



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
MICHIGAN OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES

ORLENE HAWKS
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: May 28, 2020
MOAHR Docket No.: 20-001668
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Ellen McLemore

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; 42 CFR 438.400 to 438.424; 45 CFR 99.1 to 99.33; and 45 CFR 205.10; and Mich Admin Code, R 792.11002. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on May 21, 2020, from Detroit, Michigan. Petitioner was present and represented himself. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) was represented by Brad Reno, Hearing Facilitator.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly deny Petitioner's Food Assistance Program (FAP) application?

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 [REDACTED], 2019, Petitioner submitted an application for FAP benefits (Exhibit A, pp. 12-17).
2. Petitioner indicated on the application that he had income from self-employment (Exhibit A, pp. 15-16).
3. On November 21, 2019, the Department sent Petitioner a Notice of Case Action (NOCA) informing him that his expedited FAP application was approved, pending verification (Exhibit A, pp. 23-28).

4. On November 21, 2019, the Department sent Petitioner a Verification Checklist (VCL) requesting verification of Petitioner's self-employment income (Exhibit A, pp. 29-31).
5. On November 25, 2019, Petitioner submitted a letter from his employer (Exhibit A, p. 59).
6. On February 6, 2020, the Department sent Petitioner a NOCA informing him that his FAP benefit case was closing effective December 1, 2019, ongoing, for his failure to verify requested information (Exhibit A, pp. 54-58).
7. On February 24, 2020, Petitioner submitted a request for hearing disputing the Department's actions.

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.

In this case, Petitioner submitted an application for FAP benefits on [REDACTED], 2019. Petitioner indicated in the application that he was self-employed. As a result, the Department sent Petitioner a VCL on November 21, 2019, requesting verification of his self-employment income. Proofs were due by December 2, 2019.

Verification is usually required at application/redetermination and for a reported change affecting eligibility or benefit level. BAM 130 (April 2017), 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. For FAP cases, the Department allows the client 10 calendar days (or other time limit specified in policy) to provide the verification that is required. BAM 130 (April 2017), p. 7. Verifications are considered to be timely if received by the date they are due. BAM 130, p. 7. For electronically transmitted verifications (fax, email or Mi Bridges document upload), the date of the transmission is the receipt date. BAM 130, p. 7. Verifications that are submitted after the close of regular business hours through the drop box or by delivery of a Department representative are considered to be received the next business day. BAM 130, p. 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, p. 7.

The Department testified that Petitioner did not return verification of his self-employment income. As a result, Petitioner's FAP application was denied. Petitioner testified that he does odd jobs for local individuals and is paid in cash. Petitioner stated he does not receive any tax documents, such as a 1099, for the work he performs. Petitioner testified that he submitted a note from his employer stating that he was employed.

The Department presented Petitioner's electronic case file (ECF) (Exhibit A, p. 53). The ECF consists of scanned documents, arranged by category and identified by a client name, recipient ID or case number, established for a particular client group. BAM 300 (October 2016), p. 1. The ECF contains all forms, documents and other evidence to the group's current and past eligibility. BAM 300, p. 1. The ECF revealed that Petitioner submitted documents on November 25, 2019, titled "Other Income Verification" and "Employer statement." The Department stated that both submissions were the same document. The Department presented the document that was submitted by Petitioner (Exhibit A, p. 59). The document is a letter from Petitioner's employer stating that she employs Petitioner and that the Department may contact her with any questions.

The Department sends a negative action 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. Petitioner clearly did not indicate a refusal to provide the verification and made a reasonable effort to comply with the requests for verification. Thus, the Department did not act in accordance with policy when it closed Petitioner's FAP benefit case.

DECISION AND ORDER

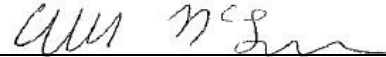
The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, if any, finds that the Department did not act in accordance with Department policy when it denied Petitioner's FAP application.

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. Redetermine Petitioner's FAP eligibility as of December 1, 2019, ongoing;
2. If Petitioner is eligible for FAP benefits, issue supplements he is entitled to receive; and
3. Notify Petitioner of its decision in writing.

EM/cg



Ellen McLemore
Administrative Law Judge
for Robert Gordon, 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 Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Order if the request is received by MOAHR 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. MOAHR will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration.

A written request may be mailed or faxed to MOAHR. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 763-0155; Attention: MOAHR Rehearing/Reconsideration Request.

If submitted by mail, the written request must be addressed as follows:

Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request
P.O. Box 30639
Lansing, Michigan 48909-8139

Via Email:

MDHHS-Genesee-Union St.-Hearings
M. Holden
D. Sweeney
BSC2- Hearing Decisions
MOAHR

Petitioner – Via First-Class Mail:

