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**DEPARTMENT  
POLICY**

This item applies **only** to Food Assistance Program (FAP).

Bridges uses certain expenses to determine net income for FAP eligibility and benefit levels.

- For groups with **no** senior/disabled/disabled veteran (SDV) member, Bridges uses the following:
  - Dependent care expense.
  - Excess shelter up to the maximum in Reference Tables Manual (RFT) 255.
  - Court ordered child support and arrearages paid to non-household members.
- For groups **with** one or more SDV member, Bridges uses the following; see Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 550:
  - Dependent care expense.
  - Excess shelter.
  - Court ordered child support and arrearages paid to non-household members.
  - Medical expenses for the SDV member(s) that exceed \$35.

Complete either a manually-calculated or Bridges budget to document expenses every time an expense change is reported.

**ALLOWABLE  
EXPENSES**

An expense is allowed if all of the following:

- The service is provided by someone outside of the FAP group.
- Someone in the FAP group has the responsibility to pay for the service in money.
- Verification is provided, if required.

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## Responsibility to Pay

Responsibility to pay means that the expense is in the name of a person in the FAP group.

**Exception:** If the expense is in someone else's name, allow the expense if the FAP group claims the expense **and** the service address on the bill is where they live.

Do **not** allow any expense if the entire expense is directly paid by an agency or someone outside of the group.

An expense that is fully reimbursed is not allowed; see BEM 500, Reimbursements.

If an expense is partially reimbursed or paid by an agency or someone outside of the FAP group, allow **only** the amount that the group is responsible to pay, **unless** specific policy directs otherwise.

**Example:** HUD pays \$150 toward a FAP group's \$325 rental expense. Allow only the \$175 (\$325 rent - \$150 HUD pays = \$175) that the group is expected to pay.

### ***Shared Expenses***

Allow only the FAP group's portion of child support, medical or dependent care expenses if another person outside of the FAP group is jointly responsible. If the FAP group's share can be identified, allow that portion. Otherwise, the expense is evenly prorated among the groups responsible for it and the FAP group's prorated share is allowed.

**Note:** Shelter, the heat and utility standard and the individual utility standards are **never** prorated, even if the expense is shared. Refer to the following sections found in this item:

- Shelter expenses.
- Mandatory heat and utility standard.
- Mandatory individual standards.

### ***Member Removal***

The expenses of a FAP member who is no longer living with the group are removed when the member removal is processed.

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## Verification

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) must verify the responsibility to pay and the amount of certain expenses; see the individual expense policy for verification requirements. Document verification used in the case record.

Do **not** budget expenses that require verification until the verification is provided. Determine eligibility and the benefit level without an expense requiring verification if it cannot be verified.

**Note:** Do **not** include a medical expense that might be covered by a reimbursement if the amount of the reimbursement cannot be verified.

Treat subsequently provided verification from an eligible FAP group as a change. A supplement for lost benefits is issued **only** if the expense could **not** be verified within 30 days of the application and the local office was at fault.

## BUDGETING EXPENSES

### Budget Month

Expenses are used from the same calendar month as the month for which benefits are being determined.

**Example:** June expenses are used to determine June's benefits.

Expenses remain unchanged until the FAP group reports a change; see Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM) 220, Change Processing.

### Determining the Monthly Amount

Bridges converts all expenses (except one-time-only expenses the group does not wish to average) to a nonfluctuating monthly amount.

The same conversion method is used to determine countable available income in BEM 505. Bridges will convert a(n):

- Weekly expense, multiply the average weekly expense by 4.3.
- Twice a month expense, multiply the average weekly expense by 2.

- Every other week expense, multiply the average expense by 2.15.
- Yearly expense, average the bill over 12 months beginning with the first billing of the year.
- Quarterly expense, average the bill over three months.
- Expense billed less often than monthly. Bridges will average the one-time-only expense over the balance of the benefit period or over the period of time the client has the responsibility to pay. The expense is allowed beginning with the first benefit month the change can affect.

**Example:** Groups that have 24-month benefit periods must be given options for one-time-only medical expenses; see Medical Expenses in this item.

### ***Home Equity Loan Expense***

To determine the countable monthly expenses for a home equity loan, use either:

- The entire amount (principal and interest) for a fixed, non-fluctuating home equity loan.
- The average of two or more recent month's payments (principal and interest) for a variable home equity loan payment, **unless** the FAP group states the payment amount is different for the benefit month being determined.

Document in the case record or in Bridges what months were used and why they were representative.

### ***Non-Converted Expenses***

Expenses that will not continue beyond the month following the benefit month being processed are not converted.

Budget **non-converted** expenses for the month they are billed or otherwise become due, regardless of when the FAP group intends to pay the expense.

Non-converted expenses are budgeted for **one** benefit month only.

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**Expenses for  
Disqualified or  
Ineligible Persons**

The treatment of expenses paid by or billed to ineligible or disqualified persons differs depending on the reason the person is not in the group.

Determine the appropriate month's expenses for a disqualified or ineligible person as if he were a member of the FAP group.

***Student Status***

Expenses for which the ineligible student is responsible are not budgeted.

***Employment Related Activities, IPV, Trafficking, Parole or Probation Violation or Divestment***

Budget total expenses, including medical expenses of a senior, disabled, disabled veteran (SDV) disqualified person. Allow unlimited excess shelter even if the only SDV member is the disqualified person.

***Social Security Enumeration, Citizenship/Alien Status, Child Support Non-Cooperation or Time Limited***

Shelter expenses, the mandatory heat and utility standard, mandatory individual standards and actual utility expenses are never prorated. However, only a prorated portion for dependent care expenses and child support expenses is allowed.

To determine the prorated amount to allow:

1. Divide the expense evenly by the number of group members, including the disqualified person(s) living with the FAP group.
2. Multiply the result by the number of eligible group members.

**Example:** One person in the group is disqualified with a child support expense of \$200.00 per month. The total group size is 4. Bridges divides \$200.00 by 4 which equals \$50.00. It then multiplies \$50.00 by 3 eligible group members which equals \$150.00 and allows a child support expense of \$150.00.

Bridges does **not** allow:

- Medical expenses for SDV disqualified persons.

## CHILD SUPPORT EXPENSES

- Unlimited excess shelter if the only SDV member is disqualified.

The following child support expenses are allowed:

- The amount of court-ordered child support and arrearages paid by the household members to non-household members in the benefit month.
- Court-ordered third party payments (landlord or utility company) on behalf of a non-household member.
- Legally obligated child support paid to an individual or agency outside the household, for a child who is now a household member, provided the payments are not returned to the household.

Do not allow more than the legal obligation if the client is up-to-date on their child support payments. However, if they are behind and making arrearage payments, allow the total amount paid even if it exceeds the court-ordered amount. Current and arrearage child support expenses must be paid to be allowed.

### Verification

Verify child support expenses and arrearages paid to non-household members at application, redetermination and when a change is reported. All of the following must be verified:

1. The household's legal obligation to pay.
2. The monthly amount of the obligation for current child support.
3. The amount of child support the household actually pays.

Current payments must be entered separately from arrearage payments on Bridges. A separate arrearage order is not needed to allow arrearage payments. If MDHHS verifies child support payments are court ordered, the original court order also serves as verification of the arrearage.

### Verification Sources

Acceptable verification sources include, but are **not** limited to:

- For the household's legal obligation to pay and current obligation amount:
  - Court or administrative order.
  - Legally enforceable separation agreement.
- For the household's actual child support and arrearages paid:
  - Wage withholding statements.
  - Verification of withholding from unemployment compensation or other unearned income.
  - Statements from the custodial parent regarding direct payments.
  - Statements from the custodial parent regarding third party payments the noncustodial parent pays or expects to pay on behalf of the custodial parent.
  - Data obtained from the state's Child Support Enforcement System (MICSES).

**Note:** Documents that are accepted as verification of the household's legal obligation to pay child support and arrearages are **not** acceptable as verification of the household's actual monthly payment.

## DEPENDENT CARE EXPENSES

Allow an **unreimbursed** dependent care expense for a child or an incapacitated adult who is a member of the FAP group, when such care is necessary to enable a member of the FAP group to work. This is the amount the FAP group actually pays out-of-pocket. The expense does **not** have to be paid to be allowed. Allow only the amount the provider expects the client to pay out-of-pocket. Work includes seeking, accepting or continuing employment; or training or education preparatory to employment.

**Case Management Tip:** Be especially careful in following the above dependent care expense budgeting policy if the client's dependent care is reimbursed by the Child Development and Care program (CDC) or another agency or person.

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**Verification**

Verify dependent care expenses at application, reported change and redetermination.

**Verification  
Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to, bills or written statement or collateral contact with the provider.

**MEDICAL  
EXPENSES****Application and  
Redetermination**

Consider **only** the medical expenses of SDV persons in the eligible group or SDV persons disqualified for certain reasons; see Expenses for Disqualified or Ineligible Persons in this item. Estimate an SDV person's medical expenses for the benefit period. Base the estimate on all of the following:

- Verified allowable medical expenses.
- Available information about the SDV member's medical condition and health insurance.
- Changes that can reasonably be anticipated to occur during the benefit period.

***During the Benefit Period***

A FAP group is not required to, but may voluntarily report changes during the benefit period. Process changes during the benefit period **only** if they are one of the following:

- Voluntarily reported and verified during the benefit period such as expenses reported and verified for MA deductible.
- Reported by another source and there is sufficient information and verification to determine the allowable amount without contacting the FAP group.

***One-Time-Only Expenses***

Groups that do not have a 24-month benefit period may choose to budget a one-time-only medical expense for one month or average

it over the balance of the benefit period. Bridges will allow the expense in the first benefit month the change can affect.

**Exception:** Groups that have 24-month benefit periods must be given the following options for one-time-only medical expenses billed or due within the first 12 months of the benefit period:

1. Budget it for one month.
2. Average it over the remainder of the first 12 months of the benefit period.
3. Average it over the remainder of the 24-month benefit period.

**Example:** Sally has a \$1,200 emergency room bill in 11/08. It is not covered by Medicaid or any medical insurance and she received the first bill for this service in 1/09. Her FAP benefit period is 10/1/08 through 9/30/10. She can elect to use:

- The entire \$1,200 deduction to affect 2/09 benefits. This would probably increase her FAP to the maximum amount for that one month.
- \$150 per month (\$1,200 bill divided by 8 months remaining in the first 12 months of her benefit period) to affect 2/09 through 9/09. This would probably increase her FAP benefits by \$50 per month for eight months.
- \$60 per month (\$1,200 bill divided by 20 months remaining in the benefit period) to affect 2/09 through 9/10. This would probably increase her FAP benefits by \$20 for 20 months. (If she were within \$20 of the maximum, this option would benefit her the most.)

### Allowable Medical Expenses

Allowable medical expenses are limited to the following:

- Medical and dental care including psychotherapy and rehabilitation services provided by a licensed practitioner authorized by State law or other qualified health professional.
- Hospitalization or nursing care. Include these expenses for a person who was a group member immediately prior to entering a hospital or nursing home.

- Prescription drugs and the postage for mail-ordered prescriptions.
- Costs of medical supplies, sickroom equipment (including rental) or other prescribed medical equipment (excluding the cost for special diets).
- Over-the-counter medication (including insulin) and other health-related supplies (bandages, sterile gauze, incontinence pads, etc.) when recommended by a licensed health professional.
- Premiums for health and hospitalization policies (excluding the cost of income maintenance type health policies and accident policies, also known as assurances). If the policy covers more than one person, allow a prorated amount for the SDV person(s).
- Medicare premiums.
- Dentures, hearing aids and prosthetics including the cost of securing and maintaining a seeing eye or hearing dog or other assistance animal. (Animal food and veterinary expenses are included.)
- Eyeglasses when prescribed by an ophthalmologist (physician-eye specialist) or optometrist.
- Actual costs of transportation and lodging necessary to secure medical treatment or services. If actual costs **cannot** be determined for transportation, allow the cents-per-mile amount at the standard mileage rate for a privately owned vehicle in lieu of an available state vehicle. To find the cents-per-mile amount go to the Michigan Department of Management and Budget at [www.michigan.gov/dtmb](http://www.michigan.gov/dtmb), select Services & Facilities from the left navigation menu, then select Travel. On the travel page, choose Travel Rates and High Cost Cities using the rate for the current year.
- The cost of employing an attendant, homemaker, home health aide, housekeeper, home help provider, or child care provider due to age, infirmity or illness. This cost must include an amount equal to the maximum FAP benefits for one person if the FAP group provides the majority of the attendant's meals. If this attendant care cost could qualify as both a medical

expense and a dependent care expense, it **must** be treated as a medical expense.

- A Medicaid deductible is allowed if the following are true.
  - The medical expenses used to meet the Medicaid deductible are allowable FAP expenses.
  - The medical expenses are not overdue. See below.

**Note:** Medical marijuana is **not** an allowable medical expense.

### Estimating and Determining an Allowable Medical Expense

Estimate an SDV person's medical expenses for the benefit period. The expense does **not** have to be paid to be allowed. Allow medical expenses when verification of the portion paid, or to be paid by insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, etc. is provided. Allow **only** the non-reimbursable portion of a medical expense. The medical bill cannot be overdue.

The medical bill is **not** overdue if one of the following conditions exists:

- Currently incurred (for example, in the same month, ongoing, etc.).
- Currently billed (client is receiving the bill for the first time for a medical expense provided earlier and the bill is not overdue).
- Client made a payment arrangement before the medical bill became overdue.

### VERIFICATION

Verify allowable medical expenses including the **amount of reimbursement**, at initial application and redetermination. Verify reported changes in the source or amount of medical expenses if the change would result in an increase in benefits.

Do not verify other factors, unless questionable. Other factors include things like the allowability of the service or the eligibility of the person incurring the cost.

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## VERIFICATION SOURCES

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or written statement from the provider, which show all amounts paid by, or to be paid by, insurance, Medicare or Medicaid.
- Insurance, Medicare or Medicaid statements which show charges incurred and the amount paid, or to be paid, by the insurer.
- DHS-54A, Medical Needs, completed by a licensed health care professional.
- SOLQ for Medicare premiums.
- Written statements from licensed health care professionals.
- Collateral contact with the provider. (Most commonly used to determine cost of dog food, over-the-counter medication and health-related supplies, and ongoing medical transportation).

## SHELTER EXPENSES

Allow a shelter expense when the FAP group has a shelter expense or contributes to the shelter expense. Do **not** prorate the shelter expense even if the expense is shared. Shelter expenses are allowed when billed. The expenses do **not** have to be paid to be allowed.

Late fees and/or penalties incurred for shelter expenses are **not** an allowable expense.

**Note:** When a shelter expense is paid in advance, continue to allow the ongoing monthly shelter expense. **Example:** A client's monthly shelter expense is \$300. They pay \$900 to the landlord to cover the months of April-June. Continue to allow the monthly shelter obligation of \$300 in the FAP budgets for April-June.

### Housing Expenses

Housing expenses include rent, mortgage, a second mortgage, home equity loan, required condo or maintenance fees, lot rental or

other payments including interest leading to ownership of the shelter occupied by the FAP group.

The expense must be a continuing one. Payments that exceed the normal monthly obligation are **not** deductible as a shelter expense unless the payment is necessary to prevent eviction or foreclosure, **and** it has **not** been allowed in a previous FAP budget. Additional expenses for optional charges, such as carports, pets, etc. are **not** allowed.

**Note:** Some finance companies or banks may combine billings for allowable shelter expenses with other loans. Be careful to only allow the portion that is an allowable shelter expense. Home equity loans are allowable, see Determining the Monthly Amount, Home Equity Loan Expense in this item.

### ***Temporary Housing***

If FIP or SDA shelter vendor payments are made on behalf of a FAP group residing in **temporary housing** per BEM 500, Government Aid section, subtract the vendor payment from the total shelter amount to determine the allowable shelter expense.

### ***Rental Income Situations***

Do **not** deduct the cost of doing business from the shelter expense of a FAP group with rental income.

## **Property Taxes, Assessments and Insurance**

Property taxes, state and local assessments and insurance on the structure are allowable expenses. Do **not** allow insurance costs for the contents of the structure, for example, furniture, clothing and personal belongings.

Deduct the entire insurance charge for structure and contents when the amount for the structure cannot be determined separately.

Renter's insurance is **not** allowed.

## **Home Repair Expenses**

Allow charges for repair of a home which was substantially damaged or destroyed due to a natural disaster such as fire or flood.

**Note:** Do **not** allow any portion of an expense that has been or will be reimbursed by any source.

## Verification

Verify shelter expenses at application and when a change is reported. If the client fails to verify a reported change in shelter, remove the old expense until the new expense is verified.

Verify the expense **and** the amount for housing expenses, property taxes, assessments, insurance and home repairs.

## Verification Sources

Acceptable verification sources include, but are **not** limited to:

- Mortgage, rental or condo maintenance fees contracts or a statement from the landlord, bank or mortgage company.
- Copy of tax, insurance, assessment bills or a collateral contact with the appropriate government or insurance office.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address if verifying shelter, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.
- DHS-3688, Shelter Verification form. A copy of this form will be sent to the FAP group and a task and reminder sent to the specialist when a change of address is done in Bridges. The due date will be on the form. The specialist must monitor for return of the form and take appropriate action if it is or is **not** returned.
- Current lease.

## MANDATORY HEAT AND UTILITY STANDARD

The heat/utility (h/u) standard covers all heat and utility costs including cooling, **except** actual utility expenses, for example, installation fees etc.; see Actual Utilities in this item. Do **not** prorate the h/u standard even if the heating/cooling expense is shared.

FAP groups that qualify for the h/u standard **do not** receive any other individual utility standards. Do **not** require verification of the other utility standards if the household is already eligible for the h/u standard.

**Note:** FAP groups whose heat is included in their rent may still qualify for the h/u standard. Some additional ways include but are not limited to, receipt of the Home Heating Credit (HHC) or a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Payment (LIHEAP). The amount of either payment must be greater than \$20 in the month of application or in the immediately preceding 12 months prior to the application month.

**Effective May 1,  
2014**

### **Applications**

When processing applications or redeterminations clients are **not** automatically allowed the h/u standard. Process these using the policy as written in the MANDATORY HEAT AND UTILITY STANDARD section.

All new FAP applications that were not certified before March 10, 2014, when the Agricultural Act of 2014 went into effect, will be reprocessed to follow the MANDATORY HEAT AND UTILITY STANDARD section and will be required to provide verification once the systems changes are completed on May 1, 2014.

### **Delayed Implementation of Changes Due to Agricultural Act of 2014 (End of the Dollar LIHEAP Program)**

For all FAP groups that received the h/u standard on or before February 7, 2014, the h/u standard will remain in place for a period of five months after the month of their first redetermination occurring on or after May 1, 2014. In order to continue receiving the h/u standard beyond the expiration of the five month period, the FAP group must meet the requirements of the MANDATORY HEAT AND UTILITY STANDARD section.

**Example:** Sally's FAP group received the h/u standard on or before February 7, 2014. Her case either has its first redetermination after May 1, 2014 in the month of May, with the benefit period beginning in June. The delayed implementation change requires her benefit issuance amount starting in November to include only the utilities for which she is responsible to pay. Therefore, from June through October, she will continue to

automatically receive the h/u standard. However, if she does not verify any responsibility for utilities, then starting with her November FAP issuance her budget will no longer contain any heat or utility expenses.

### Heating Separate from Housing Costs

A FAP group which has a heating expense or contributes to the heating expense separate from rent, mortgage or condominium/maintenance payments must use the h/u standard.

#### ***Heat Verification***

Verify heating separate from housing costs at application or when a change is reported.

***Exception:*** For groups that have verified that they own or are purchasing the home that they occupy, verify the heat obligation only if questionable.

#### ***Heat Verification Sources***

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the provider for heating/cooling expenses.
- Collateral contact with the landlord or the heating/cooling provider.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.
- DHS-3688, Shelter Verification.
- Current lease.

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**Cooling Separate  
from Housing  
Costs**

FAP groups who pay for cooling (including room air conditioners) are eligible for the h/u standard if they verify they have the responsibility to pay for non-heat electric.

**Verification**

Verify non-heat electric at application or when a change is reported.

**Verification Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the provider for electric expenses.
- Collateral contact with the electric provider.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.
- DHS-3688, Shelter Verification.
- Current lease.

**Heat Included in  
Rent or Fees**

FAP groups whose heat is **included** in their rent or fees are not eligible for the h/u standard, **unless** they are billed for **excess heat** payments from their landlord.

**Verification**

Verify the excess heat expense at application or when a change is reported. Client statement is no longer acceptable; verification is required.

**Verification Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the landlord for excess heat expenses.
- Collateral contact with the landlord.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.

## Home Heating Credit (HHC)

### ***New Applications***

FAP groups who have received a HHC in an amount greater than \$20 in the application month or in the immediately preceding 12 months prior to the application month are eligible for the h/u standard.

### ***Existing FAP Groups***

FAP groups who are at redetermination and have received a HHC in an amount greater than \$20 in the certification month or in the immediately preceding 12 months prior to the certification month are eligible for the h/u standard.

### ***Verification***

Verify receipt of HHC at application, redetermination or when a change is reported.

### ***Verification Sources***

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Bridges inquiry. (HHC Approved Client Inquiry).
- Letter from provider.
- Collateral contact with provider.
- Copy of HHC warrant.

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**Low Income Home  
Energy Assistance  
Payment (LIHEAP)*****New Applications***

FAP groups who have received a LIHEAP payment or a LIHEAP payment was made on their behalf in an amount greater than \$20 in the application month or in the immediately preceding 12 months prior to the application month are eligible for the h/u standard.

***Existing FAP Groups***

FAP groups who are at redetermination and have received a LIHEAP payment or a LIHEAP payment was made on their behalf in an amount greater than \$20 in the certification month or in the immediately preceding 12 months prior to the certification month are eligible for the h/u standard.

**Note:** LIHEAP payments may include State Emergency Relief (SER) energy related payments or Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) payments.

***Verification***

Verify receipt of a LIHEAP payment at application, redetermination or when a change is reported.

***Verification Sources***

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Bridges Inquiry (benefit issuance for energy related SER).
- Letter from provider.
- Collateral contact with provider.
- Proof of LIHEAP payment

**Electricity Included  
in Rent or Fees**

FAP groups whose electricity is **included** in their rent or fees are not eligible for the h/u standard **unless** their landlord bills them separately for excess cooling.

**Verification**

Verify separate excess cooling expense at application or when a change is reported.

**Verification Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- A written statement from the landlord for separate cooling expense.
- Collateral contact with the landlord.

**Shared Meters or  
Expenses**

If the FAP group has **any** responsibility for the heating/cooling expense, use the h/u standard.

**Verification**

Verify the heating/cooling expense at application or when a change is reported.

**Verification Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the landlord.
- Collateral contact with the landlord.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.

**MANDATORY  
INDIVIDUAL  
STANDARDS**

FAP groups not eligible for the h/u standard who have other utility expenses or contribute to the cost of other utility expenses are eligible for the individual utility standards. Use the individual standard for each utility the FAP group has responsibility to pay. Do **not** prorate the utility standard even if the expense is shared.

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**Non-Heat Electric  
Standard**

A FAP group which has no heating/cooling expense but has a responsibility to pay for non-heat electricity separate from rent/mortgage or condo/maintenance fees must use the non-heat electric standard. The standard covers **only** non-heat electric.

**Verification**

Verify non-heat electric expense at application or when a change is reported.

**Verification Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the provider for electric expenses.
- Collateral contact with the electric provider.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.
- DHS-3688, Shelter Verification.
- Current lease.

**Water and/or  
Sewer Standard**

A FAP group which has no heating/cooling expense but has a responsibility to pay for water and/or sewer separate from rent/mortgage or condo fees, must use the water and/or sewer standard. The standard covers **only** water and/or sewer expenses.

**Verification**

Do **not** verify the water or sewer expense, unless questionable; see BAM 130 regarding verification of questionable data.

**Verification Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the provider for water or sewer expenses.
- Collateral contact with the water or sewer provider.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.

### Telephone Standard

A FAP group which has no heating/cooling expense but has a responsibility to pay for a traditional land-line service, cellular phone service including per-minute or per-call service and voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) must use the telephone standard. The standard covers **only** the telephone expense.

#### **Verification**

Do not verify the telephone expense, unless questionable; see BAM 130 regarding verification of questionable data.

#### **Verification Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are **not** limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the telephone provider.
- Collateral contact with the telephone provider.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.

### Cooking Fuel Standard

A FAP group which has no heating/cooling expense but has a responsibility to pay for cooking fuel separate from rent/mortgage or condo fees must use the cooking fuel standard. The standard covers **only** cooking fuel expenses.

**Verification**

Do not verify the cooking fuel expense, unless questionable; see BAM 130 regarding verification of questionable data.

**Verification Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the provider for cooking fuel expenses.
- Collateral contact with the cooking fuel provider.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.

**Trash Removal  
Standard**

A FAP group which has no heating/cooling expense but has a responsibility to pay for trash or garbage removal separate from rent/mortgage or condo fees must use the trash removal standard. The standard covers **only** trash removal.

**Verification**

Do not verify the trash or garbage removal expense, unless questionable; see BAM 130 regarding verification of questionable data.

**Verification Sources**

If the trash or garbage removal expense is questionable, acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the provider for trash removal.
- Collateral contact with the trash removal provider.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.

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**ACTUAL UTILITIES**

Actual utility expenses will be used for the following expenses only:

- Utility installation charges (not deposits).
- Water well installation and maintenance.
- Septic installation and maintenance.

**Note:** Do **not** allow an actual utility expense for reconnection fees after service has been turned off for the same people at the same address.

**Verification**

Verify the actual expense.

**Verification Sources**

Acceptable verification sources include, but are not limited to:

- Current bills or a written statement from the provider.
- Collateral contact with the provider.
- Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.

**SHELTER COSTS  
FOR UNOCCUPIED  
HOME**

Allow shelter costs for a home temporarily unoccupied by the FAP group due to:

- Employment or training away from home.
- Illness.
- Abandonment caused by a natural disaster or casualty loss.

Include shelter costs for a temporarily unoccupied home, provided all of the following are true:

- The FAP group intends to return to the home.
- The current occupants of the home, if any, are **not** claiming shelter costs on that home for FAP purposes.

- The home is **not** being leased or rented to others during the FAP group’s absence.

**Allowable Expenses**

Allow the following expenses:

- Basic shelter expenses as described above.
- Heat and Utility Standard, or individual utility standards.
- Utility installation fees charged by the utility provider, excluding deposits.
- Well/septic installation and maintenance.

**Exception:** Heat and utility expenses may only be claimed for one home.

**Verification**

The FAP group **must** verify these expenses for a deduction to be allowed. MDHHS is not required to assist FAP groups in obtaining verification of shelter costs for an unoccupied home in another county or state.

**FAP ALLOWABLE EXPENSES - DESK AID**

<b>Ineligible student has expense?</b>	If no, go to the next section. If yes, do not allow the expense.
Disqualified due to: • Lack of SSN, alien status. • Time limited, child support. Has expense?	If no, go to the next section. If yes, allow full shelter, heat and utility expenses. Note: Prorate other expenses, such as child support and dependent care expenses, between the household members. Allow the prorated portion designated for the eligible group members.
Disqualified due to: • IPV. • Employment related. • Divestment. Has expense?	If no, go to the next section. If yes, allow full expense.
<b>Receives subsidized housing?</b>	If no, go to the next section. If yes, allow only the portion of the rent for which the client is responsible.

Verifications.	<p><b>Required</b> at application and reported change.</p> <p><b>Acceptable verifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS-3688.</li> <li>• Current lease.</li> <li>• Rent receipt.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the landlord.</li> <li>• Statement from HUD.</li> </ul> <p>Note: These types of verifications must identify the client and the client's address and obligations.</p>
<b>Housing/rent responsibility?</b>	<p>If no, do not allow an expense. Go to the next section.</p> <p>If yes, allow the full expense.</p> <p>Note: Do not allow late fees, penalties or one-time deposits.</p>
Verifications.	<p><b>Required</b> at application and reported change.</p> <p><b>Acceptable verifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS-3688.</li> <li>• Current lease.</li> <li>• Rent receipt</li> <li>• Collateral contact with landlord.</li> </ul> <p>Note: These types of verifications must identify the client's address and obligations.</p>
<b>Purchasing home or ownership responsibility?</b>	<p>If no, do not allow an expense. Go to the next section.</p> <p>If yes, allow the full expense.</p> <p>Note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow taxes, insurance, required maintenance and condo fees the client is responsible for that are not included in the mortgage payment.</li> <li>2. Do not allow late fees or penalties.</li> </ol>
Verifications.	<p><b>Required</b> at application and reported change.</p> <p><b>Acceptable verifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS-3688.</li> <li>• Land contract.</li> <li>• Tax bills.</li> <li>• Insurance bills.</li> <li>• Mortgage papers.</li> <li>• Assessment bills.</li> <li>• Collateral contact.</li> </ul> <p>Note: These types of verifications must identify the client's address and obligations.</p>
<p><b>Effective May 1, 2014</b>  <b>Applications</b>  When processing applications or redeterminations, clients are not automatically allowed the h/u standard. Process these using the policy as written in the <b>MANDATORY HEAT AND UTILITY STANDARD</b></p>	

section in this item.	
<b>Responsible for heating expenses separate from mortgage/rent/fees?</b>	<p>If no, do not allow the heat and utility (h/u) standard. Go to the next section.</p> <p>If yes, allow the h/u standard, which includes all the individual utility standards.</p>
Heat Verifications.	<p>At application and reported change, enter the appropriate verification source, if available.</p> <p><b>Acceptable verifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS-3688.</li> <li>• Current lease.</li> <li>• Current bill that identifies the expense.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the landlord or provider.</li> </ul> <p>Note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verify the heat obligation only if questionable for groups that have verified that they own or are purchasing the home they occupy.</li> <li>2. If the heating bill is in someone else's name, allow the expense if the client claims the expense and the service address on the bill is where the FAP group lives.</li> </ol>
<b>Responsible for cooling expenses separate from rent/fees?</b>	<p>If no, do not allow the h/u standard. Go to the next section.</p> <p>If yes, allow the h/u standard, which includes all the individual utility standards if the client varies they have a non-heat electric expense.</p>
Cooling Verifications	<p>Enter the appropriate verification source, if available.</p> <p><b>Acceptable verifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS-3688.</li> <li>• Current lease.</li> <li>• Current bill that identifies the expense for the FAP group.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the landlord or provider.</li> </ul> <p>Note: If the non-heat electric bill is in someone else's name, allow the expense if the client claims the expense and the service address on the bill is where the FAP group lives.</p>
<b>Heat included in rent/fees, but responsible for:</b>	<p>If no, do not allow the heat and utility standard. Go to the next section.</p> <p>If yes, allow the h/u standard.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excess heat costs.</li> </ul>	

Excess heat verifications.	Enter the appropriate verification source, if available. <b>Acceptable verifications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current bills or written statement from the landlord.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the landlord.</li> <li>• Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current.</li> </ul>
Receipt of HHC in an amount greater than \$20 in the current month or preceding 12 months.	If no, do not allow h/u standard. Go to next section. If yes, allow the h/u standard.
HHC verifications	Enter the appropriate verification source, if available. <b>Acceptable verifications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridges inquiry. (HHC Approved Client Inquiry).</li> <li>• Letter from provider.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with provider.</li> <li>• Copy of HHC warrant.</li> </ul>
Receipt of LIHEAP payment or a LIHEAP payment was made on the group's behalf in an amount greater than \$20 in the current month or immediately preceding 12 months. (SER or MEAP)	If no, do not allow h/u standard. Go to next section. If yes, allow the h/u standard.
LIHEAP payment verification.	Enter the appropriate verification source, if available. <b>Acceptable verifications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridges inquiry. (Benefit issuance for energy related SER.)</li> <li>• Letter from provider.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with provider.</li> <li>• Proof of MEAP payment.</li> </ul>
<b>Electricity included in rent/fees, but responsible for:</b> Excess cooling costs.	If no, do not allow the heat and utility standard. Go to the next section. If yes, allow the h/u standard.
Excess cooling verifications.	Enter the appropriate verification source, if available. <b>Acceptable verifications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written statement from the landlord.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the landlord.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible for non-heat electric expenses and not eligible for the h/u standard?</b>	If no, do not allow the heat and utility standard. Go to the next section. If yes, allow the non-heat electric standard.

Non-heat electric verifications.	Enter the appropriate verification source, if available. <b>Acceptable verifications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS-3688.</li> <li>• Current lease.</li> <li>• Current bill that identifies the expense for the FAP group.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the landlord or provider.</li> </ul> Note: If the non-heat electric bill is in someone else's name, allow the expense if the client claims the expense, and the services address on the bill is where the FAP group lives.
<b>Responsible for water and/or sewer expenses and not eligible for the h/u standard?</b>	If no, do not allow the heat and utility standard. Go to the next section. If yes, allow the water and/or sewer standard.
Water and or sewer verifications	Not required, unless questionable. Acceptable verifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current bill that identifies the expense for the FAP group.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the landlord or provider.</li> </ul> Note: If the water and/or sewer bill is in someone else's name, allow the expense if the client claims the expense and the service address on the bill is where the FAP group lives.
<b>Responsible for telephone, monthly cellular phone plans and not eligible for the h/u standard (Y/N)?</b>	If no, do not allow the heat and utility standard. Go to the next section. If yes, allow the telephone standard.
Telephone verifications.	<b>Not</b> required, unless questionable. <b>Acceptable verifications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current bill that identifies the expense for the FAP group <b>and</b>, must include at least the monthly basic fee.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the provider.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible for cooking fuel expenses and not eligible for the h/u standard?</b>	If no, do not allow the heat and utility standard. Go to the next section. If yes, allow the cooking fuel standard.
Cooking fuel verifications.	<b>Not</b> required, unless questionable. <b>Acceptable verifications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current bill that identifies the expense for the FAP group.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the provider.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible for trash removal expenses and not eligible for the h/u standard (Y/N)?</b>	If no, do not allow the heat and utility standard. Go to the next section. If yes, allow the trash removal standard.

Trash removal verifications.	<p><b>Not</b> required, unless questionable.</p> <p><b>Acceptable verifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current bill that identifies the expense for the FAP group.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the provider.</li> </ul>
Actual utility expenses?	<p>If no, go to the next section.</p> <p>If yes, allow only the following expenses:</p> <p>Utility installation charges (<b>not deposits</b>).</p> <p>Water well installation and maintenance.</p> <p>Septic installation and maintenance.</p>
Actual utility verifications.	<p><b>Verify</b> the actual expense.</p> <p><b>Acceptable verifications include, but are not limited to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current bills or a written statement from the provider.</li> <li>• Collateral contact with the provider.</li> <li>• Cancelled checks, receipts or money order copies, if current. The receipt must contain minimum information to identify the expense, the amount of the expense, the expense address, the provider of the service and the name of the person paying the expense.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Do not allow an actual utility expense for reconnection fees after the service has been turned off for the same people at the same address.</p>

## LEGAL BASE

7 CFR 273.8(h)

7 CFR 273.9(d),.10(d)(6),.11(c),.21

7 CFR 273.9 (c)(10)(11)

42 USC 8621 - 8630

Michigan Low Income Heating Assistance and Shut Off Protection Act, MCL 400.1201 et. seq.

Agricultural Act of 2014, Section 4006