

**STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM  
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

**IN THE MATTER OF:**



Reg. No.: 201272939  
Issue No.: 3002  
Case No.: [REDACTED]  
Hearing Date: September 26, 2012  
County: Wayne DHS (19)

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Christian Gardocki

**HEARING DECISION**

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 following Claimant's request for a hearing. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on September 17, 2012 from Detroit, Michigan. Participants included the above named claimant. Participants on behalf of Department of Human Services (DHS) included [REDACTED], Supervisor, and [REDACTED], Specialist.

**ISSUE**

The issue is whether DHS properly determined Claimant's eligibility for Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefit eligibility.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

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

1. Claimant was an ongoing FAP benefit recipient.
2. Claimant was a member of a three-person FAP benefit group.
3. Claimant received monthly income of \$980 from Retirement, Survivors, Disability Insurance (RSDI).
4. Claimant had a \$179/month mortgage expense.
5. On 8/17/12, DHS determined that Claimant was eligible for \$370/month in FAP benefits, effective 9/2012.

6. On 8/24/12, Claimant requested a hearing to dispute the FAP benefit determination.

### **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 (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 through R 400.3015. Department policies are contained in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and the Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

Claimant requested a hearing to dispute a FAP benefit reduction effective 9/2012. Claimant's primary complaint was that DHS reduced her benefit eligibility despite no change in her circumstances. Prior FAP benefit determinations are irrelevant to the correctness of the determination for 9/2012. As a courtesy, DHS explained that Claimant's prior FAP benefit eligibility was based on a failure by DHS to budget Claimant's RSDI income. Despite the DHS explanation, it cannot be determined whether the 9/2012 FAP benefit eligibility decision is correct without examining the entire FAP benefit budget. BEM 556 outlines the proper procedures for calculating FAP benefit eligibility.

It was not disputed that Claimant received \$980/month in RSDI. For all programs, the gross amount of RSDI is countable income. BEM 503 at 20.

DHS uses certain expenses to determine net income for FAP eligibility and benefit levels. BEM 554 at 1. For groups without a senior (over 60 years old), disabled or disabled veteran (SDV) member, DHS considers the following expenses: child care and excess shelter (housing and utilities) up to a capped amount and court ordered child support and arrearages paid to non-household members. For groups containing SDV members, DHS also considers the medical expenses for the SDV group member(s) and the full excess shelter expense. It was not disputed that Claimant's household had no SDV members.

Verified medical expenses for SDV groups, child support and day care expenses are subtracted from a client's monthly countable income. Claimant did not claim to have any medical, day care or child support expenses.

Claimant's FAP benefit group received a standard deduction of \$146. RFT 255. The standard deduction is given to all FAP benefit groups though the amount varies based on the benefit group size. The standard deduction is also subtracted from the countable monthly income to calculate the group's adjusted gross income. The adjusted gross income amount is found to be \$834.

Claimant stated that she had a housing obligation of \$179/month. Claimant contended that her rent recently increased to \$187. For purposes of evaluating the correctness of

the DHS determination from 8/17/12, the amount of Claimant's reported rent as of 8/17/12 should be considered. The evidence tended to support finding that Claimant's reported rent was \$179/month as of 8/17/12.

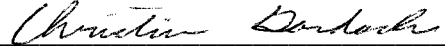
DHS gives a flat utility standard to all clients. BEM 554 (1/2011), pp. 11-12. The utility standard of \$553 (see RFT 255) encompasses all utilities (water, gas, electric, telephone) and is unchanged even if a client's monthly utility expenses exceed the \$553 amount. The total shelter obligation is calculated by adding Claimant's housing expenses to the utility credit (\$553). This amount is found to be \$732.

DHS only credits FAP benefit groups with what DHS calls an "excess shelter" expense. This expense is calculated by taking Claimant's total shelter obligation and subtracting half of Claimant's adjusted gross income. Claimant's excess shelter amount is found to be \$315.

The FAP benefit group's net income is determined by taking the group's adjusted gross income and subtracting the allowable excess shelter expense. The FAP benefit group net income is found to be \$519. A chart listed in RFT 260 is used to determine the proper FAP benefit issuance. Based on Claimant's group size and net income, Claimant's proper FAP benefit issuance is found to be \$370, the same amount calculated by DHS. It is found that DHS properly determined Claimant's FAP benefit eligibility for 9/2012 as \$370/month.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that DHS properly determined Claimant's FAP benefit eligibility, effective 9/2012, as \$370/month. The actions taken by DHS are AFFIRMED.

  
Christian Gardocki  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Maura Corrigan, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: 10/5/2012

Date Mailed: 10/5/2012

**NOTICE:** Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) 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. MAHS 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. (60 days for FAP cases)

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.

Claimant may request a rehearing or reconsideration for the following reasons:

- A rehearing **MAY** be granted if there is newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision.
- A reconsideration **MAY** be granted for any of the following reasons:
  - misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision,
  - typographical errors, mathematical error, or other obvious errors in the hearing decision that effect the substantial rights of the claimant:
  - the failure of the ALJ to address other relevant issues in the hearing decision.

Request must be submitted through the local DHS office or directly to MAHS by mail at  
Michigan Administrative Hearings  
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request  
P. O. Box 30639  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-07322

CG/hw

cc:

