

Reasons for Decision:

Order # AP1920-0503

On <date removed>, <name removed> filed an appeal of the decision of the Director, Centralized Services to close their file. The decision was communicated in a letter dated <date removed>.

The Department told <name removed> their file was closed because they did not meet work expectations.

<name removed> expressed concern that the supervisor responsible for their file was not present at the hearing. The appellant alleged that the comments made by the supervisor in the Department's written report were not true.

<name removed> stated they did not want to go to the social skills program, as it was too far from their home. The appellant asserted that they were required to take three different buses to get to the program. The appellant told the Board their worker insisted they attend or their benefits would be held.

<name removed> acknowledged signing an action plan, but stated they disagreed with the plan. The appellant stated that they only signed the plan to continue receiving benefits.

<name removed> stated they did attend the social skills program, and they did meet the job search requirements for a few days. However, it was late <month removed> and the weather was too cold to look for work.

<name removed> asserted that they did everything the Department asked them to do, but the program was not right for them.

After talking to their worker, <name removed> attended the social skills program, but staff would not allow them to return. The following day they received the file closure letter, without any warning from the Department.

The Department relied extensively on the written report submitted as evidence.

The Department told the Board that the social skills program only closes a file after a pattern of negative behavior is established. The Department asserted that <name removed>'s file showed an overall pattern of a negative attitude and non-compliance with expectations when dealing with both the Department and the social skills program.

The Department noted the goal of employment programming is for the client to find a job. Consequently, mere attendance is not sufficient to meet expectations. It is also expected that clients will get out and meet people face to face.

The Department stated that a non-compliant client is given an opportunity to show compliance. The Department told the Board that <name removed> still has an opportunity to demonstrate compliance. At this point, they would have to be compliant for at least one week to have their file reopened.

In response to a question from the Board, <name removed> stated they do submit resumes in person, although they did not think the Department's expectation that they submit eight resumes per day was reasonable.

<name removed> told the Board they have a bus pass, but the distance they have to travel is a barrier. The Department stated there is no record in <name removed>'s file of their raising distance as an issue.

<name removed> asserted that the issue is that the Department insists that they comply with its expectations or it will cancel their benefits. The appellant reiterated that they did not want to participate in the Department's programs, but the Department forced them to do so.

The Board notes that <name removed> acknowledged signing an action plan they disagreed with for the sole purpose of continuing their assistance. The appellant repeatedly told the Board they do not agree with the Department's expectations. Their explanation that they stopped looking for work in person because <month removed> is too cold lacks credibility. Furthermore, the Department submitted sufficient evidence of ongoing non-compliance on <name removed>'s part.

After carefully reviewing the verbal and written evidence presented to it, including <name removed>'s history of non-compliance and stated attitude towards Department programming, the Board determines that the Department assessed <name removed>'s eligibility for assistance according to the legislation and regulations, and confirms the Director's decision to close their income assistance file.

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