

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

██████████
██████████
██████████

Reg. No.: 14-004392
Issue No.: 3011
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: July 14, 2014
County: Wayne (17-Greenfield/Joy)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Michael J. Bennane

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 July 14, 2014, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included ██████████

ISSUE

Did the Department properly find Claimant in noncooperation with child support requirements and reduce her Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits?

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 28, 2011, the Department's Office of Child Support (OCS) sent Claimant a "First Customer Contact Letter" that outlined the actions required of Claimant to continue to receive benefits previously received by Claimant.
2. On August 4, 2012, the Department sent Claimant a noncooperation notice.
3. On March 7, 2014, the Department sent Claimant a notice of case action informing her that her FAP benefits would be reduced effective April 1, 2014, due to Claimant's failure to cooperate with OCS.
4. On June 5, 2014, Claimant requested a hearing to protest the decrease in her FAP benefits.

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.

After swearing in Claimant, this Administrative Law Judge questioned her about the information she had already supplied to OCS. Claimant testified that she had provided OCS with all the information she possessed about the father of her child. Claimant was asked whether she had any further information and she replied in the negative.

This Administrative Law Judge then asked the Department whether they had any evidence or knowledge that Claimant had further information concerning the father of her child. The Department replied in the negative.

In *Black v Dept of Social Services*, 195 Mich App 27 (1992), the Court of Appeals addressed the issue of burden of proof in a non-cooperation finding. Specifically, the court in *Black* ruled that to support a finding of non-cooperation, the Department has the burden of proof to establish that the mother (1) failed to provide the requested verification and that (2) the mother knew the requested information. The *Black* court also emphasized the fact that the mother testified under oath that she had no further information and the Department failed to offer any evidence that the mother knew more than she was disclosing. *Black* at 32-34.

Here, Claimant testified that she had no further information to supply to the Department or OCS and the Department testified that it had no knowledge of Claimant possessing further information concerning the father of her child..

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 .
- did not act in accordance with Department policy when it moved to reduce Claimant's FAP benefits for her failure to cooperate with OCS.
- failed to satisfy its burden of showing that it acted in accordance with Department policy when it .


DECISION AND ORDER

Accordingly, the Department's decision is

- AFFIRMED.
 REVERSED.
 AFFIRMED IN PART with respect to _____ and REVERSED IN PART with respect to _____.

THE DEPARTMENT IS ORDERED TO BEGIN DOING THE FOLLOWING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENT POLICY AND CONSISTENT WITH THIS HEARING DECISION, WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DATE OF MAILING OF THIS DECISION AND ORDER:

1. Reinstate the Claimant's FAP benefits retroactively back to April 1, 2014, and supplement for any missed benefits.



Michael J. Bennane
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **7/16/2014**

Date Mailed: **7/16/2014**

MJB / pf

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:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]