

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

████████████████████
████████████████████
██

Reg. No.: 15-000584
Issue No.: 3002;6002
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: February 12, 2015
County: Macomb-District 12

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Zainab Baydoun

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 February 12, 2015, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included Claimant. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (Department) included ██████████, Eligibility Specialist/Alternate Hearings Facilitator.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly deny Claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) and Child Development and Care (CDC) applications on the basis that she failed to verify requested information?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. In November 2014, Claimant submitted an application for FAP and CDC benefits.
2. In connection with the application, on December 18, 2014, the Department sent Claimant a Verification Checklist (VCL) instructing her to submit proof of her income, CDC provider assignment, loss of employment, home rent and checking account information by December 29, 2014. (Exhibit 1)
3. Claimant submitted verification of her income, home rent and checking account information by the December 29, 2014, due date on the VCL.

4. On December 30, 2014, the Department sent Claimant a Notice of Case Action informing her that the FAP and CDC applications had been denied on the basis that she failed to return proof of her loss of employment and CDC provider verification by the due date. (Exhibit 2)
5. On January 14, 2015, Claimant requested a hearing disputing the Department's actions.

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 Child Development and Care (CDC) program is established by Titles IVA, IVE and XX of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 601-619, 670-679c, and 1397-1397m-5; the Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1990, PL 101-508, 42 USC 9858 to 9858q; and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, PL 104-193. The program is implemented by 45 CFR 98.1-99.33. The Department administers the program pursuant to MCL 400.10 and provides services to adults and children pursuant to MCL 400.14(1) and Mich Admin Code, R 400.5001-.5020.

Additionally, verification is usually required at application/redetermination and for a reported change affecting eligibility or benefit level. BAM 130 (October 2014), p.1. To request verification of information, the Department sends a verification checklist (VCL) which tells the client what verification is required, how to obtain it, and the due date. BAM 130, p. 3. Although the client must obtain the required verification, the Department must assist if a client needs and requests help. If neither the client nor the Department can obtain the verification despite a reasonable effort, the Department is to use the best available information; and if no evidence is available, the Department is to use its best judgment. BAM 130, p. 3.

With respect to FAP and CDC cases, clients are given 10 calendar days to provide the verifications requested by the Department. Verifications are considered to be timely if received by the date they are due. BAM 130, pp.6-7. The Department sends a negative action notice when the client indicates a refusal to provide a verification or the time period given has elapsed and the client has not made a reasonable effort to provide it.

BAM 130, pp.6- 7. For CDC cases, if the client cannot provide the verification despite a reasonable effort, the Department can extend the time limit at least once. BAM 130, p. 6.

In this case, on December 18, 2014, the Department sent Claimant a VCL instructing her to submit proof of her income, CDC provider assignment, loss of employment, home rent and checking account information by December 29, 2014. (Exhibit 1). The Department testified that although Claimant timely submitted some of the requested verifications by the due date, because Claimant did not provide verification of her loss of employment and CDC provider assignment, her FAP and CDC applications were denied based on a failure to verify and a Notice of Case Action was sent, informing her of the denial. (Exhibit 2).

At the hearing, Claimant confirmed that she received the VCL and stated that in response, she submitted some of the requested verifications. Claimant testified that in December 2014, she gave the CDC provider the verification form to complete and that she was informed by the CDC provider that the provider would complete the form and submit it to the Department. With respect to the loss of employment verifications, Claimant testified that she attempted to contact her case worker several times for clarification on what would be acceptable to submit as proof of her loss of employment, however, her case worker did not return any phone calls. The Department representative present for the hearing was not Claimant's case worker; therefore, Claimant's testimony was unrefuted. Claimant also testified that she contacted her previous employer to obtain the information for the Department; however, the employer indicated that they did not know what to provide Claimant with.

Under the facts in this case and based on the evidence presented, Claimant made a reasonable effort to provide the information requested by the Department and did not indicate a refusal to do so. BAM 130, p 6. 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 failed to satisfy its burden of showing that it acted in accordance with Department policy when it denied Claimant's FAP and CDC applications based on a failure to verify requested information.

DECISION AND ORDER

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

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. Register and process Claimant's November 2014, FAP and CDC applications;
2. Issue supplements to Claimant and her CDC provider for any CDC benefits they were entitled to receive but did not from the application date, ongoing;
3. Issue supplements to Claimant for any FAP benefits that she was entitled to receive from the application date, ongoing; and
4. Notify Claimant in writing of its decision.



Zainab Baydoun
Administrative Law Judge
for Nick Lyon, Interim Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: **2/19/2015**

Date Mailed: **2/19/2015**

ZB / tlf

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: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]