

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 15-007374
Issue No.: 3011, 5011, 6011
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: June 23, 2015
County: Genesee-District 2

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Kevin Scully

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, telephone hearing was held on June 23, 2015, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included [REDACTED]. Participants on behalf of the Department included [REDACTED] as hearings facilitator, and [REDACTED] representing the Office of Child Support.

ISSUE

Did the Department of Health and Human Services (Department) properly sanction the Claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP), State Emergency Relief (SER), and Child Development and Care (CDC) benefits for non-cooperation with the Office of Child Support?

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 February 13, 2015, the Department requested that the Claimant provide the Department with information necessary to identify and locate the absent parent of her child.
2. On March 15, 2015, the Department notified the Claimant that she had 14 days to cooperate with the Department's efforts to identify and locate the absent parent of her children.
3. On April 10, 2015, the Department notified the Claimant that it found her to be non-cooperative with the Department's efforts to identify and locate the absent parent of her children.

4. On May 1, 2015, the Department notified the Claimant that it had denied her State Emergency Relief (SER) application.
5. On May 1, 2015, the Department notified the Claimant that it had denied her Child Development and Care (CDC) application.
6. On May 1, 2015, the Department notified the Claimant that it would reduce her monthly allotment of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits to \$ [REDACTED] effective June 1, 2015, and reduce her FAP group size to 1.
7. On May 5, 2015, the Department received the Claimant's request for a hearing protesting the Department's non-cooperation sanction.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

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

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) [formerly known as the Food Stamp program] is established by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, 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 Department of Human Services) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10, the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001-.3011.

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 Department of Human Services) pursuant to MCL 400.10 and Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001-.7049.

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.

Families are strengthened when children's needs are met. Parents have a responsibility to meet their children's needs by providing support and/or cooperating with the department, including the Office of Child Support (OCS), the Friend of the Court (FOC) and the prosecuting attorney to establish paternity and/or obtain support from an absent parent. The custodial parent or alternative caretaker of children 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, as well as denial or closure of program benefits. Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 255 (October 1, 2014), pp 1-2.

The Claimant was a FAP recipient, and applied for SER and CDC benefits. After reviewing the Claimant's benefits case file, the Department initiated an investigation to identify and locate the absent parent of the Claimant's child as required by Department policy. On February 13, 2015, the Department made its first request to the Claimant for information necessary to identify and locate the absent parent. On March 15, 2015, the Claimant had not responded to any of the Department's request, and she was notified that she had 14 days to cooperate with the Department's inquiries. After receiving no response, on April 10, 2015, the Department notified the Claimant that it found her to be non-cooperative with the Department's efforts to identify and locate the absent parent.

As a result of her non-cooperation with the Department's Office of Child Support, the Department reduced the Claimant's FAP benefits after disqualifying her from the FAP group. The Department also denied the Claimant's requests for SER and CDC benefits.

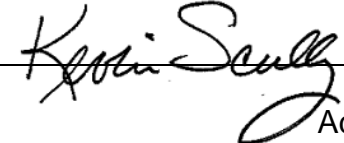
The Claimant testified that she failed to respond to the Department's requests for information because she is unable to identify the absent parent.

The Claimant had a duty to cooperate with the Department's Office of Child Support despite her opinion that she is unable to locate the absent father. The Claimant had a duty to provide any information she does have so that the Department can assist her to identify and locate the absent parent. In the absence of any cooperation with the Department's inquiries, the Department had no choice to sanction the Claimant's benefits for failure to cooperate with the Department's inquiries without good cause.

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 reduced the Claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits and denied Child Development and Care (CDC) and State Emergency Relief (SER) benefits.

DECISION AND ORDER

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



Kevin Scully
Administrative Law Judge
for Nick Lyon, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

Date Signed: **6/30/2015**

Date Mailed: **6/30/2015**

KS/las

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.

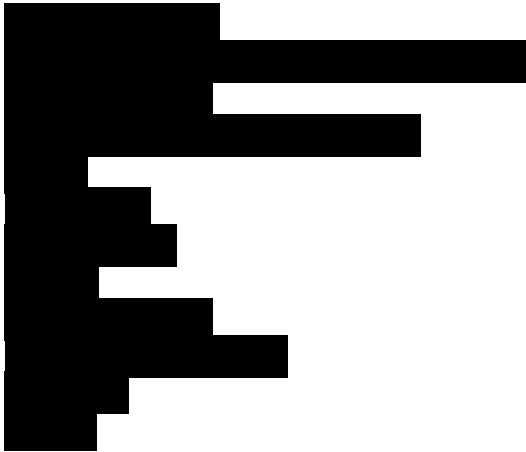
A written request may be faxed or mailed to MAHS. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088 and be labeled as follows:

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:

A large black rectangular redaction covers the recipient list for the 'cc:' field. The redaction is composed of several horizontal bars of varying lengths, obscuring all names and contact information.