

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No.: 15-008490
Issue No.: 3008
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: July 09, 2015
County: St. Joseph

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Kevin Scully

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, telephone hearing was held on July 09, 2015, from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of Claimant included [REDACTED]. Participants on behalf of the Department included [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], Assistance Payments Supervisor.

ISSUE

Did the Department of Health and Human Services (Department) properly determine the Claimant's allotment of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. The Claimant is an ongoing Food Assistance Program (FAP) recipient as a group of one.
2. On January 14, 2015, the Department received verification that the Claimant has an obligation to pay rent in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] per month.
3. On March 4, 2015, the Department notified the Claimant that his monthly allotment of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits would increase to \$ [REDACTED] effective February 1, 2015.
4. The Claimant monthly rent expense includes heat but he does pay for electricity separate from his rent.

5. On May 7, 2015, the Department notified the Claimant that it would reduce his monthly allotment of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits to \$ [REDACTED] effective June 1, 2015.
6. On May 20, 2015, the Department received the Claimant's request for a hearing protesting his monthly allotment of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), Department of Health and Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT), and Department of Health and Human Services Emergency Relief Manual (ERM).

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) [formerly known as the Food Stamp program] is established by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, 7 USC 2011 to 2036a and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in 7 CFR 273. The Department (formerly known as the Department of Human Services) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10, the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001-.3011.

For all Food Assistance Program (FAP) groups that received the heat and utility standard on or before February 7, 2014, the heat and utility standard will remain in place for a period of five months after the month of their first redetermination or first reported case change occurring on or after May 1, 2014. In order to continue receiving the heat and utility standard beyond the expiration of the five month period, the Food Assistance Program (FAP) group must meet the requirements of the mandatory heat and utility standard section. Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 554 (October 1, 2014), p 15.

The Claimant is an ongoing FAP recipient as a group of one. On January 14, 2015, the Department notified the Claimant that he was approved for FAP benefits with a \$ [REDACTED] monthly allotment effective February 1, 2015.

On May 7, 2015, the Department redetermined the Claimant's eligibility for ongoing FAP benefits. The Claimant receives a monthly income of \$ [REDACTED] an amount not disputed during the hearing. The Claimant's adjusted gross income of \$ [REDACTED] was determined by subtracting the standard \$ [REDACTED] deduction from his total gross monthly income. The Claimant is entitled to a shelter deduction of \$ [REDACTED] which was determined by adding his rent of \$ [REDACTED] to the standard non-heat electric standard deduction of \$ [REDACTED] and subtracting 50% of his adjusted gross income. The Claimant had previously received a standard heat and utility deduction despite the fact that he did not have an obligation to pay for heating expenses separate from his rent but this deduction was removed as a result of a change to BEM 554.

The Claimant's net income of \$ [REDACTED] was determined by subtracting his shelter deduction from his adjusted gross income. A group of one with a net income of \$ [REDACTED] is entitled to a \$ [REDACTED] monthly allotment of FAP benefits.


The Claimant argued that it is unfair to reduce his FAP benefits so drastically due to his fixed income and rising expenses.

The Claimant's grievance centers on dissatisfaction with the Department's current policy. Administrative Law Judges have no authority to make exceptions to the Department policy set out in the program manuals. Furthermore, administrative adjudication is an exercise of executive power rather than judicial power, and restricts the granting of equitable remedies. *Michigan Mutual Liability Co. v Baker*, 295 Mich 237; 294 NW 168 (1940).

The Administrative Law Judge, based on the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, if any, finds that the Department acted in accordance with Department policy when it determined the Claimant's eligibility for the Food Assistance Program (FAP) based on his allowable expenses. Any expenses not reported to the Department could affect his future eligibility if they were verified to the Claimant's case worker.

DECISION AND ORDER

Accordingly, the Department's decision is **AFFIRMED**.



Kevin Scully
Administrative Law Judge
for Nick Lyon, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

Date Signed: **7/10/2015**

Date Mailed: **7/10/2015**

KS/las

NOTICE OF APPEAL: A party may appeal this Hearing Decision in the circuit court in the county in which he/she resides, or the circuit court in Ingham County, within 30 days of the receipt date.

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Hearing Decision from the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) within 30 days of the mailing date of this Hearing Decision, or MAHS **MAY** order a rehearing or reconsideration on its own motion.

MAHS **MAY** grant a party's Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration 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 party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration 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 this Hearing Decision is mailed.

A written request may be faxed or mailed to MAHS. If submitted by fax, 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 48909-8139

cc:

