

Reasons for Decision:

Order # AP1718-0742

On <date removed>, the appellant appealed the decision of the Director, Employment and Income Assistance to close their file due to work expectations not being met. The decision was made on <date removed>.

The appellant explained to the Board they had been employed and living in stable housing, but they lost their job as a cashier and cook. Without transportation, they had difficulty finding work. Since they lost their job, they have lost their housing and most of their belongings, and has had their children apprehended by CFS. The appellant has since consented to a permanent order placing their children in care of their paternal grandparents, although they have one year to ask for a review of that order.

The appellant has been living at the residences of friends and family, including a period of time at their sister's residence. These arrangements have been temporary, and largely unsatisfactory.

The appellant stated they have not received benefits since they moved out of their ex's house in <date removed>. The appellant phoned their worker, but was told they had been assigned a new worker at Centralized Services. As they had no transportation and lacked proper winter clothing, they found it very difficult to attend Centralized Services.

The appellant's previous worker arranged for them to enter the Career Starters program, but they were unable to attend a few times because they were also enrolled in programs at Snowbird Lodge on Sherbrook Street. The programs had been arranged as a requirement by CFS. The appellant stated they had to choose between focusing on CFS or EIA, and they chose CFS.

The appellant asserted their missed appointments and failure to provide documentation was the result of communication issues between them and their worker. The appellant maintained they had not received the letters the Department included in its report. They were mailed to their sister's house in Elmwood, but they has not been to their sister's house since <date removed>, since they had to walk there.

The appellant noted they do not have a phone, and when they call their worker they typically get the worker's voice mail. Since they do not have regular access to a phone, they feel that leaving a message would be pointless.

The appellant stated they would like to try Career Starters again, but has not been able to make a plan with their worker.

The Department reviewed its written report, which documented a lengthy history of missed or postponed meetings, mostly as a result of the appellant's actions. The Department stated it had requested several different documents from the appellant, and noted they failed to provide much of the requested documentation.

The Department stated it will work with clients who want to work through CFS. The Department contacted staff at Snowbird Lodge, who reported the appellant had not been attending programs there.

The Department advised the Board the appellant did receive benefits for <date removed> and <date removed>, paid in <date removed>. The appellant did not receive benefits for <date removed> and <date removed>. Since their file has been closed for more than 45 days, they will have to go through the intake process again.

The Department conceded the appellant might not have received the letters sent to them, if they was not staying at their sister's residence.

In response to a question from the Board, the appellant confirmed that they had completed some, but not all, of the CFS programs. They stated they wants to complete the four programs they stopped attending.

In response to a question from the Board, the appellant stated they tried to advise their worker of their transportation issues, but could only leave voice messages for the worker. The worker stated the messages did not mention transportation as an issue. the appellant did ask for transportation for CFS programs, but the worker advised their CFS was supposed to cover their transportation for those programs. Bus tokens can be provided for appointments if advance notice is given.

The Board acknowledges the appellant's difficulties with transportation and communication. However, the Board notes the appellant has presented no evidence that they attempted to find ways to overcome those difficulties, including more detailed messages with their worker to update changes in their circumstances.

The appellant told the Board that their record of missed meetings with the Department was the result of the decision to prioritize their work with CFS over their contact with EIA. Evidence before the Board indicates that the appellant also missed sessions or dropped out of programs with CFS.

The appellant told the Board their goal is to find employment and stable housing, then regain custody of their children. The Board supports the appellant in their goal, and

notes their goal will be more achievable if they pays closer attention to complying with the requirements of the Department programs they are involved with.

As the appellant contributed significantly to the closure of their file, the Board can find no reason to restore their assistance for <month removed>, <month removed> and the first half of <month removed>. The Board is not convinced that it is necessary to require the appellant to go through the intake process again. Therefore, the Board varies the decision of the Director and orders the Department to enroll the appellant in the appropriate assistance category effective <date removed>.

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