

Legislative Analysis



DISTRIBUTE FOOD ASSISTANCE BENEFITS TO AN INDIVIDUAL TWICE PER MONTH

Mitchell Bean, Director
Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4923

Sponsor: Rep. Andy Meisner

Committee: Families and Children's Services

Complete to 10-23-07

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4923 AS INTRODUCED 6-14-07

The bill would amend the Social Welfare Act (MCL 400.114J) to provide that if the Department of Human Services determines an individual is eligible for food assistance benefits, it would issue regular food assistance benefits to that individual two times per month. The department could continue to issue food assistance benefits to the recipient on a staggered basis based on the case ending digit. The bill would not apply to the issuance of initial food benefits, retroactive assistance benefits or supplemental food assistance benefits.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would require the Department of Human Services to issue standard food assistance benefits to eligible recipients two times each month. Under current policy, benefits are distributed once each month with these payments staggered over the first nine days of the month to individual recipients based on the last digit of the client's case number.

The policy change would impose one-time costs on the Department of Human Services related to information technology systems changes needed to implement the change and staff time needed to respond to recipient inquiries that would likely result from the policy change. Information from the Department of Human Services suggests that the information technology systems costs would be around \$900,000. The additional increase in staff time and costs would depend upon the number of recipient inquiries that resulted from the policy change and the required follow-up time from DHS staff. For reference, in September 2007, the DHS issued food assistance benefits to 565,588 recipient groups representing 1,217,334 individuals, so a significant workload impact is possible.

Federal funding would be provided to meet 50% of any resulting costs. State revenues would be required for the remaining 50%.

Legislative Analyst: E. Best

Fiscal Analyst: Bob Schneider

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