

STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF: [REDACTED]

Claimant

Reg. No: 2009-31695
Issue No: 3002; 3003
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
August 27, 2009
Kalamazoo County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Robert J. Chavez

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 upon claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, a hearing was held on August 27, 2009.

ISSUE

Was the claimant's FAP allotment computed and allocated correctly?

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the competent, material and substantial evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

- (1) Claimant was receiving a Food Assistance Program (FAP) allotment budget in Kalamazoo County.
- (2) On 6-26-09, claimant reported her rent was increased to \$499 per month and included all utilities, except the telephone.

(3) Claimant's FAP budget was re-run and claimant's new budget indicated claimant was eligible for FAP benefits of \$110.

(4) Claimant filed for hearing on 7-30-09, alleging that DHS incorrectly computed her budget, and therefore, allocated the wrong amount of FAP benefits.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) (formerly known as the Food Stamp (FS) program) is established by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Human Services (DHS or department) administers the FAP program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MAC R 400.3001-3015. Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Bridges Reference Manual (BRM).

When determining eligibility for FAP benefits, the household's total income must be evaluated. All earned and unearned income of each household member must be included unless specifically excluded. BEM, Item 500. A standard deduction from income of \$135 is allowed for each household. Certain non-reimbursable medical expenses above \$35 a month may be deducted for senior/disabled/veteran group members. Another deduction from income is provided if monthly shelter costs are in excess of 50% of the household's income after all of the other deductions have been allowed, up to a maximum of \$300 for non-senior/disabled/veteran households. BEM, Items 500 and 554; RFT 255; 7 CFR 273.2. Only heat, electricity, sewer, trash and telephone are allowed deductions. BEM 554. Any other expenses are considered non-critical, and thus, not allowed to be deducted from gross income. Claimant argued that her cable and newspaper bills should be deducted. However, these deductions are not provided for in

policy and are therefore, prohibited. Furthermore, RFT 255 states exactly how much is allowed to be claimed for each deduction. In the case at hand, claimant argued that her telephone bill is higher than the allowed deduction. However, policy states that \$33 is to be deducted for telephone expenses, regardless of the actual bill.

In this case, the Administrative Law Judge has reviewed the FAP budget and finds that the department properly computed the claimant's gross income. The gross unearned income benefit amount must be counted as unearned income, which is \$688 in the current case, after counting the total member group's SSI benefits of \$674 monthly, and the State SSI supplement of \$14 monthly. BEM 500. These amounts were verified by the claimant herself and by Department Exhibits 2 and 7. The federal regulations at 7 CFR 273.10 provide standards for the amount of a household's benefits. The department in compliance with the federal regulations has prepared issuance tables which are set forth at Bridges Reference Manual, Table 260. The issuance table provides that a household with household size and net income of the claimant is eligible for an FAP allotment of \$110. The Administrative Law Judge has reviewed the budget and found no errors. Claimant was unable to point out specifically what parts of the budget she felt were in error. Therefore, the undersigned finds that the FAP allotment was computed correctly.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Department's decision to award claimant's FAP benefits of \$110 was correct.

Accordingly, the Department's decision is AFFIRMED.

/s/ _____
Robert J. Chavez
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: September 1, 2009

Date Mailed: September 2, 2009

NOTICE: Administrative Hearings may order a rehearing or reconsideration on either its own motion or at the request of a party within 30 days of the mailing date of this Decision and Order. Administrative Hearings will not order a rehearing or reconsideration on the Department's motion where the final decision cannot be implemented within 60 days of the filing of the original request.

The Claimant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt of the Decision and Order or, if a timely request for rehearing was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the rehearing decision.

RJC/cv

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