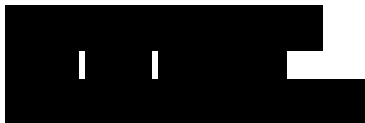


STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No: 201121331
Issue No: 1052
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: September 7, 2011
St. Clair County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Christopher S. Saunders

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9 and MCL 400.37 upon the Department of Human Services (department) request for a disqualification hearing. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on September 7, 2011. Respondent appeared and provided testimony.

ISSUE

Whether Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) Family Independence Program (FIP)?

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 completed an application for public assistance on August 1, 2007 (DHS 1171), acknowledging her responsibility to report any changes in her income, resources, or living arrangements to the department within ten days of the change. (Department Exhibits 10-17).
3. At the time he submitted the application, the Respondent listed himself, his wife, and her son as members of his household and therefore of his group. (Department Exhibits 9-16).

4. Respondent submitted an application for State Emergency Relief (SER) on May 8, 2008 in which she stated that she had no income. (Department Exhibits 18-20).
5. Respondent submitted an application/re-determination (DHS 1171) on July 22, 2008 in which she stated that she had no income. (Department Exhibits 21-36).
6. Respondent received child support payments on April 22, 28, May 6, July 2, 9, 15, and 17, 2008. (Department Exhibit 37).
7. Respondent was clearly instructed and fully aware of the responsibility to report true and accurate information to the department.
8. Respondent has no apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill the income reporting responsibilities.
9. Respondent had committed one previous intentional program violation. (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 Program Reference Manual (PRM).

The Family Independence Program (FIP) was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, 8 USC 601, *et seq.* The Department of Human Services (DHS or department) administers the FIP program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MAC R 400.3101-3131. The FIP program replaced the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program effective October 1, 1996. Department policies are found in the Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 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 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 \$1000 or more, or
 - the total overissuance amount is less than \$1000, 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, Respondent failed to notify the department that she was receiving child support payments. The clear and convincing evidence of record shows that Respondent submitted a SER application and a re-determination and stated that she had no income when in fact she had been receiving child support. At the hearing, the Respondent stated that she could not remember filling out an application for SER, but she did not dispute the fact that she had been receiving child support during the period in question. Therefore, because the Respondent did not inform the department of her child support payments as was her obligation, the Respondent committed an intentional program violation of the FIP program for the period of April 1, 2008 through July 31, 2008. Because this is a second IPV, the disqualification period of two years is appropriate.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, finds clear and convincing evidence that the Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation.

Therefore, it is HEREBY ORDERED that:

1. The Respondent shall reimburse the department for FIP benefits ineligibly received as a result of his intentional program violation for the period of April 1, 2008 through July 31, 2008 in the amount of [REDACTED]
2. The Respondent is personally ineligible to participate in the FIP program for a period of two years. The disqualification period shall be applied immediately.

/s/

Christopher S. Saunders
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: September 12, 2011

Date Mailed: September 13, 2011

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.

CSS/cr

cc:

