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Belfast Issues

June 30, 2016

On Thursday, June 30, 2016, I went to Belfast for the purpose of conducting a revisit to bring the City back into compliance with the General Assistance program. Fourteen cases were reviewed for compliance.

Issues that were addressed on April 6, 2016 were:

**Applications were incomplete, including but not limited to: Social Security numbers and dates of birth are not being listed for household members; relative information is missing; employment information missing; budgets not completed, including deficit and unmet need.**

**Assistance was issued when applicant was disqualified for a job quit.**

**Vouchers were given for phone cards.**

**Assistance was given in excess of deficit and unmet need on many occasions.**

**Electrical security deposits were paid.**

**Conditions of eligibility were not met or not assigned in many instances.**

**Client evicted from permanent housing for behavior issues was given a voucher for temporary housing.**

**HH/personal items were issued as an emergency.**

**Children were counted as household members when they were only present on the weekend.**

**Misspent monies were not used as a resource.**

**Extra food was issued because the household had family visiting.**

**Motel was issued as an emergency "when a bed was available". Used two weeks later.**

Upon my return I found that the following issues had not been resolved:

**Applications were still not completed.**

**Assistance was given in excess of deficit, unmet need and/or category maximum.**

**Conditions of eligibility were not met or not assigned in many instances.**

**Misspent monies were not used as a resource.**

**Monies paid from the "Worthy poor" account were included on the client's General Assistance decision.**

New issues that were uncovered during the June 30<sup>th</sup> revisit were:

**IAR forms were not completed and/or signed by the administrator and/or client.**

**Not requiring Dr.'s Note in order to exclude from worksearch/workfare.**

**Paid expenses in excess of received income were not investigated.**

**Electricity paid when amount paid would not stop the electrical disconnect.**

**Actual receipts from prior 30 days income not consistently seen.**

**Some names of clients and amounts of invoices from vendors were altered.**

**Housing and work searches were not verified**

**Temporary housing being issued for a thirty day period without any conditions to search for permanent housing.**

**Prospective income was not budgeted on applications where the applicant had started a new job.**

**On one application, where the applicant had been living in temporary housing for many months, a landlord verification form was returned and the applicant was continued to be housed in temporary housing for another three months.**

**A monthly allowance of food was issued for someone in temporary housing.**

**In accordance with 22 M.R.S.A § 4323-2, I find that the City of Belfast is still in non-compliance.**

**Ellen D. Moore**

**Field Examiner II**

**General Assistance Program**