

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL, REGULATIONS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
55 FARMINGTON AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06105-3725

████████████████████
SIGNATURE CONFIRMATION

Case ID # ██████████
Client ID # ██████████
Request # 220525

NOTICE OF DECISION

PARTY

██████████
████████████████████
██████████

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

On ██████████ the Department of Social Services (the "Department") issued a Notice of Action ("NOA") to ██████████ (the "Appellant") discontinuing his Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") benefits because his gross income exceeded the program limit.

On ██████████ the Appellant requested an administrative hearing to contest the Department's discontinuance of his SNAP benefits.

On ██████████ the Office of Legal Counsel, Regulations, and Administrative Hearings ("OLCRAH") issued a notice scheduling the administrative hearing for ██████████
██████████

On [REDACTED], in accordance with sections 17b-60, 17b-61, and 4-176e to 4-184, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes, OLCRAH held an administrative hearing by telephone.

The following individuals participated in the hearing:

[REDACTED], Appellant
Jasmine Bell, Department's Representative
Sara Hart, Hearing Officer

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

The issue is whether the Department correctly discontinued the Appellant's SNAP benefits due to having a monthly gross income exceeding the program limit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Appellant was a recipient of SNAP benefits for a household comprised of one member. The Department certified his SNAP eligibility for the period of [REDACTED], [REDACTED], through [REDACTED]. (*Department Testimony*)
2. The Appellant is age [REDACTED] (DOB [REDACTED]) and has been determined disabled by the Social Security Administration ("SSA"). (*Exhibit 9: SOLQ Details*)
3. On [REDACTED], the Appellant submitted an application for the Medicare Savings Program ("MSP") to the Department. (*Exhibit 1: W1QMB*)
4. On [REDACTED], the Department processed the Appellant's MSP application, granting MSP effective [REDACTED]. (*Exhibit 2: Case Notes*)
5. [REDACTED] employs the Appellant and he is paid weekly. He received the following gross wages:

| Pay Date | Gross Amount | Hours |
|------------|--------------|-------|
| [REDACTED] | \$342.65 | 22.5 |
| [REDACTED] | \$308.41 | 20.25 |
| [REDACTED] | \$268.13 | 15.25 |
| [REDACTED] | \$288.75 | 19.25 |

(*Exhibit 7: Worknumber Report*)

6. The Department calculated the Appellant's monthly gross income as \$1,298.57. *(Exhibit 3: Federal SNAP Income Test, Department's Testimony)*
7. The Appellant receives a gross monthly SSA payment of \$1,261.90 per month. *(Exhibit 9)*
8. The Appellant's monthly rent is \$600.00. He is responsible for paying separate utility costs. *(Appellant's Testimony)*
9. The Appellant has an unknown amount of recurring out-of-pocket medical expenses that he has not reported to the Department. *(Appellant's Testimony)*
10. On [REDACTED], the Department reviewed the Appellant's MSP application and determined the Appellant's gross income exceeded the gross income limit for a household of one individual. *(Exhibit 2)*
11. On [REDACTED], the Department issued a NOA discontinuing the Appellant's SNAP benefits, effective [REDACTED], because his monthly gross income was more than the program limit. *(Exhibit 6: NOA [REDACTED])*
12. The issuance of this decision is timely under Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations ("C.F.R.") § 273.15(c)(1) which provides that the State agency shall issue a decision within 60 days of the date of the request for a hearing. The Appellant requested an administrative hearing on [REDACTED], therefore, this decision is due no later than [REDACTED] *(Hearing Record)*

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Section 17b-2(7) of the Connecticut General Statutes provides that the Department of Social Services is designated as the state agency for the administration of the supplemental nutrition assistance program pursuant to the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.
2. Title 7 C.F.R. § 273.1(a) provides for household concept and states that a household is composed of one of the following individuals or groups of individuals, unless otherwise specified in paragraph (b) of this section: (1) An individual living alone;

The Department correctly determined the Appellant's household size of one member.

3. 7 C.F.R. § 271.2 states that an elderly or disabled member means a member of a household who: (1) Is 60 years of age or older;

The Department correctly determined that the Appellant meets the definition of elderly for purposes of SNAP eligibility.

4. 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(j)(2)(i) provides the following households are categorically eligible for SNAP benefits unless the entire household is institutionalized as defined in §273.1(e) or disqualified for any reason from receiving SNAP benefits. (E) any household in which all members receive or are authorized to receive PA and/or SSI benefits in accordance with paragraphs (j)(2)(i)(A) through (j)(2)(i)(D) of this section.

7 C.F.R. § 273.9(a) provides that participation in the Program shall be limited to those households whose incomes are determined to be a substantial limiting factor in permitting them to obtain a more nutritious diet. Households, which contain an elderly or disabled member, shall meet the net income eligibility standards for the Food Stamp Program. Households, which do not contain an elderly or disabled member, shall meet both the net income eligibility standards and the gross income eligibility standards for the Food Stamp Program. Households that are categorically eligible as defined in §273.2 (j) (2) or 273.2 (j) (4) do not have to meet either the gross or net income eligibility standards. The net and gross income eligibility standards shall be based on the levels established in Section 673 (2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902 (2)).

The Department correctly determined that the Appellant's household is subject to the net income eligibility standards.

5. 7 C.F.R. § 273.9(b) states that "Household income shall mean all income from whatever source excluding only items specified in paragraph (c) of this section."

7 C.F.R. § 273.9(b)(2)(ii) provides unearned income shall include but not be limited to Annuities; pensions; retirement, veteran's, or disability benefits; worker's or unemployment compensation including any amounts deducted to repay claims for intentional program violations as provided in §272.12; old-age, survivors, or social security benefits; strike benefits; foster care payments for children or adults who are considered members of the household; gross income minus the cost of doing business derived from rental property in which a household member is not actively engaged in the management of the property at least 20 hours a week.

The Department correctly determined that SSA is considered unearned income and included the Appellant's SSA in the determination of eligibility for SNAP.

6. 7 C.F.R. § 273.9 (b)(1)(i) states that “Earned income shall include: (i) All wages and salaries of an employee.”

The Department correctly included the Appellant’s wages in the determination of eligibility for SNAP benefits.

7. 7 C.F.R. § 273.10(c)(2)(i) provides for converting income into monthly amounts. Income anticipated during the certification period shall be counted as income only in the month it is expected to be received unless the income is averaged. Whenever a full month’s income is anticipated but is received on a weekly or biweekly basis, the State agency shall convert the income to a monthly amount by multiplying weekly amounts by 4.3 and biweekly amounts by 2.15, use the State Agency’s PA conversion standard, or use the exact monthly figure if it can be anticipated for each month of the certification period. Nonrecurring lump sum payments shall be counted as a resource starting in the month received and shall not be counted as income.

7 C.F.R. § 273.10(c)(2)(ii) provides in relevant part that income received during the past 30 days shall be used as an indicator of the income that is and will be available to the household during the certification period. However, the State agency shall not use past income as an indicator of income anticipated for the certification period if changes in income have occurred or can be anticipated. If income fluctuates to the extent that a 30-day period alone cannot provide an accurate indication of anticipated income, the State agency and the household may use a longer period of past time if it will provide a more accurate indication of anticipated fluctuations in future income.

The Department correctly determined the Appellant’s average monthly wages were \$1,298.57 ($\$288.75 + \$268.13 + \$308.41 + 342.68 = \$1,207.97/4 = \$301.99 * 4.3 = \$1,298.567$ rounded up).

The Appellant’s total monthly gross income equals \$2,560.47 ($\$1,261.90 + \$1,298.57$).

8. 7 C.F.R. § 273.9(d)(2) provides for the earned income deduction. Earned income deduction. Twenty percent of gross earned income as defined in [paragraph \(b\)\(1\)](#) of this section. Earnings excluded in [paragraph \(c\)](#) of this section shall not be included in gross earned income for purposes of computing the earned income deduction, except that the State agency must count any earnings used to pay child support that were excluded from the household’s income in accordance with the child support exclusion in [paragraph \(c\)\(17\)](#) of this section.

The Appellant’s earned income deduction equals \$259.71 ($\$1,298.57 * 20\%$).

9. 7 C.F.R. § 273.9(d)(1)(i) provides for the standard deduction. *48 States, District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands*. Effective October 1, 2002, in the 48 States and the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands, the standard deduction for household sizes one through six shall be equal to 8.31 percent of the monthly net income eligibility standard for each household size established under paragraph (a)(2) of this section rounded up to the nearest whole dollar. For household sizes greater than six, the standard deduction shall be equal to the standard deduction for a six-person household.

The Department correctly determined the Appellant eligible for the \$193.00 standard deduction.

- 10.7 C.F.R § 273.9(d)(6)(iii) provides in relevant part the following: *Standard utility allowances*. (A) With FNS approval, a State agency may develop the following standard utility allowances (standards) to be used in place of actual costs in determining a household's excess shelter deduction: an individual standard for each type of utility expense; a standard utility allowance for all utilities that includes heating or cooling costs (HCSUA);

The Department correctly determined the Appellant is entitled to the SUA, which is \$921.00.

- 11.7 C.F.R. § 273.10(e)(1)(i) provides the following: *Calculating net income and benefit levels-(1) Net monthly income*. To determine a household's net monthly income, the State agency shall:

- A. Add the gross monthly income earned by all household members and the total monthly unearned income of all household members, minus income exclusions, to determine the household's total gross income. Net losses from the self-employment income of a farmer shall be offset in accordance with §273.11(a)(2)(iii).
- B. Multiply the total gross monthly earned income by 20 percent and subtract that amount from the total gross income; or multiply the total gross monthly earned income by 80 percent and add that to the total monthly unearned income, minus income exclusions. If the State agency has chosen to treat legally obligated child support payments as an income exclusion in accordance with §273.9(c)(17), multiply the excluded earnings used to pay child support by 20 percent and subtract that amount from the total gross monthly income.
- C. Subtract the standard deduction.
- D. If the household is entitled to an excess medical deduction as provided in §273.9(d)(3), determine if total medical expenses exceed \$35. If so, subtract that portion which exceeds \$35.
- E. Subtract allowable monthly dependent care expenses if, any, as specified under § 273.9(d)(4) for each dependent.
- F. If the State agency has chosen to treat legally obligated child support payments as a deduction rather than an exclusion in accordance with § 273.9(d)(5),

- subtract allowable monthly child support payments in accordance with § 273.9(d)(5).
- G. Subtract the homeless shelter deduction, if any, up to the maximum of \$143.
 - H. Total the allowable shelter expenses to determine shelter costs, unless a deduction has been subtracted in accordance with paragraph (e)(1)(i)(G) of this section. Subtract from total shelter costs 50 percent of the household's monthly income after all the above deductions have been subtracted. The remaining amount, if any, is the excess shelter cost. If there is no excess shelter cost, the net monthly income has been determined. If there is excess shelter cost, compute the shelter deduction according to paragraph (e)(1)(i)(I) of this section.
 - I. Subtract the excess shelter cost up to the maximum amount allowed for the area (unless the household is entitled to the full amount of its excess shelter expenses) from the household's monthly income after all other applicable deductions. Households not subject to a capped shelter expense shall have the full amount exceeding 50 percent of their net income subtracted. The household's net monthly income has been determined.

7 C.F.R. § 273.10(e)(2)(ii)(A) provides the following: 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 SNAP 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".

7 C.F.R. § 273.10(e)(4) provides the following: Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) and Maximum SNAP Allotments. (i) Maximum SNAP allotment level. Maximum SNAP allotments shall be based on the TFP as defined in §271.2, and they shall be uniform by household size throughout the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia. The TFP for Hawaii shall be the TFP for the 48 States and DC adjusted for the price of food in Honolulu. The TFPs for urban, rural I, and rural II parts of Alaska shall be the TFP for the 48 States and DC adjusted by the price of food in Anchorage and further adjusted for urban, rural I, and rural II Alaska as defined in §272.7(c). The TFPs for Guam and the Virgin Islands shall be adjusted for changes in the cost of food in the 48 States and DC, provided that the cost of these TFPs may not exceed the cost of the highest TFP for the 50 States. The TFP amounts and maximum allotments in each area are adjusted annually and will be prescribed in a table posted on the FNS web site, at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp.

The Appellant's SNAP benefits are calculated as follows:

SNAP BENEFIT CALCULATION

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>INCOME</u> | |
| Earned Income | \$1,298.57 |
| Less 20% | -\$259.71 |
| = Adjusted earned income | \$1038.86 |
| + Unearned income | \$1,261.90 |
| = Total income | <u>\$2,300.76</u> |
| - Standard deduction | -\$193.00 |
| - Medical expenses | \$0.00 |
| -Dependent care expenses | \$0.00 |
| =Adjusted gross income | \$2,107.76 |
| <u>SHELTER COSTS</u> | |
| Rent | \$600.00 |
| + SUA | \$921.00 |
| Total shelter costs | \$1,521.00 |
| <u>SHELTER HARDSHIP</u> | |
| Shelter costs | \$1,521.00 |
| Less 50% of adjusted gross income | -\$632.38 |
| = Total shelter hardship (max \$569.00 if not disabled or elderly) | \$888.62 |
| <u>ADJUSTED NET INCOME</u> | |
| Adjusted gross income | \$2,107.76 |
| Less shelter hardship | -\$888.62 |
| Net Adjusted Income (NAI) | \$1,219.14 |
| <u>BENEFIT CALCULATION</u> | |
| Thrifty Food Plan for one person ¹ | \$281.00 |
| Less 30% of NAI (rounded up to nearest whole dollar) | \$366.00 |
| SNAP award | \$0.00 |

The Department correctly determined that the Appellant's income exceeded the SNAP net income limits.

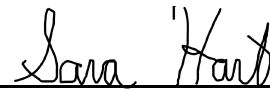
¹ Thrifty Food Plan for one person as of [REDACTED] was \$281.00. TFP increased to \$291.00 for HH of 1 effective [REDACTED]

12.7 C.F.R. § 273.13(a) provides for notice of adverse action. *Use of notice.* Prior to any action to reduce or terminate a household's benefits within the certification period, the State agency shall, except as provided in [paragraph \(b\)](#) of this section, provide the household timely and adequate advance notice before the adverse action is taken. (1) The notice of adverse action shall be considered timely if the advance notice period conforms to that period of time defined by the State agency as an adequate notice period for its public assistance caseload, provided that the period includes at least 10 days from the date the notice is mailed to the date upon which the action becomes effective. Also, if the adverse notice period ends on a weekend or holiday, and a request for a fair hearing and continuation of benefits is received the day after the weekend or holiday, the State agency shall consider the request timely received.

The Department correctly issued a notice of adverse action advising the Appellant of the discontinuance of SNAP on [REDACTED].

DECISION

The Appellant's appeal is **DENIED**.



Sara Hart
Hearing Officer

Cc: Jasmine Bell, Department Representative, Norwich Regional Office
Jessica Carroll, Operations Manager, Norwich Regional Office

RIGHT TO REQUEST RECONSIDERATION

The appellant has the right to file a written reconsideration request within **15** days of the mailing date of the decision on the grounds there was an error of fact or law, new evidence has been discovered or other good cause exists. If the request for reconsideration is granted, the appellant will be notified within **25** days of the request date. No response within 25 days means that the request for reconsideration has been denied. The right to request a reconsideration is based on § 4-181a (a) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Reconsideration requests should include specific grounds for the request: for example, indicate what error of fact or law, what new evidence, or what other good cause exists.

Reconsideration requests should be sent to: Department of Social Services, Director, Office of Administrative Hearings and Appeals, 55 Farmington Avenue Hartford, CT 06105.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

The appellant has the right to appeal this decision to Superior Court within **45** days of the mailing of this decision, or **45** days after the agency denies a petition for reconsideration of this decision, provided that the petition for reconsideration was filed timely with the Department. The right to appeal is based on § 4-183 of the Connecticut General Statutes. To appeal, a petition must be filed at Superior Court. A copy of the petition must be served upon the Office of the Attorney General, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106 or the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, 55 Farmington Avenue Hartford, CT 06105. A copy of the petition must also be served on all parties to the hearing.

The 45 day appeal period may be extended in certain instances if there is good cause. The extension request must be filed with the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services in writing no later than 90 days from the mailing of the decision. Good cause circumstances are evaluated by the Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee in accordance with § 17b-61 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Agency's decision to grant an extension is final and is not subject to review or appeal.

The appeal should be filed with the clerk of the Superior Court in the Judicial District of New Britain or the Judicial District in which the appellant resides.

