WEST VIRGINIA OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
BOARD OF REVIEW

[redacted]

Appellant,

v. **Action Number: 26-BOR-2869**

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
BUREAU FOR FAMILY ASSISTANCE,

Respondent.

DECISION OF STATE HEARING OFFICER

INTRODUCTION

This is the decision of the State Hearing Officer resulting from a fair hearing for [redacted] This hearing was held in accordance with the provisions found in Chapter 700 of the Office of Inspector General Common Chapters Manual. This fair hearing was convened on October 15, 2026, on an appeal filed with the Board of Review on September 29, 2026.

The matter before the Hearing Officer arises from the September 11, 2026 decision by the Respondent to calculate Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

At the hearing, the Respondent appeared by Kristyne Hoskins, Economic Service Worker Senior. The Appellant was self-represented. All witnesses were placed under oath and the following documents were admitted into evidence.

Department's Exhibits:

D-1 Notice of Decision dated September 11, 2026
D-2 Rent Receipt dated September 1, 2026
D-3 Hearing Request

Appellant's Exhibits:

None

After a review of the record, including testimony, exhibits, and stipulations admitted into evidence at the hearing, and after assessing the credibility of all witnesses and weighing the evidence in consideration of the same, the Hearing Officer sets forth the following Findings of Fact.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1) The Appellant is a recipient of SNAP benefits.

2) Effective October 1, 2026, the Appellant's monthly SNAP benefits increased from $62.00 to $72.00, due to a change in the Standard Deduction amount applied to the SNAP calculation.

3) By notice dated September 11, 2026, the Respondent informed the Appellant of the SNAP increase due to the change in deduction. (Exhibit D-1)

4) The Appellant pays $650.00 per month in shelter costs. (Exhibit D-2)

5) The Appellant's heating and cooling utilities are included in her shelter costs.

6) The Appellant receives a monthly unearned income from the Social Security Administration in the amount of $994.00.

7) The Respondent did not attribute a shelter cost deduction toward the SNAP calculation because the submitted rent receipt failed to document landlord contact information. (Exhibit D-2)

8) The Appellant pays $12.00 in monthly medication co-payments. (Exhibit D-3)

9) The Appellant pays $30.00 in monthly over-the-counter vitamins. (Exhibit D-3)

10) The Appellant pays for transportation costs to her medical appointments.

APPLICABLE POLICY

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual § 4.4.3.B documents in part:

> SNAP certification for residents of shelters for battered persons and their children are based on the income, assets, and expenses of the client and their children. See Sections 5.6 and 16.2.
>
> The following steps are used to determine countable income for cases meeting the eligibility tests above.
>
> Step 1: Combine monthly gross countable earnings and monthly gross profit from self-employment.

Step 2: Deduct 20% of Step 1.
Step 3: Add the gross countable unearned income, including the WV WORKS benefit and any amount reduced or being repaid to WV WORKS due to failure to comply with a program requirement. See Section 4.4.4.
Step 4: Subtract the Standard Deduction found in Appendix B.
Step 5: Subtract allowable Dependent Care Expenses.
Step 6: Subtract the amount of legally obligated child support actually paid.
Step 7: Subtract the Homeless Shelter Standard Deduction found in Appendix B.
Step 8: Subtract allowable medical expenses in excess of $35.
Step 9: Calculate 50% of the remaining income and compare it to the actual monthly shelter/SUA amount.

Step 10:

	No One Elderly or Disabled	At Least One Person Elderly or Disabled
Shelter/SUA Equal to Or Less Than Step 9	No further computation is needed. The amount from Step 8 is the countable income.	No further computation is needed. The amount from Step 8 is the countable income.
Shelter/SUA Greater Than Step 9	The amount in excess of 50%, not to exceed the shelter/utility cap, in Appendix B is deducted to arrive at countable income.	The amount in excess of 50% is deducted, without regard to the shelter/utility cap, in Appendix B to arrive at countable income.

Step 11: Compare the countable income to the maximum net income in Appendix A for the AG size. This net income test does not apply to Categorically Eligible AGs. See Chapter 1.

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual § 4.4.3.C

To determine the SNAP allotment, find the countable income and the maximum benefit allotment for the AG in Appendix A. One- and two-person AGs who meet the gross and net income test or who are categorically eligible, as defined in Section 1.4.17.C automatically receive the minimum SNAP benefit, unless it is a prorated benefit. See Appendix D, SNAP and WV WORKS Proration Table. No benefits are issued to any AG eligible for an initial, prorated amount less than $10. See Chapter 1 for proration requirements. The Worker will determine the benefit amount by using the following method. The eligibility system also uses this method.

Computation of Benefit Amount	Example
Multiply net income by 30% (Round up)	$ 554 Net monthly income X .30 **$166.20 = $167**
Subtract 30% of net income as calculated above from the maximum monthly benefit for the AG size	$973 Maximum allotment for four - 167 30% of net income **$806 SNAP benefit for a full month**

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual 4.4.1.B documents in part:

> The Worker must consider information about the client's income sources before deciding which income to use.
>
> The Worker must follow the steps below for each old income source.
>
> Step 1: Determine the amount of income received by all persons in the Income Group (IG) in the 30 calendar days prior to the application/redetermination date, or interview date when the interview is completed on a different day than when the application is received. The appropriate time period is determined by counting back 30 days beginning with the calendar day prior to the date of application/redetermination. However, if the interview is completed on a different day than when the date the application/redetermination is received, the 30-day look-back period could begin the day before the interview date. The income from this 30-day period is the minimum amount of income that must be considered. When, in the Worker's judgment, future income may be more reasonably anticipated by considering the income from a longer period of time, the Worker considers income for the time period he determines to be reasonable. Whether the Worker considers income from the prior 30 days, or from a longer period of time, all of the income received from that source during that time period must be considered. All pay periods during the appropriate time period must be considered and must be consecutive. If the client provided sufficient income verification on the date the application/redetermination is received, then additional verification is not required at interview. The year-to-date amounts on check stubs may only be used when the client has verification of all payment amounts whether used or not but is missing one.
>
> Step 2: Determine if the income from the previous 30 days is reasonably expected to continue into the new certification period. If it is not expected to continue, the income from this source is no longer considered for use in the new certification period. If it is expected to continue, determine if the amount is reasonably expected to be more or less the same. If so, the income source is used for the new certification period and treated according to Section 4.4.1.D below. If it is not expected to continue at more or less the same amount, the income source is used for the new certification period and treated according to Section 4.4.1.C below.

> Step 3: Record the results of Step 2, including the amount of income, why the source is or is not being considered for the new certification period, the client's statement about continuation of the income from this source, the time period used, and, if more than the previous 30 days, the reason additional income was considered. Once the Worker has determined all of the old sources of income to consider and the time period for which they are considered, he must then determine if any source should be considered for future income.

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual § 4.4.2.B.7 documents in part:

> After all other exclusions, disregards, and deductions have been applied, 50% of the remaining income is compared to the total monthly shelter costs and the appropriate SUA. If the shelter costs/SUA exceed 50% of the remaining income, the amount in excess of 50% is deducted. The deduction cannot exceed the shelter/utility cap found in Appendix B.
>
> The Worker must allow the expense only if the AG is obligated to pay with the AG's excluded or non-excluded resources. There is no time limit during the certification period for deciding when an AG is no longer allowed a deduction for the bill. The AG is no longer allowed the deduction when the expense is no longer billed or is no longer due. An expense does not have to be paid to be a deduction. In order to receive a shelter deduction, the expense/obligation must be verified at a minimum of application and redetermination, or when the AG reports a change in shelter expense.

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual § 4.4.2 documents in part:

> Certain items may be allowed as income deductions to arrive at an AG's countable income, (even if the payment is made from assets). To receive a deduction, the expense must:
> • Not be an educational expense;
> • Be billed or be due during the certification period in which the deduction is claimed;
> • Be obligated to be met by the AG's own resources; and
> • Be owed to an individual not included in the AG to receive a deduction.

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual 4.4.2.B.6 documents:

> Medical expenses in excess of $35 must be allowed as a medical deduction for AG members who are elderly, which is at least age 60, or disabled, as defined in Section 13.15. Once the medical expenses of all such AG members have been totaled, the amount of the total in excess of $35 is used as a medical deduction. Thirty-five dollars ($35) is deducted from the total amount of expenses for the AG, not $35 from each person's expenses. There is no maximum dollar limit for a medical deduction.

➢ Allowable Expenses Only medical costs that are not reimbursable through a third party (insurance, Medicaid, etc.) are deducted. The deduction cannot be granted until the reimbursable portion of the expense is known.

• The cost of any medical goods or services related to the use of an illegal substance under federal law, including medicinal marijuana, may not be deducted.
• Medical and dental care, including psychotherapy and rehabilitation services provided by a qualified health professional.
• Prescription and over-the-counter drugs, if prescribed by a qualified health professional. This includes postage and handling costs paid for mail-order prescription drugs.
• Medical supplies and equipment, if prescribed by a qualified health professional. Items may be either purchased or rented.
• Hospital or outpatient costs, nursing care, and nursing facility care. This is also allowable if paid on behalf of an individual who was a member of the AG immediately prior to admission to a facility. The facility must be recognized by the State.
• Health and hospitalization insurance premiums, including long-term care, vision, and dental insurance. When the individual(s) who qualifies for a medical deduction has medical insurance under a policy that benefits other individuals who do not qualify for a medical deduction, only the portion of the insurance premium assigned to the qualifying individual(s) is considered. If specific information is not available about the eligible individual's premium amount, the premium is prorated among those covered by the insurance.
• Medicare premiums, except when the DOHS is paying the premium.
• Medical support service systems, if prescribed by a qualified health professional. Allowable costs are related to the purchase, rental, and maintenance of the system. Examples of medical support service systems include, but are not limited to, Lifeline Personal Response, Life Alert, etc.
• Dentures
• Hearing aids and batteries
• Purchase and maintenance of prosthetic devices
• Purchase and maintenance of a trained service animal which is required for a physical or mental disability and is prescribed by a doctor. This includes the cost of food and veterinarian bills for the service animal. Trained service animals may include seeing or hearing dogs, therapy animals to treat depression, animals used by persons with other disabilities such as epilepsy, paraplegia, etc. When the supervisor is unable to determine whether or not an animal meets the applicable criteria or an animal-related expense is an appropriate deduction, he must contact the Division of Family Assistance (DFA) Economic Services Policy Unit for clarification.
• Prescription eyeglasses
• Reasonable cost of transportation and lodging to obtain medical treatment or services. If a client can verify that a charge was made for transportation, but the transportation provider will not state the amount, the current state mileage rate is allowed as a medical deduction.

• Maintaining an attendant, homemaker, home health aide, housekeeper, or childcare services necessary due to age, infirmity, or illness. If the AG provides the majority of the attendant's meals, an amount equal to the maximum monthly SNAP allotment for one person is also used as a medical deduction.
• Any cost-sharing or spenddown expense incurred by Medicaid clients.

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual § 4.4.2.C.1 documents in part:

SUAs are fixed deductions that are adjusted yearly to allow for fluctuations in utility expenses. AGs with utility expenses for both occupied and unoccupied homes may only use the SUA for one home of his choice. These deductions are the Heating/Cooling Standard (HCS), the Non-Heating/Cooling Standard (NHCS), and the One Utility Standard (OUS). The current SUA amounts are found in Appendix B. AGs that are obligated to pay from their resources a utility expense that is billed separately from their shelter expenses are eligible for an SUA deduction. AGs that are not obligated to pay any utility expense are ineligible for the SUA, even if other residents pay utility expenses. Eligibility for the SUA must be evaluated at certification, redetermination, and when the AG reports a change in utilities that may affect its eligibility for a deduction. Items that are considered utilities include, but are not limited to:
• Water, including well installation and maintenance
• Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LP or LPG) or natural gas
• Wood, wood pellets, coal, and heating oil
• Electricity
• Sewage, including septic tank system installation and maintenance
• Garbage collection
• The basic rate for one telephone, either landline or cellular service, but not both. Basic rates include, but are not limited to, taxes, wire maintenance fees, subscriber line charges, relay center surcharges, and 911 fees. It does not include extra services such as, call-waiting, caller ID, etc. Items not considered utilities include, but are not limited to:
• Cable/digital/satellite television service
• Internet service
• Utility deposits
• Pre-paid cell phones

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual Chapter 4.4.2.C documents:

Items considered in arriving at shelter expenses are the continuing amounts of:
• Rent. Security or damage deposits are not shelter expenses.
• Mortgage payments. This includes second mortgages and home equity loans and any other loans for which the dwelling is used as collateral.
• Interest on mortgage payments.
• Condominium and association fees, regardless of purpose for the fees.

• Payments to an escrow account established to pay property taxes and homeowner's insurance.
• Property taxes and special tax assessments on the structure and lot required by State or local law. This does not include assessments such as police and fire fees, unless the fee is based on property valuation.
• Insurance on the structure and lot. This does not include insurance on furniture or personal belongings. If the insurance cost on the structure and the cost on the personal belongings/furniture cannot be identified separately, the entire insurance payment is allowed.
• Cost of repairing the home that was damaged or destroyed due to a natural disaster or misfortune including, but not limited to, fire, flood, or freezing temperatures. This does not include charges that will be or have been reimbursed from any source such as insurance, private agency, etc.
• A car payment when a homeless AG lives in their vehicle.
• Insurance on the vehicle itself when a homeless AG lives in their vehicle.

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual Chapter 7.3 documents in pertinent part:

SNAP At each application and redetermination, or when an individual reports a change of shelter expense. If completing an application or redetermination and we already have a lease or rental agreement that is less than 1 year old, it is considered valid and may be used, provided it accurately reflects the household's current shelter obligation and actual paid amount. It is not necessary to request that they submit the same lease or rental agreement again. If the lease or rental agreement has been changed, updated, is no longer accurate, or is questionable, a new verification must be requested.

Acceptable verification must include the name and phone number of the landlord, the obligation amount, and the actual paid amount. Shelter expense verifications do not require a landlord's signature. Acceptable verification is not limited to any single type of document and is obtained from the household or other source. When the customer cannot obtain information from a primary source of verification, the worker can then accept a secondary source. When a customer cannot obtain any verification of shelter expense, it is necessary for the worker to obtain a shelter attestation form from the customer. If a lease or rental agreement provided by the customer is older than 1 year, the customer must also complete a shelter attestation form. The worker must provide or mail the shelter attestation form to the customer to complete and must record why the shelter attestation form was used. Primary Sources of Verification: • Current lease/rental agreements within 1 year of the application/review date. • Document on official letterhead from an office or agency. This includes offices or agencies working on behalf of the landlord. • HUD contracts/renewals Secondary Sources of Verification • Handwritten notes/letters • Rent receipts/Money Orders

Code of Federal Regulations 273.10 documents:

Calculating net income and benefit levels —

(1) ***Net monthly income.***

(i) 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.

(ii) In calculating net monthly income, the State agency shall use one of the following two procedures:

(A) Round down each income and allotment calculation that ends in 1 through 49 cents and round up each calculation that ends in 50 through 99 cents; or

(B) Apply the rounding procedure that is currently in effect for the State's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. If the State TANF program includes the cents in income calculations, the State agency may use the same procedures for SNAP income calculations. Whichever procedure is used, the State agency may elect to include the cents associated with each individual shelter cost in the computation of the shelter deduction and round the final shelter deduction amount. Likewise, the State agency may elect to include the cents associated with each individual medical cost in the computation of the medical deduction and round the final medical deduction amount.

(2) ***Eligibility and benefits.***

(A) Households which contain an elderly or disabled member as defined in § 271.2, shall have their net income, as calculated in paragraph (e)(1) of this section (except for households considered destitute in accordance with paragraph (e)(3) of this section), compared to the monthly income eligibility standards defined in § 273.9(a)(2) for the appropriate household size to determine eligibility for the month.

(B) In addition to meeting the net income eligibility standards, households which do not contain an elderly or disabled member shall have their gross income, as calculated in accordance with paragraph (e)(1)(i)(A) of this section, compared to the gross monthly income standards defined in § 273.9(a)(1) for the appropriate household size to determine eligibility for the month.

(C) For households considered destitute in accordance with paragraph (e)(3) of this section, the State agency shall determine a household's eligibility by computing its gross and net income according to paragraph (e)(3) of this section, and comparing, as appropriate, the gross and/or net income to the corresponding income eligibility standard in accordance with § 273.9(a) (1) or (2).

(D) If a household contains a member who is fifty-nine years old on the date of application, but who will become sixty before the end of the month of application, the State agency shall determine the household's eligibility in accordance with paragraph (e)(2)(i)(A) of this section.

(E) If a household contains a student whose income is excluded in accordance with § 273.9(c)(7) and the student becomes 18 during the month of application, the State agency shall exclude the student's earnings in the month of application and count the student's earnings in the following month. If the student becomes 18 during the certification period, the student's income shall be excluded until the month following the month in which the student turns 18.

(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 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; or

(*2*) The State agency shall not round the 30 percent of net income at all. Instead, after subtracting the 30 percent of net income from the appropriate Thrifty Food Plan, the State agency shall round the allotment down to the nearest lower dollar.

(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.

(C) Except during an initial month, all eligible one-person and two-person households shall receive minimum monthly allotments equal to the minimum benefit. The minimum benefit is 8 percent of the maximum allotment for a household of one, rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

(iii) For an eligible household with three or more members which is entitled to no benefits (except because of the proration requirements of paragraph (a)(1) and the provision precluding issuances of less than $10 in an initial month of paragraph (e)(2)(ii)(B)) of this section:

(A) The State agency shall deny the household's application on the grounds that its net income exceeds the level at which benefits are issued; or

(B) The State agency shall certify the household but suspend its participation, subject to the following conditions:

(*1*) The State agency shall inform the suspended household, in writing, of its suspended status, and of its rights and responsibilities while it is in that status.

(*2*) The State agency shall set the household's change reporting requirements and the manner in which those changes will be reported and processed.

(*3*) The State agency shall specify which changes shall entitle the household to have its status converted from suspension to issuance, and which changes shall require the household to reapply for participation.

(*4*) The household shall retain the right to submit a new application while it is suspended.

(*5*) The State agency shall convert a household from suspension to issuance status, without requiring an additional certification interview, and issue its initial allotment, within ten days of the date the household reports the change.

(*6*) The State agency shall prorate the household's benefits, in the first month after the suspension period, from the date the household reports a change, in accordance with paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(*7*) The State agency may delay the work registration of the household's members until the household is determined to be entitled to benefits.

(iv) For those eligible households which are entitled to no benefits in their initial month of application, in accordance with paragraph (a)(1) or (e)(2)(ii)(B) of this section, but are entitled to benefits in subsequent months, the State agency shall certify the households beginning with the month of application.

(v) When a household's circumstances change and it becomes entitled to a different income eligibility standard, the State agency shall apply the different standard at the next recertification or whenever the State agency changes the household's eligibility, benefit level or certification period, whichever occurs first.

(vi) During a month when a reduction, suspension or cancellation of allotments has been ordered pursuant to the provisions of § 271.7, eligible households shall have their benefits calculated as follows:

(A) If a benefit reduction is ordered, State agencies shall reduce the maximum SNAP allotment amounts for each household size by the percentage ordered in the Department's notice on benefit reductions. State agencies shall multiply the maximum SNAP allotment amounts by the percentage specified in the FNS notice; if the result ends in 1 through 99 cents, round the result up to the nearest higher dollar; and subtract the result from the normal maximum SNAP allotment amount. In calculating benefit levels for eligible households, State agencies would follow the procedures detailed in paragraph (e)(2)(ii) of this section and substitute the reduced maximum SNAP allotment amounts for the normal maximum SNAP allotment amounts.

(B) Except as provided in paragraphs (a)(1), (e)(2)(ii)(B), and (e)(2)(vi)(C) of this section, one- and two-person households shall be provided with at least the minimum benefit.

(C) In the event that the national reduction in benefits is 90 percent or more of the benefits projected to be issued for the affected month, the provision for a minimum benefit for households with one or two members only may be disregarded and all households may have their benefits lowered by reducing maximum SNAP allotment amounts by the percentage specified by the Department. The benefit reduction notice issued by the Department to effectuate a benefit reduction will specify whether minimum benefits for households with one or two members only are to be provided to households.

(D) If the action in effect is a suspension or cancellation, eligible households shall have their allotment levels calculated according to the procedures in paragraph (e)(2)(ii) of this section. However, the allotments shall not be issued for the month the suspension or cancellation is in effect. The provision for the minimum benefit for households with one or two members only shall be disregarded and all households shall have their benefits suspended or cancelled for the designated month.

(E) In the event of a suspension or cancellation, or a reduction exceeding 90 percent of the affected month's projected issuance, all households, including one and two-person households, shall have their benefits suspended, cancelled or reduced by the percentage specified by FNS.

DISCUSSION

The Appellant comes with this appeal as a protest to the calculation of her monthly SNAP allotment. Specifically, the Appellant contends that additional deductions to her income should be considered for shelter cost, transportation for medical appointments and her monthly co-payments for prescription medication. The Respondent must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that it correctly calculated the Appellant's SNAP benefits.

Shelter Costs-Effective October 1, 2026, the Appellant's monthly SNAP benefit increased from $62.00 to $72.00, due to a change in the Standard Deduction amount applied to the benefit calculation. The Appellant contends that an additional deduction should have been considered for her shelter costs. The Appellant submitted a September 2026 rent receipt (Exhibit D-2) to the Respondent for consideration of those costs which documented a monthly payment of $650.00 to [redacted] but failed to document additional contact information. The Respondent disallowed the shelter deduction because of the incomplete contact information. The Appellant acknowledged that the landlord's contact information was not included on the receipt because the landlord does not have a phone. Testimony indicated that the Appellant was in the process of obtaining additional contact information for the landlord. Governing policy provides that acceptable verifications for shelter cost must include the name and phone number of the landlord, the obligation amount and the amount paid. Evidence is clear that the submitted documentation failed to include the contact information for the Appellant's landlord. Because the documentation did not include the necessary landlord contact information, the Respondent was correct in its decision to disallow a shelter cost deduction.

Medical Expenses-The Appellant contends that she pays a total of $30.00 round trip, twice monthly, for a total of $60.00 for transportation for doctor's appointments with additional transportation for prescription pickup. Additionally, the Appellant testified that she pays a monthly total of $12.00 in out-of-pocket co-payments for prescription drugs. The Respondent cited West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual Chapter 4.4.2.B.6 which documents that "reasonable cost of transportation and lodging to obtain medical treatment or services. If a client can verify that a charge was made for transportation, but the transportation provider will not state the amount, the current state milage rate is allowed as a medical deduction." The Respondent indicated that they could not utilize transportation for pharmacy visits but would be willing to assess the medical deductions for medical appointments with provided receipts. Governing policy allows medical expenses in excess of $35.00 must be allowed as a medical deduction for assistance group members who are elderly or disabled. Included in these allowable expenses are reasonable cost of transportation and lodging to obtain medical treatment or services. The current state mileage rate is allowed as a medical deduction when a client can verify a charge for transportation but a provider will not state the amount. The Appellant is considered disabled from the Social Security Administration; therefore, she meets the requirements to be considered for medical deductions for SNAP benefits. Because transportation cost for medical appointments was not considered in the Respondent's calculation of SNAP benefits, this matter is **REMANDED** for consideration of total medical expenses including transportation at the verified charge or current state milage rate.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1) Policy stipulates that rent is considered as a shelter expense toward a SNAP calculation.

2) Policy stipulates that acceptable verifications of shelter expenses must include obligation amount and actual paid amount of the shelter expense along with the name and phone number of the landlord.

3) The Appellant provided a rent receipt which failed to document the contact information of her landlord; therefore, the Respondent was correct in its decision to disallow a shelter expense deduction for rent.

4) Policy stipulates that medical expenses in excess of $35.00 must be allowed as a medical deduction for assistance group members who are elderly or disabled. Allowable expenses include prescription and over-the-counter drugs, if prescribed by a health professional, and reasonable cost of transportation and lodging to obtain medical treatment or services. If a client can verify that a charge was made for transportation, but cannot verify the charge amount, the current state mileage rate is allowed as a medical deduction.

5) The Appellant claims transportation cost and prescription medication co-payments which were not included in the calculation of SNAP benefits. The matter is remanded to the Respondent for consideration of these medical expenses.

DECISION

This matter is hereby **REMANDED** for consideration of medical expenses, including transportation and co-payments for prescriptions, in excess of $35.00 toward the calculation of SNAP benefits.

ENTERED this _____ day of October 2026.

_____

Eric L. Phillips
State Hearing Officer