



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
MICHIGAN OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES

ORLENE HAWKS  
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] MI [REDACTED]

Date Mailed: February 28, 2020  
MOAHR Docket No.: 20-000764  
Agency No.: [REDACTED]  
Petitioner: [REDACTED]

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Amanda M. T. Marler**

### **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; 42 CFR 438.400 to 438.424; 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 February 26, 2020 from [REDACTED] Michigan. The Petitioner was self-represented. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) was represented by Raichel Dennis, Family Independence Manager.

### **ISSUE**

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

### **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 [REDACTED], 2019, Petitioner submitted an Application for FAP benefits.
2. On November 19, 2019, an interview was completed during which Petitioner indicated that she receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits and is only responsible for the payment of her phone bill.
3. On December 11, 2019, the Department issued a Notice of Case Action to Petitioner informing her that she was eligible for \$17.00 in FAP benefits for a partial month of November 2019 and \$28.00 per month effective December 1, 2019, ongoing.
4. On January 21, 2019, the Department received Petitioner's request for hearing disputing the Department's calculation of her FAP benefit rate.

## **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.

In this case, Petitioner disputes the Department's calculation of her FAP benefit rate. To determine whether the Department properly calculated Petitioner's FAP benefit rate, an evaluation of the Department's budget calculations is necessary, starting with income. All countable, gross earned and unearned income available to the client must be considered in determining a client's eligibility for program benefits and group composition policies specify whose income is countable. BEM 500 (July 2017), pp. 1-5. The Department determines a client's eligibility for program benefits based on the client's actual income and/or prospective income. Prospective income is income not yet received but expected. BEM 505 (October 2017), p. 1. In prospecting income, the Department is required to use income from the past 30 days if it appears to accurately reflect what is expected to be received in the benefit month, discarding any pay if it is unusual and does not reflect the normal, expected pay amounts. BEM 505, pp. 5-7. A standard monthly amount must be determined for each income source used in the budget. BEM 505, pp. 8-9.

The Department testified and Petitioner did not dispute that in November 2019, Petitioner received a gross Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit of \$714.00 per month. Since her income is received on a monthly basis, no further calculation is required to standardize it.

After consideration of income, the Department considers all appropriate deductions and expenses. There was evidence presented that the Petitioner is a Senior, Disabled, or Disabled Veteran. BEM 550. Therefore, she is eligible for the following deductions to income:

- Dependent care expense.
- Excess shelter.
- Court ordered child support and arrearages paid to non-household members.
- Standard deduction based on group size.
- Medical deduction for expenses greater than \$35.00.

BEM 554 (October 2019), p. 1; BEM 556 (July 2019), pp. 3-6.

The Department budgeted \$0.00 for a child support and dependent care expense. Petitioner did not dispute that she does not have these expenses. The Department also budgeted the standard deduction of \$161.00 for a group size of one in accordance with Department policy. RFT 255 (October 2019), p. 1. Petitioner did not dispute that she did not have any medical expenses

After consideration of all these expenses, Petitioner's Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is \$553.00.

Once the Adjusted Gross Income is calculated, the Department must then consider the Excess Shelter Deduction. The Department budgeted and Petitioner agrees that she has no housing expense or utility expense other than her phone. The telephone standard deduction is \$30.00. RFT 255, p. 1. Once each utility standard is considered, the housing expense and utility standards are added together for a total housing expense of \$30.00. BEM 556, p. 6. Petitioner's total housing expense is then reduced by half of her AGI (\$276.50) resulting in a negative number. *Id.* Since the calculation results in a negative number, Petitioner does not have an excess shelter cost and is not eligible for an Excess Shelter Deduction. *Id.*

If Petitioner was eligible for an Excess Shelter Deduction, the deduction would then be subtracted from her AGI to achieve her Net Income. BEM 556, pp. 5-6. Since Petitioner is not eligible for the deduction, her AGI is equal to her Net Income of \$553.00. At this point, Petitioner's Net Income is compared against the Food Assistance Issuance Tables, she is eligible for \$28.00 in FAP benefits per month. RFT 260 (October 2019), p. 8. The Department properly calculated Petitioner's FAP benefit rate.

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 afforded Petitioner a FAP benefit rate of \$28.00 per month.

### **DECISION AND ORDER**

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

AMTM/jaf



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**Amanda M. T. Marler**  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Robert Gordon, 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 Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Order if the request is received by MOAHR 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. MOAHR will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration.

A written request may be mailed or faxed to MOAHR. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 763-0155; Attention: MOAHR Rehearing/Reconsideration Request.

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

Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules  
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request  
P.O. Box 30639  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-8139

**DHHS**

Carisa Drake  
MDHHS-██████████ Hearings  
BSC3  
M Holden  
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**Petitioner**

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