



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
MICHIGAN OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES
SUZANNE SONNEBORN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARLON I. BROWN, DPA
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED], MI [REDACTED]

Date Mailed: March 18, 2024
MOAHR Docket No.: 24-000880
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Danielle R. Harkness

HEARING DECISION

On January 26, 2024, Petitioner, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] requested a hearing to dispute the denial of his application for Family Independence Program (FIP) cash assistance benefits. As a result, a hearing was scheduled to be held on March 5, 2024, pursuant to MCL 400.9, 7 CFR 273.15, and Mich Admin Code, R 792.11002. Petitioner appeared at the hearing and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Petitioner's Authorized Hearing Representative (AHR), appeared on behalf of Petitioner. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) was represented by Corlette Brown, Hearings Facilitator; Ashley Worthy, Eligibility Specialist; Charles Walker, Assistance Payments Supervisor; and Mashana Chunev, Eligibility Specialist.

A 17-page packet of documents provided by the Department was admitted collectively as the Department's Exhibit A.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly deny Petitioner's application for FIP cash assistance when it determined that Petitioner failed to complete the Family Automated Screening Tool (FAST)?

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] [REDACTED] 2023, Petitioner reapplied for FIP cash assistance.
2. On November 17, 2023, the Department mailed a FAST Referred Notice to Petitioner, which advised Petitioner that he was required to complete the FAST online questionnaire within 30 days from the date of the notice.

3. Petitioner did not complete the FAST online questionnaire.
4. On January 16, 2024, the Department mailed a Notice of Case Action to Petitioner to notify him that his application for FIP cash assistance was denied for failing to complete the FAST.
5. On January 26, 2024, Petitioner requested a hearing.

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 FIP was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-193, and 42 USC 601 to 679c. The Department (formerly known as the Department of Human Services) administers FIP pursuant to 45 CFR 233-260, MCL 400.10, the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-119b, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3101-.3131.

A FIP recipient is required to develop a plan and participate in activities that will strengthen the family and/or help them reach self-sufficiency. BEM 228 (January 1, 2020), p. 1. To accomplish this objective, each FIP recipient is required to complete a family automated screening tool (FAST), which is a web-based initial screening to identify the strengths and needs of FIP families. *Id.* at 2. Completing a FAST is one of the FIP participant's first required work-related activities and establishes a foundation for the development of a successful self-sufficiency plan. *Id.* The completion of FAST is required once for each episode of FIP assistance. *Id.* at 3.

Failure to complete FAST within 30 days of the notice date is considered a failure to meet the eligibility requirements. *Id.* at 19. Good cause cannot excuse the failure to complete FAST because the completion of FAST is a prerequisite to finding good cause. *Id.* at 3. The Department is required to deny a request for FIP benefits when FAST is not completed within 30 days of the notice. *Id.* at 19.

After Petitioner reapplied for FIP cash assistance, the Department mailed Petitioner a new FAST Referred Notice on November 17, 2023, which advised Petitioner that he was required to complete a FAST online questionnaire within 30 days from the date of the notice. Petitioner did not complete the FAST online questionnaire. Petitioner's AHR stated that Petitioner did not receive the November 17, 2023, Notice. Further, she indicated that she does not understand why another FAST needs to be completed because Petitioner had already completed one for his prior application.

Documents properly addressed and placed in the mail are presumed to reach their destination. *Crawford v Michigan*, 208 Mich App 117, 121; 527 NW2d 30 (1994). "This -

2- presumption may be rebutted by evidence, but whether it was a question for the trier of fact.” *Stacey v Sankovich*, 19 Mich App 688, 694; 173 NW2d 225 (1969). Plaintiff denied receipt of the papers but presented no evidence to rebut the presumption of receipt. The mere denial of service is insufficient to rebut the presumption. Cf. *Ins Co of North America v Issett*, 84 Mich App 45, 49; 269 NW2d 301 (1978); *James v James*, 57 Mich App 452, 454; 225 NW2d 804 (1975). In this case, the Department provided credible evidence that the November 17, 2023, FAST Referred Notice was mailed to Petitioner’s last-known mailing address and was not returned as undeliverable. Petitioner’s denial of service of the November 17, 2023, Notice is insufficient to rebut this presumption.

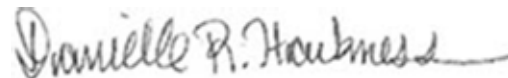
Further, the Department properly determined that Petitioner was required to complete a FAST again because a FAST must be completed for each episode of FIP assistance. It may have been a redundant task, but the Department properly put Petitioner on notice that he had to complete it again when the Department mailed a FAST Referred Notice on November 17, 2023.

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 acted in accordance with its policies and the applicable law when it denied Petitioner’s application for FIP cash assistance.

IT IS ORDERED, the Department’s decision is **AFFIRMED**.

DH/nr



Danielle R. Harkness
Administrative Law Judge

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-Electronic Mail :

DHHS
Keisha Koger-Roper
Wayne-District 31 (Grandmont)
17455 Grand River
Detroit, MI 48227
**MDHHS-Wayne-31-Grandmont-
Hearings@Michigan.gov**

Interested Parties
Wayne 31 County DHHS
BSC4
B. Sanborn
MOAHR

Via-First Class Mail :

Authorized Hearing Rep.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED], MI [REDACTED]

Petitioner

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED], MI [REDACTED]