

ISSUE

Did the Department properly determine Petitioner's eligibility for Family Independence Program (FIP) 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. On September 17, 2025, a Notice of Case Action was issued closing FIP benefits effective October 1, 2025 based on a failure to verify information. (Exhibit A, pp. 8-14)
2. The Department acknowledged that on September 5, 2025, Petitioner provided a document addressing the verification request and the FIP case should have remained open. (Exhibit A, pp. 3, 21, and 23)
3. The local office submitted a Help Desk Ticket on December 12, 2025. (Exhibit A, pp. 22-24)
4. On December 16, 2025, the Help Desk responded that they were unable to grant an extension for a supplement because October 2025 benefits were not authorized by December 5, 2025 to receive the supplement. (Exhibit A, p. 24)
5. On December 16, 2025, a Notice of Case Action was issued approving FIP benefits for the periods of June 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025 and December 1, 2025 an ongoing. (Exhibit A, pp. 15-20)
6. On December 5, 2025, Petitioner filed a hearing request contesting the Department's determination. (Exhibit A, pp. 4-6)

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 Family Independence Program (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.

In this case, on September 17, 2025, a Notice of Case Action was issued closing FIP benefits effective October 1, 2025 based on a failure to verify information. (Exhibit A, pp. 8-14).

The Department acknowledged that on September 5, 2025, Petitioner provided a document addressing the verification request and the FIP case should have remained open. (Exhibit A, pp. 3, 21, and 23). The local office submitted a Help Desk Ticket on December 12, 2025. (Exhibit A, pp. 22-24).

The Department's Hearing Summary asserts that FIP was reinstated for Petitioner's household for October and ongoing. (Exhibit A, p. 3). However, the December 16, 2025, Notice of Case Action stated that FIP benefits were approved for the periods of June 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025 and December 1, 2025 and ongoing. (Exhibit A, pp. 15-20). There is no approval for FIP benefits for November 2025 according to the December 16, 2025, Notice of Case Action. Accordingly, the December 16, 2025 determination did not fully reinstate FIP effective October 1, 2025 and ongoing if there was no approval for the month of November 2025.

Further, the Department documented that when Petitioner's FIP case was incorrectly closed for October 2025, this also affected Petitioner's receipt of a lump sum payment. (Exhibit A, p. 3). On December 16, 2025, the Help Desk responded that they were unable to grant an extension for a supplement because October 2025 benefits were not authorized by December 5, 2025 to receive the supplement. (Exhibit A, p. 24). Based on the information provided, had the Department not incorrectly closed the FIP case effective October 1, 2025, Petitioner would have been eligible for the lump sum payment. When the Department reinstated FIP benefits as of October 1, 2025 to correct their error, the Department should have issued supplemental payment(s) for any FIP benefits Petitioner would have received had the case remained open. Additionally, while the Department provided the email response from the Help Desk, the Department did not provide any policy regarding October 2025 benefits needing to be authorized by December 5, 2025 to receive a supplement.

Overall, the Department has not provided sufficient evidence to satisfy its burden of showing that it acted in accordance with Department policy when it reinstated Petitioner's FIP case because the available evidence does not show that the reinstatement included all FIP benefits Petitioner would have received had the case remained open.

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 failed to satisfy its burden of showing that it acted in accordance with Department policy when it determined Petitioner's eligibility for FIP.

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:

Initiate issuing supplemental payment(s) for any FIP benefits Petitioner was otherwise eligible to receive had the case remained open as of October 1, 2025