



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
Christopher Seppanen
Executive Director

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: June 6, 2016
MAHS Docket No.: 16-005438
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Robert J. Chavez

HEARING DECISION

Following Petitioner'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; and Mich Admin Code, R 792.11002. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on May 25, 2016, from Detroit, Michigan. The Petitioner was represented by himself; also appearing was [REDACTED]. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) was represented by [REDACTED], Hearings Facilitator.

ISSUE

Did the Department properly calculate Petitioner's Food Assistance Program (FAP) budget?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. Petitioner was a FAP recipient.
2. On April 20, 2016, Petitioner requested a hearing, protesting his FAP allotment.
3. Petitioner has electric heat, and pays for heating costs himself.
4. No heat/utility credit was given to the Petitioner in his FAP budget.

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.

A client may request a hearing regarding FAP benefits at any time. BAM 600. Clients have 90 days to request a hearing. BAM 600. As Petitioner requested a hearing on April 20, 2016, the undersigned may therefore consider his FAP benefits during the 90 days retroactive to his hearing request, as that would be the time limit Petitioner had to request a hearing. 90 days prior to Petitioner's hearing request is January 20, 2016; the undersigned may consider Petitioner's FAP benefits retroactive to that date.

A FAP group which has a heating expense or contributes to the heating expense separate from rent, mortgage or condominium/maintenance payments must use the h/u (heat and utility) standard deduction. BEM 554, pg. 16 (2015).

In Petitioner's FAP budget, Petitioner was not granted the h/u standard deduction, but was instead granted a lower utility deduction, on the premise that Petitioner does not have a separate heating bill from electricity. Department Exhibit 4. However, Petitioner's home is heated through electricity. This was supported by Petitioner's electric bill which specifically states that heating costs are included in the bill. Department Exhibit 6.

Therefore, as Petitioner pays for the heating expense, and as Petitioner was not granted the h/u standard, the Department incorrectly calculated Petitioner's FAP budget.

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 did not act in accordance with Department policy when it calculated Petitioner's FAP budget.

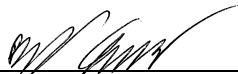
DECISION AND ORDER

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

THE DEPARTMENT IS ORDERED TO BEGIN DOING THE FOLLOWING, IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENT POLICY AND CONSISTENT WITH THIS HEARING DECISION, WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DATE OF MAILING OF THIS DECISION AND ORDER:

1. Allow Petitioner a heat/utility standard deduction in Petitioner's current FAP allotment calculations.
2. Recalculate Petitioner's FAP budget retroactive to January 20, 2016, using the heat/utility standard.

RC/tm



Robert J. Chavez
Administrative Law Judge
for Nick Lyon, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

NOTICE OF APPEAL: A party may appeal this Order in circuit court within 30 days of the receipt date. A copy of the circuit court appeal must be filed with the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Order if the request is received by MAHS within 30 days of the date the Order was issued. The party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration must provide the specific reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration.

A written request may be mailed or faxed to MAHS. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088; 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

DHHS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

cc: [REDACTED]