

## **SUMMARY**

Monterey County shall abide by its stipulation to provide remedies to the claimant in the CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) Program as set forth below. [275-4, 285-4]

## **FACTS**

By Notice of Action dated January 11, 2025, Monterey County (the County) informed the claimant that CalFresh benefits would decrease from \$153.00 to \$142.00 effective February 2025. (County's Exh. 1, Att. 1)

On January 17, 2025, the claimant requested a hearing regarding the benefit amount for CalFresh, noting she was approved for \$153.00 per month and believes she may qualify for more. It also notes she disputed the reduction of CalFresh benefits from \$153.00 to \$142.00 effective February 1, 2025, due to an increase in income. (Claimant's Exh. A)

On March 3, 2025, the hearing in this matter took place. The claimant and assigned appeals specialist for Monterey County appeared telephonically. A Spanish language interpreter assisted the claimant. The claimant confirmed disputing the reduction of CalFresh benefits from \$153.00 to \$142.00 effective February 2025.

At the hearing, the county representative testified to the following:

The claimant is a recipient with an annual renewal due July 2025. The claimant's household consists of the claimant only, who is over the age of 60.

On January 11, 2025, the system ran February 2025 benefit month due to Social Security Income receiving a cost-of-living adjustment for January 2025. The income used was Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and State Supplementary Payment (SSP) of \$1,206.94. The expenses allowed were \$360.00 per month for rent, and utility expense of \$645.00. The claimant was given an allotment of \$142.00. (County's Exh. 1, Att. 3)

On February 13, 2025, the county representative contacted the claimant to review the hearing request. The claimant confirmed that she is receiving SSI/SSP income of \$1,206.94 per month, and reported her rent remains \$360.00 per month. (County's Exh. 1, Att. 4)

The claimant reported the following out-of-pocket medical expenses:

- \$54.00 per month for doctor visit
- \$100.00 per month for doctor visit
- \$14.00 per month for a clinic

These out-of-pocket medical expenses were not previously reported.

The County acknowledges that these out-of-pocket medical expenses were not being allowed and is willing to stipulate that if the claimant provides verification of out-of-pocket medical expenses, the County will reevaluate CalFresh for February 2025 forward.

The claimant currently has five months left of her certification period and once verifications are provided, the County can allow the expenses as one lump sum in the month it was verified or can average the expenses over the remainder of the certification period, which is seven months.

At the hearing, the claimant testified to the following:

She understands the stipulation offered by Monterey County and accepts the stipulation.

She pays for her doctor's visits by phone, so she has not been receiving receipts. She has an upcoming visit and will ask the office if they can provide a receipt.

In response, the county representative testified to the following:

The County may be able to accept a sworn statement from the claimant regarding her medical expenses.

### **LAW**

All the regulations cited refer to the California Department of Social Services Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP), unless otherwise noted.

#### **Stipulation**

The County representative shall have authority at the state hearing to make binding agreements and stipulations on behalf of the County. (§22-073.37)

### **CONCLUSION**

The County representative has the authority to make binding stipulations on behalf of the County at the hearing.

At the hearing, the county representative testified that Monterey County stipulates that if the claimant provides verification of out-of-pocket medical expenses, the County will reevaluate CalFresh for February 2025 forward.

The claimant accepted Monterey County's stipulation.

Therefore, based on the stipulation of the parties, it is determined that Monterey County shall, upon receipt of verification of out-of-pocket medical expenses from the claimant, reevaluate CalFresh benefits effective February 2025, and notify the claimant in writing.

**ORDER**

The claim is granted by stipulation.

Based on the stipulation of the parties, upon receipt of verification of out-of-pocket medical expenses from the claimant, Monterey County shall reevaluate CalFresh benefits effective February 2025, and shall notify the claimant in writing.