
In the Matter of the Appeal of
██████████
from a determination by the New York City
Department of Social Services

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**DECISION
AFTER
FAIR
HEARING**

JURISDICTION

Pursuant to Section 22 of the New York State Social Services Law (hereinafter Social Services Law) and Part 358 of Title 18 NYCRR, (hereinafter Regulations), a fair hearing was held on March 16, 2015, in New York City, before an Administrative Law Judge. The following persons appeared at the hearing:

For the Appellant

██

For the Social Services Agency
A. Ukoli, Fair Hearing Representative

ISSUE

Was the Agency's determination to deny the Appellant's application for Public Assistance benefits correct?

FINDINGS OF FACT

An opportunity to be heard having been afforded to all interested parties and evidence having been taken and due deliberation having been had, it is hereby found that:

1. The Appellant applied for Public Assistance benefits on November 7, 2014.
2. By notice dated November 26, 2014, the Agency advised the Appellant of its determination to deny the Appellant's Public Assistance benefits on the grounds that “[y]ou are ineligible Based upon BEV Evaluation-Manual Notice.”

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3. The Action Taken On Your Application dated November 26, 2014 did not include the specific laws and/or regulations upon which the action is based.

4. On January 7, 2015, the Appellant requested this fair hearing.

APPLICABLE LAW

In general, a recipient of Public Assistance, Medical Assistance or Services (including child care and supportive services) has a right to a timely and adequate notice when the Agency proposes to discontinue, suspend, reduce or change the manner of payment of such benefits. An adequate, though not timely, notice is required where the Agency has accepted or denied an application for Public Assistance, Medical Assistance or Services; or has increased the Public Assistance grant; or has determined to change the amount of one of the items used in the calculation of a Public Assistance grant or Medical Assistance spenddown; or has determined that an individual is not eligible for an exemption from work requirements. 18 NYCRR 358-3.3(a). In addition, pursuant to 18 NYCRR 358-3.3(d), an adequate, though not timely, notice is required for a Public Assistance or Medical Assistance recipient when, for example, the Agency has factual information confirming the death of the recipient; the Agency has received a clear written statement from the recipient that he or she no longer wishes to receive Public Assistance or Medical Assistance; the Agency has reliable information that the recipient has been admitted to an institution or prison; the recipient's whereabouts are unknown and mail has been returned to the Agency; or the recipient has been accepted for Public Assistance or Medical Assistance in another district.

An adequate notice is a notice of action, an adverse action notice or an action taken notice which sets forth the action that the Agency proposes to take or is taking, and if a single notice is used for all affected assistance, benefits or services, the effect of such action, if any, on a recipient's other assistance, benefits or services. In addition, the notice must contain:

- o for reductions, the previous and new amounts of assistance or benefits provided;
- o the effective date of the action;
- o the specific reasons for the action;
- o the specific laws and/or regulations upon which the action is based;
- o the recipient's right to request an agency conference and fair hearing;
- o the procedure for requesting an agency conference or fair hearing, including an address and telephone number where a request for a fair hearing may be made and the time limits within which the request for a fair hearing must be made;

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- o an explanation that a request for a conference is not a request for a fair hearing and that a separate request for a fair hearing must be made;
- o a statement that a request for a conference does not entitle one to aid continuing and that a right to aid continuing only arises pursuant to a request for a fair hearing;
- o the circumstances under which public assistance, medical assistance, SNAP benefits or services will be continued or reinstated until the fair hearing decision is issued;
- o a statement that a fair hearing must be requested separately from a conference;
- o a statement that when only an agency conference is requested and there is no specific request for a fair hearing, there is no right to continued public assistance, medical assistance, SNAP benefits or services;
- o a statement that participation in an agency conference does not affect the right to request a fair hearing;
- o the right of the recipient to review the case record and to obtain copies of documents which the agency will present into evidence at the hearing and other documents necessary for the recipient to prepare for the fair hearing at no cost;
- o an address and telephone number where the recipient can obtain additional information about the recipient's case, how to request a fair hearing, access to the case file, and/or obtaining copies of documents;
- o the right to representation by legal counsel, a relative, friend or other person or to represent oneself, and the right to bring witnesses to the fair hearing and to question witnesses at the hearing;
- o the right to present written and oral evidence at the hearing;
- o the liability, if any, to repay continued or reinstated assistance and benefits, if the recipient loses the fair hearing;
- o information concerning the availability of community legal services to assist a recipient at the conference and fair hearing; and
- o a copy of the budget or the basis for the computation, in instances where the social services agency's determination is based upon a budget computation.

18 NYCRR 358-2.2

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DISCUSSION

The Appellant requested this hearing to review the Agency's determination to deny the Appellant's November 7, 2014 application for Public Assistance benefits.

A review of the Agency's notice shows that it did not include the specific laws and/or regulations upon which the action is based as required by 18 NYCRR 358-2.2. These defects in the Agency's notice make it void and therefore, the Agency's determination to deny the Appellant's Public Assistance benefits cannot be sustained.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Agency's determination to deny the Appellant's Public Assistance benefits is not correct and is reversed

1. The Agency is directed to continue to process the Appellant's application for Public Assistance and, if otherwise eligible, accept the application and provide benefits retroactive to the date of establishment of eligibility or the thirtieth day subsequent to the receipt of a signed and completed application, whichever is earlier.

2. In the event that the Agency determines to implement its previously contemplated action, the Agency is directed to provide the Appellant with a notice that meets the requirements set forth in 18 NYCRR 358-2.2.

The Agency's failure to determine the Appellant's eligibility for Medical Assistance and SNAP benefits in a timely manner was not correct and is reversed.

1. The Agency is directed to process the Appellant's application for Medical Assistance and SNAP benefits forthwith.

2. The Agency is directed to advise the Appellant as to any additional documentation required to determine eligibility.

3. The Agency is directed to notify the Appellant in writing of its determination as to eligibility.

4. The Agency is directed to restore all lost benefits resulting from the Agency's failure to process the Appellant's application in a timely manner.

Should the Agency need additional information from the Appellant in order to comply with the above directives, it is directed to notify the Appellant promptly in writing as to what documentation is needed. If such information is requested, the Appellant must provide it to the Agency promptly to facilitate such compliance.

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As required by 18 NYCRR 358-6.4, the Agency must comply immediately with the directives set forth above.

DATED: Albany, New York
03/31/2015

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF
TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James J. Walter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Commissioner's Designee