



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: September 13, 2017
MAHS Docket No.: 17-010442
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Kevin Scully

HEARING DECISION

Following Petitioner'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 September 7, 2017, from Lansing, Michigan. The Petitioner represented herself. The Department was represented by [REDACTED] Assistance Payments Supervisor.

ISSUE

Did the Department of Health and Human Services (Department) properly close Petitioner's 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. Petitioner was an ongoing Food Assistance Program (FAP) recipient.
2. On April 20, 2017, the Department sent Petitioner a Quick Note (DHS-100) informing her that her caseworker has been unable to verify the size and composition of her household. Exhibit A, p 5.
3. On May 22, 2017, the Department sent Petitioner a Shelter Verification (DHS-3688) with a June 1, 2017, due date. Exhibit A, pp 6-7.
4. On May 22, 2017, the Department sent Petitioner a Verification Checklist (DHS-3503) requesting proof of current address and people living in her household by Jun 1, 2017. Exhibit A, pp 8-9.
5. On June 12, 2017, the Department notified Petitioner that her Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits would close effective July 1, 2017. Exhibit A, pp 10-13.

6. On July 31, 2017, the Department received Petitioner's request for a hearing protesting the closure of her Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits. Exhibit A, pp 2-3.

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.

Clients must cooperate with the local office in determining initial and ongoing eligibility and this includes the completion of necessary forms. Department of Human Services Bridges Assistance Manual (BAM) 105 (October 1, 2016), p 8.

Verification means documentation or other evidence to establish the accuracy of the client's verbal or written statements. Verification is usually required at application/redetermination and for a reported change affecting eligibility or benefit level when it is required by policy, required as a local office option, or information regarding an eligibility factor is unclear, inconsistent, incomplete, or contradictory. The Department uses documents, collateral contacts, or home calls to verify information. A collateral contact is a direct contact with a person, organization, or agency to verify information from the client. When documentation is not available, or clarification is needed, collateral contact may be necessary. Department of Human Services Bridges Assistance Manual (BAM) 130 (January 1, 2016), pp 1-9.

Petitioner was an ongoing FAP recipient when the Department sent Petitioner a Quick Note (DHS-100) informing her that her caseworker has been unable to verify the size and composition of her household. On May 22, 2017, the Department sent Petitioner a Shelter Verification (DHS-3688) with a June 1, 2017, due date. On May 22, 2017, the Department sent Petitioner a Verification Checklist (DHS-3503) requesting proof of current address and people living in her household by June 1, 2017.

On June 12, 2017, the Department had not received the information that Petitioner had been requested to provide, and had received any communication from Petitioner. The Department then closed Petitioner's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits.

Petitioner testified that she did not receive the Department's requests for verification.

While a presumption arises that a letter with a proper address and postage will, when placed in the mail be delivered by the postal service, this presumption can be rebutted with evidence that the letter was not received. If such evidence is presented, as it was here, then a question of fact arises regarding whether the letter was received. [Citations omitted.] *Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co v Roseville*, 468 Mich 947; 664 NW2d 751 (2003).

In this case, the Department presented substantial evidence that it mailed Petitioner a Verification Checklist (DHS-3503) at her mailing address of record and the Petitioner failed to rebut the presumption of receipt. Petitioner did not dispute that she received the Department's Notice of Case Action, which sent to the same address as the Verification Checklist (DHS-3503).

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 closed Petitioner's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits for failure to provide the Department with information necessary to determine she eligibility to receive benefits.

DECISION AND ORDER

Accordingly, the Department's decision is AFFIRMED.

KS/nr



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

NOTICE OF APPEAL: A party may appeal this Order in circuit court within 30 days of the receipt date. A copy of the circuit court appeal must be filed with the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Order if the request is received by MAHS within 30 days of the date the Order was issued. The party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration must provide the specific reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration.

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

DHHS

[REDACTED]

Petitioner

[REDACTED]