



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
MICHIGAN OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES  
SUZANNE SONNEBORN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARLON I. BROWN, DPA  
ACTING DIRECTOR

[REDACTED] MI [REDACTED]

Date Mailed: November 16, 2023  
MOAHR Docket No.: 23-006758  
Agency No.: [REDACTED]  
Petitioner: [REDACTED]

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Christian Gardocki**

**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 hearing was held via telephone conference line on November 13, 2023. Petitioner appeared and was unrepresented. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) was represented by Caitlin Dodge, manager.

**ISSUE**

The issue is whether MDHHS properly terminated Petitioner'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. As of August 2023, Petitioner was an ongoing recipient of \$83 in monthly FAP benefits as the only member of the benefit group.
2. As of August 2023, Petitioner received \$1,754.90 in gross monthly Retirement Survivors, Disability Insurance (RSDI).
3. As of August 2023, Petitioner was responsible for no more than \$200 in monthly medical expenses.
4. As of August 2023, Petitioner had no day care or child support expenses.

5. As of August 2023, Petitioner reported to MDHHS a monthly housing obligation of \$600 and a responsibility to pay for heating and/or cooling.
6. On September 19, 2023, MDHHS determined Petitioner was eligible to receive \$49 in FAP benefits beginning October 2023.
7. On October 6, 2023, Petitioner requested a hearing to dispute the reduction of FAP benefits.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The 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. MDHHS administers the FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10, the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-119b, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001-.3011. FAP policies are contained in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

Petitioner requested a hearing to dispute a reduction in FAP benefits to \$49. Exhibit A, pp. 3-5. A Notice of Case Action dated September 19, 2023, stated that Petitioner was eligible to receive \$49 in monthly FAP benefits beginning October 2023. Exhibit A, pp. 21-25

FAP benefit amounts are based on a client's net income. Net income, for purposes of FAP benefits, is based on the client's group size, countable monthly income, and relevant monthly expenses. BEM 556 outlines the factors and calculations required to determine net income. MDHHS presented a budget verifying how it calculated Petitioner's net income. Exhibit A, pp. 17-20. During the hearing, all relevant budget factors were discussed with Petitioner.

In determining Petitioner's FAP eligibility, MDHHS factored a group size including only Petitioner. Petitioner did not dispute the group size one person.<sup>1</sup>

It was not disputed that Petitioner received \$1,754.90 in gross monthly RSDI benefits. For FAP benefits, gross RSDI is countable. BEM 503 (January 2023) p. 29. Petitioner had no other income. For FAP benefits, Petitioner's countable income is \$1,754 (dropping cents).

MDHHS uses certain expenses to determine net income for FAP eligibility and benefit levels. BEM 554 (October 2015), p. 1. For groups without a senior (over 60 years old), disabled or disabled veteran (SDV) member, MDHHS considers the following expenses: shelter expenses (housing and utilities) up to a capped amount, dependent care costs, and court-ordered child support and arrearages paid to non-household members (see *Id.*). An SDV group that has a verified one-time or ongoing medical expense(s) of more

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<sup>1</sup> See BEM 212 for policies on determining group size for FAP benefits.

than \$35 for an SDV person(s) will receive the standard medical deduction (SMD) of \$165. BEM 554 (October 2022) p. 9. If the group has actual medical expenses which are more than the SMD, the group has the option to verify their actual expenses instead of receiving the SMD. *Id.*

It was not disputed that Petitioner was an aged individual; thus, medical expenses may be counted. Petitioner acknowledged having no more than \$200 in monthly medical expenses. Thus, Petitioner is eligible for the SMD of \$165. Petitioner acknowledged having no child support or dependent care expenses. Petitioner's non-shelter expenses are \$165.

Petitioner's FAP benefit group size justifies a standard deduction of \$198 (see RFT 255). The standard deduction is given to all FAP benefit groups, though the amount varies based on the benefit group size. The standard deduction and countable non-shelter expenses are subtracted from the countable monthly income to calculate the group's adjusted gross income. Subtracting the standard deduction (\$198) and countable non-shelter expenses (\$165) from Petitioner's group's countable income (\$1,754) results in an adjusted gross income of \$[REDACTED]

MDHHS credited Petitioner with monthly housing expenses of \$600. Petitioner did not allege additional housing expenses. MDHHS also credited Petitioner with a standard heating/utility (h/u) credit of \$680. RFT 255 (October 2023) p. 1. Generally, the h/u credit covers all utility expenses and is the maximum credit available.<sup>2</sup> Adding Petitioner's housing expenses and utility credits results in total shelter expenses of \$1,280.

MDHHS only credits FAP benefit groups with an "excess shelter" expense. The excess shelter expense is calculated by subtracting half of Petitioner's adjusted gross income from Petitioner's total shelter obligation. Petitioner's excess shelter amount is \$585.

The FAP benefit group's net income is determined by subtracting the excess shelter expense from the group's adjusted gross income; doing so results in \$806 in net income for Petitioner's group. A chart is used to determine the proper FAP benefit issuance.<sup>3</sup> RFT 260 (October 2023) pp. 1-5. Based on Petitioner's group size and net income, Petitioner's proper FAP issuance for October 2023 is \$49: the same amount calculated by MDHHS. Thus, MDHHS properly determined Petitioner's FAP eligibility beginning October 2023.

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<sup>2</sup> MDHHS allows additional credits for "actual utility expenses". Such expenses are only allowed for utility installation charges, water well installation and maintenance, and septic installation and maintenance. BEM 554 (October 2019) p. 15. There was no evidence of applicable exceptions.

<sup>3</sup> FAP eligibility can also be calculated by multiplying the net income by 30% and subtracting the amount from the maximum FAP issuance for the group.

**DECISION AND ORDER**

The administrative law judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds that MDHHS properly determined Petitioner to be eligible for \$49 in FAP benefits beginning October 2023. The actions taken by MDHHS are **AFFIRMED**.

CG/nr



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**Christian Gardocki**  
Administrative Law Judge

**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

**Via-Electronic Mail :**

**DHHS**

Linda Gooden  
Oakland County Southfield District III  
25620 W. 8 Mile Rd  
Southfield, MI 48033  
**MDHHS-Oakland-6303-  
Hearings@michigan.gov**

**Interested Parties**

Oakland 3 County DHHS  
BSC4  
M. Holden  
N. Denson-Sogbaka  
B. Cabanaw  
MOAHR

**Via-First Class Mail :**

**Petitioner**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], MI [REDACTED]