



FH
[REDACTED]

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
Division of Hearings and Appeals**

In the Matter of

[REDACTED]

DECISION

FOO/145015

PRELIMINARY RECITALS

Pursuant to a petition filed November 02, 2012, under Wis. Admin. Code § HA 3.03(1), to review a decision by the Milwaukee Enrollment Services in regard to FoodShare benefits (FS), a hearing was held on November 27, 2012, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The issue for determination is whether the agency correctly determined petitioner's FS effective November 1, 2012.

There appeared at that time and place the following persons:

PARTIES IN INTEREST:

Petitioner:

[REDACTED]

Respondent:

Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

By: Alma Lezama
Milwaukee Enrollment Services
1220 W Vliet St
Milwaukee, WI 53205

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:

Kelly Cochrane
Division of Hearings and Appeals

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Petitioner (CARES # [REDACTED]) is a resident of Milwaukee County.
2. Petitioner applied for FS in September 2012 and was granted FS for September and October 2012 as a household of one.

3. On October 13, 2012 the agency received an alert that the petitioner was receiving unemployment compensation (UC) as income. This triggered a redetermination of petitioner's FS as it showed weekly UC in the amount of \$363.
4. On October 15, 2012 the agency issued a notice to petitioner stating that effective November 1, 2012 his FS would decrease due to the increase in income.
5. Effective November 1, 2012 petitioner's gross monthly household income was \$1560.90.

DISCUSSION

In determining the amount of FS to be issued each month, the county must budget all income of the FS household, including all earned and unearned income. 7 C.F.R. § 273.9(b). From the gross household income, the following permissible deductions as discussed in the *FoodShare Handbook*, §4.6.1 are allowed: a standard deduction, an earned income deduction, a medical expenses deduction, a child support payment deduction, a dependent care expense deduction, and a shelter expense deduction. Some FS groups are not allowed a deduction for some expenses and some expenses are not always deducted in full. The *FS Handbook* can be viewed online at <http://www.emhandbooks.wi.gov/fsh/>.

In this case, petitioner did not disagree with the calculation of the household income, and I have reviewed the information post-hearing as well and find no errors in the computations. Petitioner's testimony at hearing regarded the sufficiency of the FS given his other debts and expenses. Based on the information before me, the agency appears to have ultimately calculated the benefits correctly.

As to the sufficiency of the allotted FS: the household's monthly gross income totals \$1560.90. The only deductions that petitioner was eligible to receive is the standard deduction (\$149). No shelter deduction, child support payment deduction, nor dependent care expense deduction was given as petitioner does not have said obligations. No earned income was given as his income is unearned. No medical expense deduction was given as petitioner is not elderly, blind, or disabled. See *FS Handbook*, §4.6.4.

Petitioner questioned repeatedly why he was not given a medical expense deduction when he has many medical needs and expenses. The answer lies in the law and policy:

...

A disabled individual is a food unit member who receives disability or blindness benefits from any of these programs: SSA, MA, SSI or SSI related MA, Railroad Retirement Board (RRB). A food unit member who receives a VA payment must meet one of the criteria listed in 3.8.1.1 to be considered disabled.

If an individual is certified as disabled or blind by one of the above agencies, but has not received the initial benefit, consider him/her disabled.

An individual receiving retirement benefits from the RRB and found eligible for Medicare by the RRB is disabled. An individual who receives GA and meets the SSI program disability criteria is also disabled.

Use the elderly and disabled definitions to determine food unit membership, restaurant eligibility, student status, and medical, shelter, and utility deductions.

...

FS Handbook, §3.8.1.1. I note that for MA, disability is determined by the Disability Determination Bureau (DDB) in the Department of Health and Family Services. See *Medicaid Eligibility Handbook*, §5.2, available online at <http://www.emhandbooks.wisconsin.gov/meh-ebd/meh.htm>. As petitioner has not been certified by any of the above referenced agencies, he does not qualify as disabled. I add that the

federal code, which the policy cited above follows, cites several requirements that only qualified disabled individuals get the deduction. I refer petitioner to 7 CFR §273.1(b)(2), 7 CFR 273.9(d)(3), 7 CFR 271.2, 7 USC §2012(r), and www.fns.usda.gov/snap/rules/elderly_disabled.htm.

Returning to whether the calculation continued correctly then, when the agency subtracted the only deduction petitioner was eligible for, it brought his net income total to \$1411.90. After arriving at the household's net income, there is a line that reads, "30% of Net Adjusted Income." This 30% figure is then subtracted from the net adjusted income, and the difference is the allotment that is issued per the federal FS regulations that require it:

(ii)(A) Except as provided in paragraphs (a)(1), (e)(2)(iii) and (e)(2)(vi) of this section, the household's monthly allotment shall be equal to the maximum food stamp allotment for the household's size reduced by 30 percent of the household's net monthly income as calculated in paragraph (e)(1) of this section. If 30 percent of the household's net income ends in cents, the State agency shall round in one of the following ways:

(1) The State agency shall round the 30 percent of net income up to the nearest higher dollar; or

(2) The State agency shall not round the 30 percent of net income at all. Instead,

(B) If the calculation of benefits in accordance with paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(A) of this section for an initial month would yield an allotment of less than \$10 for the household, no benefits shall be issued to the household for the initial month.

7 CFR §273.10(e)(2)(ii). See online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>. The subtraction of the 30% is built into the allotment table referenced in the *FS Handbook* at §8.1.2. Thus, the agency deducted 30% of petitioner's net income (or \$ 423.60) from the maximum FS allotment accordingly. Based on this, petitioner was eligible for \$16 in FS ongoing, which was what was issued by the agency.

Based on the information before me, the agency appears to have ultimately calculated the benefits correctly. I remind the petitioner that if his income decreases, or has other changes to his household, he must report and verify that to the agency so his FS can be redetermined. I add for petitioner's information that it is the long-standing position of the Division of Hearings & Appeals that the Division's hearing examiners lack the authority to render a decision on equitable arguments. See, Wisconsin Socialist Workers 1976 Campaign Committee v. McCann, 433 F.Supp. 540, 545 (E.D. Wis.1977). This office must limit its review to the law as set forth in statutes, federal regulations, and administrative code provisions. As such, I cannot change policy or law because I find it unfair.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The agency correctly determined petitioner's FS effective November 1, 2012.

THEREFORE, it is

ORDERED

That the petition for review herein be dismissed.

REQUEST FOR A REHEARING

This is a final administrative decision. If you think this decision is based on a serious mistake in the facts or the law, you may request a rehearing. You may also ask for a rehearing if you have found new evidence which would change the decision. Your request must explain what mistake the Administrative Law Judge made and why it is important or you must describe your new evidence and tell why you did not have it at your first hearing. If you do not explain these things, your request will have to be denied.

To ask for a rehearing, send a written request to the Division of Hearings and Appeals, P.O. Box 7875, Madison, WI 53707-7875. Send a copy of your request to the other people named in this decision as "PARTIES IN INTEREST." Your request for a rehearing must be received no later than 20 days after the date of the decision. Late requests cannot be granted.

The process for asking for a rehearing is in Wis. Stat. § 227.49. A copy of the statutes can be found at your local library or courthouse.

APPEAL TO COURT

You may also appeal this decision to Circuit Court in the county where you live. Appeals must be served and filed with the appropriate court no more than 30 days after the date of this hearing decision (or 30 days after a denial of rehearing, if you ask for one).

For purposes of appeal to circuit court, the Respondent in this matter is the Department of Health Services. After filing the appeal with the appropriate court, it must be served on the Secretary of that Department, either personally or by certified mail. The address of the Department is: 1 West Wilson Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. A copy should also be sent to the Division of Hearings and Appeals, 5005 University Avenue, Suite 201, Madison, WI 53705-5400.

The appeal must also be served on the other "PARTIES IN INTEREST" named in this decision. The process for appeals to the Circuit Court is in Wis. Stat. §§ 227.52 and 227.53.

Given under my hand at the City of Milwaukee,
Wisconsin, this 18th day of December, 2012

\sKelly Cochrane
Administrative Law Judge
Division of Hearings and Appeals



State of Wisconsin\DIVISION OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS

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The preceding decision was sent to the following parties on December 18, 2012.

Milwaukee Enrollment Services
Division of Health Care Access and Accountability