

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No: 20119645
Issue No: 3055
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: June 6, 2011
Calhoun County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: **Kandra Robbins**

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 an intentional program violation and disqualification hearing. After due notice, a hearing was held on June 6, 2011. Respondent did not appear at the hearing and it was held in respondent's absence pursuant to 7 CFR 273.16(e), MAC R 400.3130(5), or MAC R 400.3187(5).

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 IPV; the OIG also requested that respondent be disqualified from receiving program benefits.
2. Respondent signed Assistance Application (1171) on January 11, 2008, and again on January 23, 2009 acknowledging that he understood his failure to give timely, truthful, complete and accurate information could result in a civil or criminal action or an administrative claim against him. (Department Exhibit 1, pages 12-29).

3. Respondent reported that he intended to stay in Michigan on the application. (Department Exhibit 1, pages 12-29).
4. The respondent applied for food assistance in the State of Minnesota on April 23, 2009. (Department Exhibit 4).
5. The OIG indicates that the time period they are considering the fraud period is April 23, 2009 through January 31, 2010. (Hearing Summary).
6. During the alleged fraud period, the respondent was issued [REDACTED] in FAP benefits from the State of Michigan (Department Exhibit 3, pages 32-33).
7. The respondent was issued food stamp benefits in Minnesota from April 23, 2009, through January 31, 2010. (Department Exhibit 4).
8. Respondent was clearly instructed and fully aware of his responsibility to report any changes in residency to the department.
9. Respondent was physically and mentally capable of performing her reporting responsibilities.
10. 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.

In this case, the department has requested a hearing to establish an overissuance of benefits as a result of an Intentional program violation of the Food Assistance Program 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:

BAM 700 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). BAM, 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. BAM 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 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.

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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. BAM, 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. BAM, 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. BAM 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. BAM 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 BEM 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. BEM, 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. BAM 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). BAM 720, p. 13.

In this case, the department has established that respondent was aware of the responsibility to report any changes in circumstances that might affect eligibility for services. Respondent has no apparent physical or mental impairment that limits the understanding or ability to fulfill the reporting responsibilities. Respondent received FAP benefits from April 2009 through January 2010 from the State of Michigan. In April 2009, he also began receiving food stamp benefits from the State of Minnesota.

In this case, the respondent was receiving food assistance from the State of Michigan in April 2009. In April 2010, the respondent began receiving benefits from the State of Minnesota. Policy prohibits any individual from receiving food benefits in two states at the same time. Based on clear and convincing evidence, it is found that respondent intentionally failed to inform the department that he was receiving program benefits from

the State of Michigan at the time he applied and received benefits from the State of Minnesota.

Department policy indicates that the overissuance amount is the amount of benefits the group or provider actually received minus the amount the group was eligible to receive. BAM, item 720, p. 6. The respondent was issued [REDACTED] from the State of Michigan in food stamp benefits from April 2009 through January 2010. He also received benefits from the State of Minnesota during this same time period.

All of the benefits issued during this period were in error as the respondent was receiving benefits in another state and would not have been eligible to receive benefits if he had reported.

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. Consequently, the department's request for FAP disqualification and full restitution must be granted.

Based on clear and convincing evidence, it is found that the respondent intentionally committed the program violation as he applied to receive benefits from the State of Minnesota while he was already receiving benefits from the State of Michigan.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the clear and convincing evidence, decides respondent committed a first intentional FAP program violation. The Respondent committed this violation in order to receive multiple FAP benefits from two different states simultaneously.

Therefore it is ORDERED that:

- (1) Respondent shall be personally disqualified from participation in the FAP program for 10 years. 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 overissuance caused by her IPV.

/s/
Kandra Robbins
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: June 9, 2011

Date Mailed: June 10, 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.

KR/ar

cc:

