

Reasons for Decision:

Order #AP1617-0471

The appellant appealed that the appellant was denied income assistance as the appellant was enrolled in a post-secondary education course at the time of the appellant's application.

The appellant stated that prior to the appellant's income assistance file closing in <month removed> for a summer job, the appellant was assured by the (financial) worker that the appellant would have no difficulty getting re-enrolled once the appellant's <course name removed> program began in the fall of <year removed>. Based on this information, the appellant quit the appellant's employment and began school in <month and year removed>. The appellant attended a pre-intake orientation at the beginning of <month removed>, and had an intake appointment for <date removed>. This appointment was postponed by the program and the appellant applied on <date removed>. The appellant stated that by this point <date removed> rent was four days overdue, the appellant had depleted all summer earnings, and the appellant had no means of supporting the appellant and the appellant's child. The appellant was advised on <date removed> that the appellant was denied as they do not fund students. The appellant has been forced to take a weekend job to make ends meet, and the appellant goes days without seeing the appellant's child. The education program the appellant is enrolled in will end in <date removed>.

The program stated that the appellant did not speak to the appellant's case counsellor in <month removed> about the appellant's plans to attend school in the fall, and only that worker would have the authority to make a decision on the appellant's case. The program stated that anyone always has the right to apply for assistance, but the financial workers cannot make decisions on a person's eligibility for assistance. The program stated that support from Employment and Income Assistance for persons enrolled to attend school is only done as part of a long term assessment process when this is required to make a person ready for employment. Employment and Income Assistance will only support persons in post-secondary education when this has been pre-approved as part of a plan. Anyone who applies for income assistance benefits who is already enrolled in post-secondary education is referred to apply for student aid. The program stated that the appellant had been assisted by Training and Employment Services (TES) to attend a <name of course removed> program in the past, and the appellant would therefore not be eligible for support for a second program. The appellant confirmed that the appellant did approach TES for help, and was told the appellant was not eligible as the appellant had already been assisted in a previous course.

The program stated that the normal source of funding for Manitobans who wish to go to school is through the Student Aid Program. The appellant stated the appellant did

not apply for Student aid because the appellant did not have good credit and did not think the appellant would be given a loan. The appellant also stated that the demand for workers in the <course name removed> field is greater than the <text removed> field and that is why the appellant decided to go back to school when the appellant was unable to find any work in the area the appellant took the appellant's first course.

After carefully considering the written and verbal information the Board has determined that the appellant must access any and all available financial supports prior to applying for income assistance. As the appellant is a full time student, the appellant is eligible to apply for both Canada and Manitoba Student Aid Programs. A portion of this assistance is provided as a loan, but a portion is also provided as grants and bursaries.

Employment and Income Assistance is a program of last resort, and the appellant has an obligation to explore all available funding sources. Therefore the decision of the Director has been confirmed.

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