

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**



Reg. No.: 201417112  
Issue No.: 3011  
Case No.:   
Hearing Date: January 13, 2014  
County: Wayne (43)

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Robert J. Chavez

**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 January 13, 2014, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included . Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included , FIS.

**ISSUE**

Did the Department properly  deny Claimant's application  close Claimant's case for:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Independence Program (FIP)?        | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Medical Assistance (AMP)?    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food Assistance Program (FAP)? | <input type="checkbox"/> State Disability Assistance (SDA)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Assistance (MA)?                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Development and Care (CDC)?  |

**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  applied for benefits  received benefits for:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Independence Program (FIP).        | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Medical Assistance (AMP).    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food Assistance Program (FAP). | <input type="checkbox"/> State Disability Assistance (SDA). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Assistance (MA).                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Development and Care (CDC).  |

2. On [REDACTED] 2013, the Department  
 denied Claimant's application     closed Claimant's case  
due to a child support noncooperation action.
3. On [REDACTED] 2013, the Department sent  
 Claimant     Claimant's Authorized Representative (AR)  
notice of the     denial.     closure.
4. On [REDACTED] 2013, Claimant filed a hearing request, protesting the  
 denial of the application.     closure of the case.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

Department policies are contained 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 Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by the Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is implemented by Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Human Services (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the MA program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MCL 400.105.

The Adult Medical Program (AMP) is established by 42 USC 1315, and is administered by the Department pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*

The State Disability Assistance (SDA) program, which provides financial assistance for disabled persons, is established by 2004 PA 344. The Department of Human Services (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and 2000 AACS, Rule 400.3151 through Rule 400.3180.

The Child Development and Care (CDC) program is established by Titles IVA, IVE and XX of the Social Security Act, the Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1990, and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The program is implemented by Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 98 and 99. The Department provides services to adults and children pursuant to MCL 400.14(1) and 1999 AC, Rule 400.5001 through Rule 400.5015.

Regulations governing the Office of Child Support (OCS) can be found in the Office of Child Support Policy Manual (OCSPM).

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. 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. BEM 255.

Noncooperation exists when the custodial parent (CP) does not respond to a request for action or does not provide information, and the process to establish paternity and/or a child support order cannot move forward without the CP's participation. A CP is in noncooperation with the IV-D program when the CP, without good cause, willfully and repeatedly fails or refuses to provide information and/or take an action needed to establish paternity or to obtain child support or medical support. OCSPM 2.15. IV-D staff apply noncooperation to a CP only as a last resort when no other option is available to move the IV-D case forward. OCSPM 2.3.

There is no minimum information requirement. CP's can be required to provide known or obtainable information about themselves, the child(ren) for whom support is sought, and the non-custodial parent (NCP) when needed to obtain support. OCSPM 2.3.1.

In evaluating cooperation, the IV-D worker should consider such factors as the CP's marital status, the duration of his/her relationship with the NCP, and the length of time since the CP's last contact with the NCP. OCSPM 2.3.1.

A CP can be required to cooperate by attesting under oath to the lack of information regarding an NCP. This may assist in determining cooperation in cases in which a CP's willingness to cooperate is questionable but there is insufficient evidence for a finding of noncooperation. The IV-D worker is not required to provide a CP with the opportunity to attest under oath if the CP has not demonstrated a willingness and good-faith effort to provide information. In this situation, the IV-D worker must evaluate whether the CP has knowingly withheld information or given false information, and base a decision on that evidence. OCSPM 2.3.5.

With regard to the child support noncooperation sanction, no evidence was presented that this sanction was correct. While the Department presented letters of contact for the claimant from the Office of Child Support, these letters gave deadlines that were

impossible to meet (one required claimant to contact OCS before she received the letter). Furthermore, there was no evidence presented that the information requested in these letters were required to establish a paternity case. Finally, there was no evidence to show that claimant had actually failed to contact OCS. The letters, and the subsequent sanction, can only be used to prove that OCS made contact, and that claimant was placed under a sanction. None of this evidence shows exactly why claimant is under a sanction, whether claimant has actually failed to cooperate, or how claimant is noncooperative.

Simply put, the Administrative Law Judge has received no evidence as to whether the sanction is accurate, why claimant was sanctioned, whether a sanction is warranted, or if claimant even requires child support that would support a sanction. OCS did not testify, and no other evidence regarding the sanction was presented; therefore, as the Department has the burden of proof in these matters, the sanction cannot stand. Furthermore, per claimant testimony, claimant has cooperated to the best of her ability, and there is no evidence that this sanction was applied as a last resort, as required by policy.

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 denied Claimant's application       improperly denied Claimant's application  
 properly closed Claimant's case               improperly closed Claimant's case

for:    AMP    FIP    FAP    MA    SDA    CDC.


**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 in this case REVERSED.

THE DEPARTMENT IS ORDERED TO DO THE FOLLOWING WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DATE OF MAILING OF THIS DECISION AND ORDER:

1. Remove the noncooperation sanction from claimant's case, and reopen the benefit case in question retroactive to the date of the negative action.

  
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**Robert J. Chavez**  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 1/23/2014

Date Mailed: 1/23/2014

**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.

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

RJC/hw

cc:

