

Reasons for Decision:

Order # AP1819-0169

<name removed> appealed that they were denied the Employment and Income Assistance Rewarding Volunteer Benefit (RVB).

The Rewarding Volunteer Benefit is available to participants enrolled in the disability category. The Department advised that <name removed> submitted a volunteer log sheet confirming they completed eight or more volunteer hours at Siloam Mission. <name removed> was advised in writing that the RVB could not be issued for volunteering at the same place where you are residing. As <name removed> resides at Siloam Mission, they are not eligible. Previous to <name removed>' submitting their volunteer hours at Siloam Mission, they completed a volunteer plan for another agency; however, volunteer log sheets were never received.

<name removed> stated they did not take issue with the Department's policy respecting not being eligible for RVB if volunteering at the same place, they resided, but they stated they were not advised they would not be eligible until after several conversations with their Case Counselor.

The Department advised that the volunteer plan on file at the time was for another agency, not Siloam Mission; therefore the Department was not aware and could not advise of ineligibility.

The Manitoba Assistance Regulation, Schedule A Sections 12 (1) and 12 (2) states:

12(1) *Subject to subsection (2), a person receiving a benefit set out in clause [5\(c\)](#) of this Schedule is entitled to the following payments for participating in volunteer activities:*

- a. \$50 per month if he or she engages in volunteer activities at least four and no more than seven times each month;*
- b. \$100 per month if he or she engages in volunteer activities eight times or more each month.*

12(2) *a person is not entitled to benefits under this section*

- a. for volunteer activities arising out of an approved employability enhancement measure;*
- b. if the person receives any financial compensation for performing the volunteer activities; or*
- c. If the person is receiving services under the marketAbilities, Supported Living or Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated by the department or any other government-funded program designed to prepare a person for employment.*

Further to Schedule A Section 12 the program provided a supplement Circular 2014-51 to further clarify eligibility requirements for the Rewarding Volunteer Benefit (RVB). Additionally, amounts available under the RVB are to be provided to eligible participants with disabilities only upon the completion of an approved Volunteer Plan.

Clarification – Eligible Volunteer Placements

Volunteer placements that are considered eligible for the RVB will:

- be recurring in nature (i.e. a minimum of four volunteer days per month);
- take place in community-based, not-for-profit agencies;
- provide no financial compensation to participants for their activities;
- not be in exchange for any services that participants may be receiving from the agency in which they volunteer; and
- be completely voluntary in nature and not tied to any engagement/participation, employability/employment, or education/training-related service planning processes that participants may be involved in with other government, Regional Health Authority (RHA) or community-based programs. In such instances, funds required to support participation in these plans are the responsibility of the service provider, or may be incorporated into monthly income assistance budgets where allowed under current policy
- not to be completed by participants in the place that they live. (e.g., participants residing on a temporary basis in an emergency shelter, on a longer-term basis in a community-based residence, or in a Manitoba Housing Authority/subsidized housing complex).

The Board carefully considered all the written and verbal information. The Board did not hear of any rationale or extenuating circumstances, which would allow <name removed> to receive the RVB at this time for volunteer work at the same place as they reside. The Board acknowledged and took note of <name removed> concerns; however, the policy is very clear on the criteria to be eligible for the benefit. Therefore, the decision of the Director has been confirmed, and the appeal is dismissed.

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