

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF: [REDACTED],  
Respondent

Reg. No: 2008-29326  
Issue No: 3055  
Case No: [REDACTED]  
Load No:  
Hearing Date:  
April 8, 2009  
Kent County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Ivona Rairigh

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37, 7 CFR 273.16, MAC R 400.3130, and MAC R 400.3178 upon the Department of Human Services (department) request for a disqualification hearing. After due notice, a hearing was held on April 8, 2009. Respondent personally appeared and testified.

ISSUE

Whether respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) on the Food Assistance Program (FAP) and whether respondent received an overissuance of benefits that the department is entitled to recoup?

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the clear and convincing evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) filed a hearing request to establish an overissuance of FAP benefits received by respondent as a result of respondent having committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV); the OIG also requested that respondent be disqualified from receiving program benefits.

2. Respondent signed Assistance Applications (1171) on July 22, 2004, acknowledging that she understood her failure to give timely, truthful, complete and accurate wage/employment information could result in a civil or criminal action or an administrative claim against her (Department's Exhibit #1, pages 7-13).

3. Respondent listed on her application her son, [REDACTED], as living in her household and requested FAP benefits for him. Respondent reported no earned income for her household and further reported as only income [REDACTED] for her other son.

4. Department subsequently received information that respondent's son, [REDACTED] was employed at the time she completed the application, and that he had been working since October 20, 2003, for [REDACTED] (Department's Exhibit #2, p. 15).

5. Department completed budgets with [REDACTED] income starting in July, 2004, and these budgets resulted in a determination that respondent was not eligible for FAP benefits she received starting in this month and continuing to June, 2005.

6. Respondent failed to report her son's employment income and as a result of her failure to report received more FAP benefits than she was entitled to receive. Respondent was overissued [REDACTED] in FAP benefits from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005 (Department's Exhibits #3 and 4).

7. Respondent's hearing testimony is that someone else used her son's name and his social security number, and that this was not his employment income. A hearing on this same issue was initially scheduled for February 4, 2009. This hearing was adjourned to give the respondent time to provide additional information to show this was not her son that was working for [REDACTED]

8. Respondent was also scheduled for an interview with OIG staff for June 30, 2008, and failed to respond to that request. Respondent has no further information to verify this was

not her son working, claims that she did not have the time to obtain such information, that her son is in another state, and that someone stole his social security card.

9. Respondent was clearly instructed and fully aware of her responsibility to report all household income to the department.

10. Respondent was physically and mentally capable of performing her reporting responsibilities.

11. Respondent has not committed any previous intentional FAP program violations.

### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) (formerly known as the Food Stamp (FS) program) is established by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Human Services (DHS or department) administers the FAP program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MAC R 400.3001-3015. Department policies are found in the Program Administrative Manual (PAM), the Program Eligibility Manual (PEM) and the Program Reference Manual (PRM).

In this case, the department has requested a disqualification hearing to establish an overissuance of benefits as a result of an IPV and the department has asked that respondent be disqualified from receiving benefits. The department's manuals provide the following relevant policy statements and instructions for department caseworkers:**BENEFIT OVERISSUANCES**

#### **DEPARTMENT POLICY**

##### **All Programs**

When a client group receives more benefits than they are entitled to receive, DHS must attempt to recoup the overissuance (OI). PAM, Item 700, p. 1.

## **Definitions**

The **Automated Recoupment System (ARS)** is the part of CIMS that tracks all FIP, SDA and FAP OIs and payments, issues automated collection notices and triggers automated benefit reductions for active programs.

A **claim** is the resulting debt created by an overissuance of benefits.

The **Discovery Date** is determined by the Recoupment Specialist (RS) for a client or department error. This is the date the OI is known to exist and there is evidence available to determine the OI type. For an Intentional Program Violation (IPV), the Office of Inspector General (OIG) determines the discovery date. This is the date the referral was sent to the prosecutor or the date the OIG requested an administrative disqualification hearing.

The **Establishment Date** for an OI is the date the DHS-4358A-D, Repay Agreement, is sent to the client and for an IPV, the date the DHS-4357 is sent notifying the client when the disqualification and recoupment will start. In CIMS the “establishment date” has been renamed “notice sent date.”

An **overissuance (OI)** is the amount of benefits issued to the client group or CDC provider in excess of what they were eligible to receive. For FAP benefits, an OI is also the amount of benefits trafficked (traded or sold).

**Overissuance Type** identifies the cause of an overissuance.

**Recoupment** is a DHS action to identify and recover a benefit OI. PAM 700, p. 1.

## **PREVENTION OF OVERISSUANCES**

### **All Programs**

DHS must inform clients of their reporting responsibilities and act on the information reported within the Standard of Promptness (SOP).

During eligibility determination and while the case is active, clients are repeatedly reminded of reporting responsibilities, including:

- . Acknowledgments on the application form, **and**

- . Explanation at application/redetermination interviews, **and**
- . Client notices and program pamphlets.

DHS must prevent OIs by following PAM 105 requirements and by informing the client or authorized representative of the following:

- . Applicants and recipients are required by law to give complete and accurate information about their circumstances.
- . Applicants and recipients are required by law to promptly notify DHS of all changes in circumstances within 10 days. FAP Simplified Reporting (SR) groups are required to report only when the group's actual gross monthly income exceeds the SR income limit for their group size.
- . Incorrect, late reported or omitted information causing an OI can result in cash repayment or benefit reduction.
- . A timely hearing request can delete a proposed benefit reduction.

## **INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION**

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **All Programs**

#### **Suspected IPV**

**Suspected IPV** means an OI exists for which all three of the following conditions exist:

- . The client **intentionally** failed to report information **or intentionally** gave incomplete or inaccurate information needed to make a correct benefit determination, **and**
- . The client was clearly and correctly instructed regarding his or her reporting responsibilities, **and**
- . The client has no apparent physical or mental impairment that limits his or her understanding or ability to fulfill their reporting responsibilities.

Intentional Program Violation (IPV) is suspected when there is clear and convincing evidence that the client or CDC provider has intentionally withheld or misrepresented information for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, increasing or preventing reduction of program benefits or eligibility. PAM, Item 720, p. 1. The federal Food Stamp regulations read in part:

- (c) Definition of Intentional Program Violation. Intentional Program Violation shall consist of having intentionally:
- (1) made a false or misleading statement, or misrepresented, concealed or withheld facts; or
  - (2) committed any act that constitutes a violation of the Food Stamp Act, the Food Stamp Program Regulations, or any State statute for the purpose of using, presenting, transferring, acquiring, receiving, possessing or trafficking of coupons, authorization cards or reusable documents used as part of an automated benefit delivery system (access device). 7 CFR 273.16(c).

The federal Food Stamp regulations read in part:

(6) Criteria for determining intentional program violation. The hearing authority shall base the determination of intentional program violation on clear and convincing evidence which demonstrates that the household member(s) committed, and intended to commit, intentional program violation as defined in paragraph (c) of this section. 7 CFR 273.16(c)(6).

## **IPV**

### **FIP, SDA AND FAP**

**IPV** exists when the client/AR is determined to have committed an Intentional Program Violation by:

- . A court decision.
- . An administrative hearing decision.
- . The client signing a DHS-826, Request for Waiver of Disqualification or DHS-83, Disqualification Consent Agreement, or other recoupment and disqualification agreement forms. PAM, Item 720, p. 1.

### **FAP Only**

**IPV** exists when an administrative hearing decision, a repayment and disqualification agreement or court decision determines FAP benefits were trafficked. PAM 720, p. 2.

### **OVERISSUANCE AMOUNT**

#### **FIP, SDA, CDC and FAP Only**

The amount of the OI is the amount of benefits the group or provider actually received minus the amount the group was eligible to receive. PAM 720, p. 6.

### **IPV Hearings**

#### **FIP, SDA, CDC, MA and FAP Only**

OIG represents DHS during the hearing process for IPV hearings.

OIG requests IPV hearings for cases when no signed DHS-826 or DHS-830 is obtained, and correspondence to the client is not returned as undeliverable, or a new address is located.

OIG requests IPV hearing for cases involving:

1. FAP trafficking OIs that are not forwarded to the prosecutor.
2. Prosecution of welfare fraud or FAP trafficking is declined by the prosecutor for a reason other than lack of evidence, **and**

The total OI amount for the FIP, SDA, CDC, MA and FAP programs combined is \$1,000 or more, **or**

- . The total OI amount is less than \$1,000, **and**
  - .. The group has a previous IPV, **or**
  - .. The alleged IPV involves FAP trafficking, **or**
  - .. The alleged fraud involves concurrent receipt of assistance (see PEM 222), **or**
  - .. The alleged fraud is committed by a state/government employee.

Excluding FAP, OIG will send the OI to the RS to process as a client error when the DHS-826 or DHS-830 is returned as undeliverable and no new address is obtained. PEM, Item 720, p. 10.

## **DISQUALIFICATION**

### **FIP, SDA and FAP Only**

Disqualify an active **or** inactive recipient who:

- . is found by a court or hearing decision to have committed IPV, **or**
- . has signed a DHS-826 or DHS-830, **or**
- . is convicted of concurrent receipt of assistance by a court, **or**
- . for FAP, is found by SOAHR or a court to have trafficked FAP benefits.

A disqualified recipient remains a member of an active group as long as he lives with them. Other eligible group members may continue to receive benefits. PAM 720, pp. 12-13.

### **Standard Disqualification Periods**

#### **FIP, SDA and FAP Only**

The standard disqualification period is used in all instances except when a **court** orders a different period (see **Non-Standard Disqualification Periods**, in this item).

Apply the following disqualification periods to recipients determined to have committed IPV:

- . One year for the first IPV
- . Two years for the second IPV
- . Lifetime for the third IPV

#### **FIP and FAP Only**

- . Ten years for concurrent receipt of benefits (see PEM 203). PAM 720, p. 13.



In this case, the department has established that respondent was aware of the responsibility to report all income and employment to the department. Respondent however, failed to report that her son was working even though she completed an application during the period of employment time to the department. Respondent testified that someone stole her son's social security card and that it was not he that was working for [REDACTED]. Respondent was contacted for an interview by OIG pertaining to these same exact issues back in June, 2008, and therefore was aware of what the department was claiming since that time, even though she failed to appear for that interview. Respondent was then given another couple of months to obtain some type of verification that this was not her son's employment, as the hearing scheduled for February 4, 2009, was adjourned so she could do so. Respondent appears at this hearing, more than 2 months later, still having no information/verification of her claim that this was not her son working, and that someone stole his social security number/card/identity and represented himself to [REDACTED] as her son. This Administrative Law Judge, while not stating that the respondent is giving false testimony, has no other option but to conclude that this was indeed her son's employment, in the absence of any other information to the contrary. Respondent was told that if she provides any additional information prior to the hearing decision being issued, it would be considered in the decision; however, she has failed to do so almost two weeks later. In addition, OIG Agent present at the hearing indicates that she will also consider any additional information respondent may provide in the future that would show that this was indeed not her son working.

Respondent has no apparent physical or mental impairment that limits the understanding or ability to fulfill the reporting responsibilities. Respondent has failed to provide any information/verification to dispute department's claim that she failed to report her son's employment income as she was required to do, despite being given more than ample time to do

so. This Administrative Law Judge therefore concludes that the department has shown, by clear and convincing evidence, that respondent committed a first intentional violation of the FAP program, resulting in a [REDACTED] over issuance from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005. Consequently, the department's request for FAP program disqualification and full restitution must be granted.]

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the clear and convincing evidence, decides respondent committed a first intentional FAP program violation.

Therefore it is ORDERED that:

1. Respondent shall be personally disqualified from participation in the FAP program for one year, but the rest of the household may participate. This disqualification period shall begin to run immediately as of the date of this Order.
2. Respondent is responsible for full restitution of the [REDACTED] FAP over issuance caused by her Intentional Program Violation (IPV).

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Ivona Rairigh  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Ismael Ahmed, Director  
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: April 22, 2009

Date Mailed: April 23, 2009

**NOTICE:** The law provides that within 30 days of receipt of the above Decision and Order, the respondent may appeal it to the circuit court for the county in which he/she lives.

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cc: 