

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 2014-19705
Issue No.: 3001
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: January 23, 2014
County: Wayne (55)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Christian Gardocki

HEARING DECISION

Following Claimant's request for a hearing, this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and 400.37; 7 CFR 273.15 to 273.18; 42 CFR 431.200 to 431.250; 45 CFR 99.1 to 99.33; and 45 CFR 205.10. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on January 23, 2014, from Detroit, Michigan. Participants included the above-named Claimant, [REDACTED], Claimant's son, testified on Claimant's behalf and appeared as Claimant's translator and authorized hearing representative. Participants on behalf of the Department of Human Services (DHS) included [REDACTED], Specialist.

ISSUE

The issue is whether DHS properly determined Claimant's Food Assistance Program (FAP) 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 and her spouse were members of a two-person household.
3. Claimant and her spouse received Supplemental Security Income of \$583/month and \$533/month, respectively.
4. Claimant paid \$450/month in rent.

5. On [REDACTED] 7/13, DHS determined Claimant to be eligible for \$220/month in FAP benefits, effective 1/2014, in part, based on a group size of two persons, unearned income of \$1102 and an obligation of \$450 for rent.
6. On [REDACTED] /13, Claimant requested a hearing to dispute the FAP benefit issuance.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) [formerly known as the Food Stamp program] is established by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, 7 USC 2011 to 2036a and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in 7 CFR 271.1 to 285.5. The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10 and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 to .3015. Department policies are contained in the Department of Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM) and Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and Department of Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

Claimant requested a hearing to dispute a FAP benefit issuance. Claimant stated that she is diabetic and needs special foods. Claimant's statement is not relevant to a FAP benefit determination. BEM 556 outlines how FAP benefits are determined.

Claimant testified that she received \$583/month in SSI benefits and that her spouse received \$533/month in SSI benefits. Based on Claimant's testimony, Claimant's household receives \$1,116/month in SSI. DHS determined Claimant's household income to be \$1102/month. For purposes of this decision, the lower and more Claimant-friendly amount (\$1102) will be accepted as Claimant's household income.

DHS uses certain expenses to determine net income for FAP eligibility and benefit levels. BEM 554 (11/2012), p. 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.

Verified medical expenses for SDV groups, child support and day care expenses are subtracted from a client's monthly countable income. DHS applies a \$35 per month copayment to monthly medical expenses. It was not disputed that Claimant had no day-care, medical or child support expenses.

Claimant's FAP benefit group receives a standard deduction of \$151. RFT 255 (10/2012), p. 1. The standard deduction is given to all FAP benefit groups, though the amount varies based on the benefit group size. The standard deduction is subtracted from the countable monthly income to calculate the group's adjusted gross income. The adjusted gross income amount is found to be \$951.

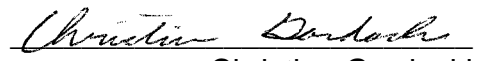
It was not disputed that Claimant's rent was \$450/month. DHS gives a flat utility standard to all clients. BEM 554 (1/2011), pp. 11-12. The utility standard of \$553 (see RFT 255 (10/2013, p. 1) encompasses all utilities (water, gas, electric, telephone) and is unchanged even if a client's monthly utility expenses exceed the \$553 amount. The total shelter obligation is calculated by adding Claimant's housing expenses to the utility credit; this amount is \$1003.

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 \$528 (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 \$423. 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 \$220, the same amount calculated by DHS.

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 eligibility to be \$220 for the month of 1/2014. The actions taken by DHS are **AFFIRMED**.


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

Date Signed: 1/30/2014

Date Mailed: 1/30/2014

NOTICE OF APPEAL: 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 or Reconsideration was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the Decision and Order of Reconsideration or Rehearing Decision.

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).

A Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration may be granted when one of the following exists:

- Newly discovered evidence that existed at the time of the original hearing that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision;
- Misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision which led to a wrong conclusion;

- Typographical, mathematical or other obvious error in the hearing decision that affects the rights of the client;
- Failure of the ALJ to address in the hearing decision relevant issues raised in the hearing request.

The Department, AHR or the claimant must specify all reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration. A request must be *received* in MAHS within 30 days of the date the hearing decision is mailed.

The written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088 and be labeled as follows:

Attention: MAHS Rehearing/Reconsideration Request

If submitted by mail, the written request must be addressed as follows:

Michigan Administrative Hearings
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request
P.O. Box 30639
Lansing, Michigan 48909-07322

CG/hw

cc:

