

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

**IN THE MATTER OF:**

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 14-004191  
Issue No.: 1008  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: August 6, 2014  
County: Saginaw County DHS

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Gary F Heisler

**HEARING DECISION**

Following Claimant's request for a hearing, this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and 400.37; 7 CFR 273.15 to 273.18; 42 CFR 431.200 to 431.250; 45 CFR 99.1 to 99.33; and 45 CFR 205.10. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on August 6, 2014, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included herself and her mother, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included Hearing Facilitator [REDACTED].

**ISSUES**

Did the Department properly sanction Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) for noncompliance with the Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) program?

**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 Family Independence Program (FIP) and Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits.
- (2) On February 4, 2014, Claimant was sent a Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) Appointment Notice (DHS-4785 form). The notice stated that Claimant was required to attend Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) beginning February 18, 2014.
- (3) On February 25, 2014, Claimant had not attended PATH. Claimant was sent a Notice of Non-Compliance (DHS-2444) which stated this was Claimant's 2<sup>nd</sup> noncompliance and scheduled a meeting for March 4, 2014. Claimant was also sent a Notice of Case Action (DHS-1605) stating that the Family Independence Program (FIP) would be sanctioned.

- (4) On March 4, 2014, Claimant did not attend the scheduled meeting. The Department determined there was no good cause for Claimant's failure to participate in employment and/or self-sufficiency related activities.
- (5) On May 2, 2014, Claimant submitted a handwritten request for hearing. The address Claimant put on the hearing request was her mother's on N. Gleaner in Freeland.

### **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, 42 USC 601, *et seq.* The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FIP pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and 1997 AACRS R 400.3101-3131. FIP replaced the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program effective October 1, 1996.

The Department's policies are available on the internet through the Department's website. Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 233A Failure To Meet Employment and/or Self-Sufficiency Related Requirements: FIP, provides guidance for administration of the Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) program. The policy identifies participation requirements, actions that are noncompliant, the consequences of noncompliance, and the definition of good cause for noncompliance.

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

Failure to complete a FAST or FSSP results in closure due to failure to provide requested verification. Clients can reapply at any time.

- Failing or refusing to:
  - Appear and participate with Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) or other employment service provider.
  - Complete a Family Automated Screening Tool (FAST), as assigned as the first step in the FSSP process.
  - Develop a Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (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 (see the exception below).
- 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.

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.

Claimant does not dispute that she did not begin participation at PATH. Claimant asserts she never received the appointment notice. All the documents sent during this period were addressed to Claimant's address of record on N. Gleaner in Freeland. The address is Ms. Grenell's. Ms. Grenell testified that she has resided at the address for 16 years and that nothing from DHS was delivered to her home after January 2014.

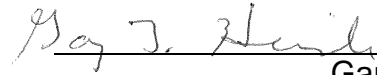
The proper mailing and addressing of a letter creates a presumption of receipt. That presumption may be rebutted by evidence. *Stacey v Sankovich*, 19 Mich App 638 (1969); *Good v Detroit Automobile Inter-Insurance Exchange*, 67 Mich App 270 (1976).

Testimony and other evidence must be weighed and considered according to its reasonableness. *Gardiner v Courtright*, 165 Mich 54, 62; 130 NW 322 (1911); *Dep't of Community Health v Risch*, 274 Mich App 365, 372; 733 NW2d 403 (2007). Moreover, the weight and credibility of this evidence is generally for the fact-finder to determine. *Dep't of Community Health*, 274 Mich App at 372; *People v Terry*, 224 Mich App 447, 452; 569 NW2d 641 (1997). In evaluating the credibility and weight to be given the testimony of a witness, the fact-finder may consider the demeanor of the witness, the reasonableness of the witness's testimony, and the interest, if any, the witness may have in the outcome of the matter. *People v Wade*, 303 Mich 303 (1942), *cert den*, 318 US 783 (1943).

After consideration of all evidence and information in this record, Ms. Grenell's testimony is not believed. Evidence presented at the hearing is not sufficient to establish that Claimant had good cause for her failure to attend PATH. The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, if any, finds that the Department acted in accordance with Department policy when it sanctioned Claimant's Family Independence Program (FIP) for noncompliance with the Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) program.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

Accordingly, the Department's decision is **AFFIRMED**.

  
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Gary F. Heisler  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **8/13/2014**

Date Mailed: **8/13/2014**

GFH/hj

**NOTICE OF APPEAL:** A party may appeal this Hearing Decision in the circuit court in the county in which he/she resides, or the circuit court in Ingham County, within 30 days of the receipt date.

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Hearing Decision from the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) within 30 days of the mailing date of this Hearing Decision, or MAHS may order a rehearing or reconsideration on its own motion.

MAHS may grant a party's Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration when one of the following exists:

- Newly discovered evidence that existed at the time of the original hearing that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision;
- Misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision which led to a wrong conclusion;
- Typographical, mathematical or other obvious error in the hearing decision that affects the rights of the client;
- Failure of the ALJ to address in the hearing decision relevant issues raised in the hearing request.

The party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration must specify all reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration. A request must be *received* in MAHS within 30 days of the date this Hearing Decision is mailed.

A written request may be faxed or mailed to MAHS. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088 and be labeled as follows:

Attention: MAHS Rehearing/Reconsideration Request

If submitted by mail, the written request must be addressed as follows:

Michigan Administrative Hearings  
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request  
P.O. Box 30639  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-07322

cc:

