



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

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

ORLENE HAWKS
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: January 11, 2021
MOAHR Docket No.: 20-006871
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 January 7, 2021, from Detroit, Michigan. Petitioner was present and represented herself. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) was represented by Valarie Foley, Hearing Facilitator.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly deny Petitioner 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], 2020, Petitioner submitted an application for FAP benefits.
2. On August 13, 2020, the Department sent Petitioner a Verification Checklist (VCL) requesting proof of her income for the previous 30 days (Exhibit A, pp. 8-9).
3. On August 24, 2020, Petitioner submitted two pay statements from her income from employment (Exhibit A, pp. 10-11).
4. On September 2, 2020, the Department sent Petitioner a Notice of Case Action informing her that her FAP application was denied for her failure to submit the requested verifications (Exhibit A, pp. 12-16).
5. On November 2, 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], 2020. On August 13, 2020, the Department sent Petitioner a VCL, requesting verification of her wages for the previous 30 days. Proofs were due by August 24, 2020.

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 presented two pay statements submitted by Petitioner on August 24, 2020. The Department testified that Petitioner was paid on a weekly basis. The pay statements provided only verified Petitioner's income for a two-week period. The Department stated that Petitioner did not submit any other pay statements prior to the VCL due date. As Petitioner did not submit proof of her income for a 30-day period, the Department denied Petitioner's application.

Petitioner testified that she received the VCL and was aware that she needed to provide proof of her income for a 30-day period. Petitioner stated that on August 24, 2020, she submitted four different pay statements, covering a 30-day period. Petitioner was unsure as to why the Department only received two pay statements.

Petitioner's testimony that she attempted to submit verification of her wages for a 30-day period was credible. 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 denied Petitioner's FAP application.

DECISION AND ORDER

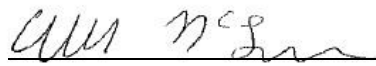
The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, if any, finds that the Department did not act in accordance with Department policy when it denied Petitioner's FAP application.

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. Reinstatement and reprocess Petitioner's [REDACTED] 2020 FAP application;
2. If Petitioner is eligible for FAP benefits, issue supplements she is entitled to receive; and
3. Notify Petitioner of its decision in writing.

EM/jem



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-Wayne-19-Hearings
BSC4-HearingDecsions
M. Holden
D. Sweeney
MOAHR

Petitioner – Via First-Class Mail:

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