

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 14-015849
Issue No.: 5001; 3008
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: December 16, 2014
County: KENT-DISTRICT 1

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Susanne E. Harris

HEARING DECISION

Following the 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 December 16, 2014, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of the Claimant included [REDACTED]. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included Hearing Facilitator, [REDACTED]; Lead Worker of the Office of Child Support (OCS), [REDACTED]; and Family Independence Manager, [REDACTED].

ISSUE

Did the Department properly deny the Claimant's application for State Emergency Relief (SER) and reduce the Claimant's monthly Food Assistance Program (FAP) allotment?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. On October 8, 2014, a child support non-compliance penalty automatically updated in the Department's computer system. Therefore, on October 8, 2014, the Claimant's monthly at FAP allotment was reduced from \$ [REDACTED] to \$ [REDACTED] effective November 1, 2014. The Claimant was sent a DHS-1605, Notice of Case Action informing her of such.
2. On October 24, 2014, the Claimant submitted an assistant application for SER.
3. On October 24, 2014 the Claimant's application for SER was denied due to the previous noncooperation penalty with the OCS.
4. On November 7, 2014, the Claimant submitted a hearing request protesting the denial of her SER application and the reduction in her FAP allotment.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), Department of Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT), and Department of Human Services Emergency Relief Manual (ERM).

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) [formerly known as the Food Stamp program] is established by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, 7 USC 2011 to 2036a and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in 7 CFR 273. The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10, the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 to .3015.

The State Emergency Relief (SER) program is established by the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b. The SER program is administered by the Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) pursuant to MCL 400.10 and Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 through R 400.7049.

Additionally, Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 255 (2014) pp. 1, 2, provides that cooperation with the OCS is a condition of eligibility for benefits. Failure to cooperate with the OCS without good cause results in disqualification for benefits. BEM 255, pp. 5-8, provides that it is the role of the Support Specialist (SS) to determine cooperation and non-cooperation and to attend pre-hearings and administrative hearings. Cooperation includes the following:

- Contacting the support specialist when requested.
- Providing all known information about the absent parent.
- Appearing at the office of the prosecuting attorney when requested.
- Taking any actions needed to establish paternity and obtain child support (including but not limited to testifying at hearings or obtaining genetic tests).

In this case, the Claimant did not contest that she did not respond to the contact letters sent to her by the OCS. She did not contest that she did not contact the support specialist upon receipt of the letters. Then, the Claimant contested ever receiving the letters. The Claimant testified that she does not know why she did not receive the first and final contact letter from the OCS. 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). In this case, the Administrative Law Judge determines that the evidence is insufficient to rebut the presumption that the Claimant received the first and final contact letter from the OCS, particularly as she received the DHS-1605, Notice of Case Action informing her of the potential closure of her case, which was also sent to the same address.

As such, the Administrative Law Judge determines that the Claimant was in noncompliance with the OCS because she failed to respond to the first and final contact letters sent to her. Therefore, when the Department took action to deny the Claimant's

application for SER and when the Department took action to reduce the Claimant's monthly FAP allotment, the Department was acting in accordance with its policy.

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 took action to deny the Claimant's application for SER and when it took action to reduce the Claimant's monthly FAP allotment.

DECISION AND ORDER

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



Susanne E. Harris
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **12/22/2014**

Date Mailed: **12/22/2014**

SEH/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 48909-8139

cc:

