

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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 telephone hearing was held on [REDACTED]. Respondent did not appear at the hearing and it was held in Respondent's absence pursuant to 7 CFR 273.16(3), MAC R 400.3130(5), or MAC R 400-3187(5).

ISSUE

Whether Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) of 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. The department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) filed a hearing request to establish an overissuance of 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 Application (DHS-1171) on [REDACTED], acknowledging that she understood her failure to give timely, truthful, complete and accurate information about her circumstances could result in a civil or criminal action or an administrative claim against her. (Department Exhibits 7-14).

3. As a result of a Wage Match on [REDACTED], the department discovered that Claimant had been employed at [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] (Department Exhibit 15).
4. On [REDACTED], the department discovered through a Quarterly Wage Match that Claimant had been employed at [REDACTED] Inc., from [REDACTED] and had not reported the income. (Department Exhibit 16).
5. On [REDACTED] the department received Claimant's earning statements from [REDACTED] showing she was currently employed and had been hired on [REDACTED]. (Department Exhibits 17-28).
6. Respondent received [REDACTED] in FAP benefits during the alleged fraud period of [REDACTED]. If the income had been properly reported and budgeted by the department, Respondent would only have been eligible to receive [REDACTED] in FAP benefits. (Department Exhibits 15-20, 40-51).
7. Respondent failed to properly report her income in a timely manner, resulting in a FAP overissuance for the months of [REDACTED], in the amount of [REDACTED]. (Department Exhibits 15-20, 40-51).
8. Respondent was clearly instructed and fully aware of the responsibility to report all employment and income to the department.
9. Respondent has no apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill the income reporting responsibilities.
10. Respondent had not committed any previous intentional program violations of the FAP program. (Department Hearing Request).

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 Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Bridges Reference Manual (BRM).

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 the respondent be disqualified from receiving benefits. The department's manuals provide the following relevant policy statements and instructions for department caseworkers.

When a customer client group receives more benefits than they are entitled to receive, the department must attempt to recoup the overissuance. BAM 700. A suspected intentional program violation means an overissuance where:

- 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.

The department suspects an intentional program violation when the client has intentionally withheld or misrepresented information for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, increasing, or preventing reduction of program benefits or eligibility. There must be clear and convincing evidence that the client acted intentionally for this purpose. BAM 720.

The department's Office of Inspector General processes intentional program hearings for overissuances referred to them for investigation. The Office of Inspector General represents the department during the hearing process. The Office of Inspector General requests intentional program hearings for cases when:

- benefit overissuances are not forwarded to the prosecutor.
- prosecution of welfare fraud is declined by the prosecutor for a reason other than lack of evidence, and
 - the total overissuance amount is [REDACTED]
or
 - the total overissuance amount is less [REDACTED]
and
 - the group has a previous intentional program violation, or
 - the alleged IPV involves FAP trafficking, or

- the alleged fraud involves concurrent receipt of assistance,
- the alleged fraud is committed by a state/government employee.

A court or hearing decision that finds a client committed an intentional program violation disqualifies that client from receiving program 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. BAM 720.

Clients that commit an intentional program violation are disqualified for a standard disqualification period except when a court orders a different period. Clients are disqualified for periods of one year for the first IPV, two years for the second IPV, lifetime disqualification for the third IPV, and ten years for a concurrent receipt of benefits. BAM 720. This is the respondent's first intentional program violation.

In this case, the department has established that Respondent was aware of the responsibility to report all income and employment to the department. Department policy requires clients to report any change in circumstances that will affect eligibility or benefit amount within ten days. BAM 105. Respondent has no apparent physical or mental impairment that limits the understanding or ability to fulfill the reporting responsibilities.

Respondent's signature on the Assistance Application [REDACTED] could result in criminal or civil or administrative claims. Through Quarterly Wage Matches, the department discovered that Claimant was employed at [REDACTED]. Claimant failed to report either income.

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] overissuance from [REDACTED]. 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 above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation by failing to report all her employment while receiving benefits for the period of time from [REDACTED]

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. The department is entitled to recoup the overissuance of benefits Respondent ineligibly received. Respondent is ORDERED to reimburse the department for the [REDACTED] overissuance caused by her intentional program violation.

It is SO ORDERED.

/s/ _____
[REDACTED]

Date Signed: [REDACTED] _____

Date Mailed: [REDACTED] _____

NOTICE: Administrative Hearings may order a rehearing or reconsideration on either its own motion or at the request of a party within 30 days of the mailing date of this Decision and Order. Administrative Hearings will not order a rehearing or reconsideration on the Department's motion where the final decision cannot be implemented within 90 days of the filing of the original request.

The Claimant may appeal the Decision and Order to Circuit Court within 30 days of the receipt of the Decision and Order or, if a timely request for rehearing was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the rehearing decision.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]