

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 201316991
Issue No.: 3002
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: January 22, 2013
County: Oakland DHS (03)

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 January 22, 2013, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants included the above-named claimant. Participants on behalf of Department of Human Services (DHS) included [REDACTED], Specialist.

ISSUE

The issue is whether DHS properly determined Claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefit eligibility, effective 1/2013.

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 the only member of a FAP benefit group.
3. Claimant received at least \$788/month in Retirement, Survivor, Disability Insurance (RSDI).
4. Claimant failed to report any rental obligation to DHS.
5. On 11/28/12, DHS determined that Claimant was eligible for \$84/month in FAP benefits effective 1/2013, in part, based on a \$0/month rental obligation and \$788/month income.

6. On 12/03/12, Claimant requested a hearing to dispute the FAP benefit redetermination.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Food Assistance Program (formerly known as the Food Stamp 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). DHS administers the FAP pursuant to Michigan Compiled Laws 400.10, *et seq.*, and Michigan Administrative Code R 400.3001-3015. DHS regulations are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

The present case concerns a FAP benefit eligibility determination effective 1/2013. Claimant's primary complaint was that DHS reduced his FAP benefit eligibility despite no apparent change in circumstances. Prior FAP benefit determinations are irrelevant to the correctness of a disputed determination. DHS explained that Claimant's prior FAP benefit eligibility was based on a failure by DHS to budget Claimant's RSDI benefits. Despite the DHS explanation, it cannot be determined whether the 1/2013 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 at least \$788/month in RSDI benefits for 1/2013. Claimant testified \$788 represents his RSDI from 2012 and that he received an increase in RSDI, effective 1/2013. For purposes of this decision, the lower and more favorable amount of \$788 will be accepted as the amount of RSDI received by Claimant. For all programs, the gross amount of RSDI is countable income. BEM 503 at 20. DHS used the more favorable amount for Claimant. Thus, Claimant is not entitled to any relief.

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, 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 an uncapped excess shelter expense. It was not disputed that Claimant was disabled.

Verified medical expenses for SDV groups, child support and day care expenses are subtracted from a client's monthly countable income. Claimant conceded that he had no day care or child support expenses. Claimant estimated that he had \$20/month in medical expenses. DHS applies a \$35/month copayment to monthly medical expenses. Because Claimant's medical expenses are less than the mandatory \$35 copayment, Claimant is not entitled to a medical expense credit in the FAP budget.

Claimant's FAP benefit group receives a standard deduction of \$148. 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 \$640.

Claimant contended that he paid his mother \$250/month in rent. Claimant also conceded that he never reported the rental obligation to DHS. Generally, clients must report changes to DHS within 10 days after the client is aware of them. BAM 105 (11/2012), p. 7. DHS cannot credit Claimant for rent when Claimant failed to report the rent obligation. Thus, Claimant is not entitled to a rent credit for the 1/2013 determination. As noted during the hearing, DHS should consider the hearing to be the reporting date of Claimant's \$250/month rent obligation for potential changes in eligibility for future months.

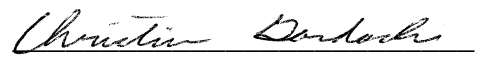
DHS gives a flat utility standard to all clients. BEM 554 (1/2011), pp. 11-12. The utility standard of \$575 (see RFT 255) encompasses all utilities (water, gas, electric, telephone) and is unchanged even if a client's monthly utility expenses exceed the \$575 amount. The total shelter obligation is calculated by adding Claimant's housing expenses to the utility credit; this amount is found to be \$575.

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 \$255 (rounding up to nearest dollar).

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's net income is found to be \$385. 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 \$84, the same amount calculated by DHS. It is found that DHS properly determined Claimant's FAP benefit effective 1/2013 as \$84/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 to be eligible for \$84/month in FAP benefits effective 1/2013. The actions taken by DHS are AFFIRMED.


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

Date Signed: January 24, 2013

Date Mailed: January 24, 2013

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:

