

STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 20112598
Issue No: 5020
Case No: [REDACTED]
Load No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date:
December 8, 2010
Montcalm County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Vicki L. Armstrong

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 telephone hearing was held on December 8, 2010. Claimant personally appeared and provided testimony.

ISSUE

Did the department properly deny the claimant's State Emergency Relief (SER) application because the housing was not affordable?

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 applied for State Emergency Relief (SER) assistance on August 26, 2010. (Department Exhibit 1).
2. Claimant requested assistance in paying for a new gas line and a new water heater. (Department Exhibit 1).
3. The department denied the SER request, indicating the housing was not affordable. (Department Exhibit 3).
4. Claimant submitted a hearing request on August 31, 2010, protesting the denial of SER application.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The State Emergency Relief (SER) program is established by 2004 PA 344. The SER program is administered pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and by final administrative rules filed with the Secretary of State on October 28, 1993. MAC R 400.7001-400.7049. Department of Human Services (DHS or department) policies are found in the State Emergency Relief Manual (SER). Department policy states:

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Housing affordability is a condition of eligibility for SER and applies only to Relocation Services (ERM 303) and Home Ownership Services and Home Repairs (ERM 304). Housing affordability does not apply to other SER services. ERM, Item 207, p. 1.

Requirements

In this item, “total housing obligation” means the total amount the SER group must pay for rent, house payment, mobile home lot rent, property taxes and required insurance premiums. Renters can have a higher “total housing obligation” if heat, electricity and/or water/cooking gas are included.

Authorize SER for services only if the SER group has sufficient income to meet ongoing housing expenses. An SER group that cannot afford to pay their ongoing housing costs plus any utility obligations will not be able to retain their housing, even if SER is authorized.

Deny SER if the group does not have sufficient income to meet their total housing obligation. The total housing obligation cannot exceed 75% of the group’s total net countable income. ERM, Item 207, p. 1.

Claimant is disputing the department’s decision denying her SER application. The department denied the claimant’s request on August 24, 2010, indicating that the housing was not affordable. Claimant requested \$925.00 in home repairs for a new gas line and a new water heater. Claimant reported that she had no income.

Claimant had a group size of three. Claimant testified that her ex-husband paid the mortgage and she was responsible for her utilities which were \$110.00 per month.

However, an SER group that cannot afford to pay their ongoing housing costs plus any utility obligations will not be able to retain their housing, even if SER is authorized. Here, Claimant could not afford her utilities. Based on Claimant's lack of income, the department properly denied SER benefits.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Department acted in accordance with policy in determining the Claimant's SER eligibility.

The Department's SER eligibility determination is AFFIRMED. It is SO ORDERED.

/s/

Vicki L. Armstrong
Administrative Law Judge
for Ismael Ahmed, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: December 13, 2010

Date Mailed: December 14, 2010

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 90 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.

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