more than one incident of noncompliance.
  - The reason the client was determined to be noncompliant.
  - The penalty that will be imposed.
  - The scheduled triage appointment, to be held within the negative action period.
- Determine good cause during triage and prior to the negative action effective date. Good cause must be verified and provided prior to the end of the negative action period and can be based on information already on file with the DHS or PATH. Document the good cause determination on the Noncooperation Detail Screen within 24 hours of determination. BEM 233A, pp 8-9.

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. A claim of good cause must be verified and documented for member adds and recipients. BEM 233A, pp 3-4.

Good cause should be determined based on the best information available during the triage and prior to the negative action date. Good cause may be verified by information already on file with DHS or MWA. Good cause must be considered even if the client does not attend, with particular attention to possible disabilities (including disabilities

that have not been diagnosed or identified by the client) and unmet needs for accommodation. BEM 233A.

Good cause includes the following:

**Illness or Injury:** The client has a debilitating illness or injury, or a spouse or child's illness or injury requires in-home care by the client.

**Reasonable Accommodation:** The DHS, employment services provider, contractor, agency, or employer failed to make reasonable accommodations for the client's disability or the client's needs related to the disability.

**Unplanned Event or Factor:** Credible information indicates an unplanned event or factor which likely prevents or significantly interferes with employment and/or self-sufficiency-related activities. Unplanned events or factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Domestic violence.
- Health or safety risk.
- Religion.
- Homelessness.
- Jail.
- Hospitalization.

Noncompliance by a WEI while the application is pending results in group ineligibility. A WEI applicant who refused employment without good cause, within 30 days prior to the date of application or while the application is pending, must have benefits delayed; see Benefit Delay for Refusing Employment in this item. BEM 233A.

The penalty for noncompliance without good cause is FIP EDG closure. Effective October 1, 2011, the following minimum penalties apply:

- For the individual's first occurrence of noncompliance, Bridges closes the FIP EDG for not less than three calendar months.
- For the individual's second occurrence of noncompliance, Bridges closes the FIP EDG for not less than six calendar months.
- For the individual's third occurrence of noncompliance, Bridges closes the FIP EDG for a lifetime sanction. BEM 233A.

In this case, the Claimant was an ongoing Family Independence Program (FIP) recipient until June 1, 2013, and the Department had referred her to the PATH program as a condition of receiving FIP benefits. The Claimant was noncompliant with the PATH program when she failed to submit verification that she had completed her assignments by April 30, 2013. The Department conducted a triage meeting on May 9, 2013, where the Claimant was given the opportunity to establish good cause for noncompliance with

the PATH program. The Claimant failed to attend the triage meeting. On April 30, 2013, the Department notified the Claimant that it would sanction her FIP benefits as of June 1, 2013.

The Claimant argued that she had good cause for her noncompliance with the PATH program. The Claimant testified that her own medical conditions and disabilities were a barrier to the completion of her PATH assignment. The Claimant testified that a serious injury to her son was a barrier to the completion of her PATH assignment. The Claimant provided documentation as verification of her medical condition as well as the injury to her son that required hospitalization.

A claimant of good cause must be verified by evidence and the Claimant failed to present evidence at the triage meeting.

However, the Department has a duty to consider whether the Claimant had good cause for her noncompliance based on all available information.

In this case, the Claimant had been previously deferred from participation in the PATH program, but was found by the Medical Review Team to be capable of completing a JET assignment. The Claimant provided medical documentation covering the period before her alleged noncompliance, but failed to present evidence supporting a finding of good cause for the week of April 30, 2013.

The Claimant argued that she is not capable of participating in the PATH program due to her disabilities. The Claimant testified that she attempted to participate at the PATH program office, but was sent home after she demonstrated an inability to complete the work.

The Claimant failed to present evidence that she was sent away from the PATH location or that she had requested any special accommodations that would facilitated the completion of her PATH assignments.

Based on the evidence and testimony available during the hearing, the Department's determination that the Claimant did not have good cause for her noncompliance with the PATH program is reasonable. The Department has established that it acted properly when it sanctioned the Claimant's FIP benefits for noncompliance with self-sufficiency related activities.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Department acted in accordance with policy when it sanctioned the Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) case for noncompliance with the Partnership. Accountability Training. Hope. (PATH) program.

The Department's FIP sanction is **AFFIRMED**. It is SO ORDERED.

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Scully  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed:07/18/2013

Date Mailed:07/19/2013

**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 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.

201353203/KS

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

KS/sw

cc:

