

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 201318454
Issue No.: 5017 5025
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: May 2, 2013
County: Wayne DHS (76)

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 May 2, 2013 from Detroit, Michigan. Participants included the above-named claimant. Participants on behalf of Department of Human Services (DHS) included [REDACTED], Specialist.

ISSUES

The first issue is whether DHS properly denied Claimant's State Emergency Relief (SER) application for property tax assistance.

The second issue is whether DHS properly denied Claimant's SER application requesting assistance with home repairs.

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. On 11/29/12, Claimant applied for SER for property taxes and home repairs.
2. As of 11/29/12, Claimant owed \$3329 in property tax arrearages.
3. As of 11/29/12, Claimant did not have a workable plan to pay her property tax arrearage.

4. On 11/29/12, DHS denied Claimant's SER application for property taxes because Claimant's property tax arrearage exceeded \$2,000.
5. On 11/29/12, DHS denied Claimant's SER for home repairs because Claimant's home was in jeopardy of loss.
6. On 12/7/12, Claimant requested a hearing to dispute the SER denials.

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. DHS (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) policies are found in the Emergency Relief Manual (ERM).

SER is a program which offers assistance for various client emergencies. Clients may seek assistance through SER for any of the following: heat or gas bills, water bills, electricity bills, home repairs, rent or mortgage arrearages, relocation expenses including rent and security deposit, food, burials or migrant hospitalization. The present case is concerned with SER applications for property tax arrearage and home repairs.

Home ownership services payments are only issued to save a home threatened with loss due to tax foreclosure or sale; SER requests for assistance with property tax arrearages and home repairs fall under home ownership service regulations. ERM 304 (8/2012), p. 1. In addition, all of the following requirements must be met:

- An SER group member is an owner or purchaser of the home, or holds a life estate on the home with the responsibility for home repairs. If the home is co-owned, the cost of the emergency is not split between the co-owners or co-purchasers.
- The home is the SER group's permanent, usual residence.
- The home is not listed for sale.
- The home is not in jeopardy of loss. (This only applies to home repairs.) Deny repairs if there is a house payment or property tax arrearage, unless a workable plan exists for paying the arrearage.
- The ongoing cost of maintaining the home is affordable to the SER group.
- The SER group did not cause the emergency. Do not authorize Home Ownership Services if the emergency was client-caused; see ERM 204, Client Caused Emergencies. (Property tax and home repair requests are exempt from the client-caused provision in Item 204.)
- The home is in livable condition and payment will guarantee safe, sanitary shelter both now and in the future. Do not approve any home ownership services payments for homes that are not in a livable condition or cannot be brought to a livable condition within the remaining SER home repair limit.
- The total amount of tax arrearage for all years does not exceed \$2,000. (This only applies to home ownership for taxes.) Pay only the minimum amount

required to resolve the tax emergency. Do not pay until loss of the home is imminent.

- The amount to be authorized does not exceed the home ownership services maximum of \$2,000, the energy-related home repair maximum of \$4,000 or the non-energy-related home repair maximum of \$1,500, and the issuance amount will resolve the emergency.
(*Id.*, p 3-4)


DHS denied Claimant's SER application requesting help with a property tax arrearage because Claimant's owed more than \$2,000 in taxes. It was not disputed that Claimant owed \$3329 in property taxes. Based on the above policy, DHS properly denied Claimant's SER request for property taxes.

DHS denied Claimant's SER application requesting help with a home repair because Claimant's home was in jeopardy of loss. The above policy notes that DHS is to deny requests for repairs if there is a tax arrearage, unless a workable plan exists for payment of the arrearage. The fact that Claimant requested assistance with a property tax arrearage at the same time she applied for help with home repairs is very persuasive evidence that Claimant's home was in jeopardy of loss.

Claimant testified that she made payment arrangements for the property taxes in 2/2013. Claimant's testimony suggests that she may be eligible for home repairs through the SER program if she reappplies. The testimony tend to confirm that Claimant did not have a workable plan for paying her taxes when she applied for SER on 11/29/12. Accordingly, the SER denial was proper.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that DHS properly denied Claimant's SER application dated 11/29/12 which requested help with property taxes and home repairs. The actions taken by DHS are AFFIRMED.


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

Date Signed: 5/16/2013

Date Mailed: 5/16/2013

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:

