

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No: 201248217
Issue No: 3055, 4052
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: June 12, 2012
Kent County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Gary F. Heisler

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge for a Intentional Program Violation hearing 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' request. After due notice, a hearing was held on June 12, 2012. Respondent did not appear. The record did not contain returned mail. In accordance with Bridges Administration Manual (BAM) 720 the hearing proceeded without Respondent.

ISSUE

Whether Respondent committed a Food Assistance Program (FAP) Intentional Program Violation (IPV) and whether Respondent received a [REDACTED] over-issuance of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits between September 1, 2009 and February 28, 2009 which the Department is entitled to recoup?

Whether Respondent committed a State Disability Assistance (SDA) Intentional Program Violation (IPV) and whether Respondent received a [REDACTED] over-issuance of State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefits between September 1, 2009 and February 28, 2009 which the Department is entitled to recoup?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. On March 25, 2009, Respondent submitted an application for assistance. Respondent listed three members in her household: herself; her husband; and her 28 year old daughter who received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Respondent also indicated that her husband had lost their only source of employment income on February 6, 2009.
2. On April 1, 2009, Respondent began receiving Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits of [REDACTED] per month for a benefit group of 3 persons.

3. On April 16, 2009, State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefits began to be issued to Respondent as a benefit group of 1 person.
4. On July 1, 2009, Respondent's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits were reduced from \$526 to [REDACTED] per month for a benefit group of 3.
5. On September 4, 2009, Respondent's benefit group of 3 was approved for a decrease of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] per month for the period beginning October 1, 2009 through February 28, 2010.
6. On September 14, 2009, Respondent's husband began employment at Omni Transportation.

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 (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and 1997 AACS R 400.3001-3015.

The State Disability Assistance (SDA) program, which provides financial assistance for disabled persons, is established by 2004 PA 344. The Department of Human Services (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the SDA program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and 1998-2000 AACS R 400.3151-400.3180.

In this case, the Department has requested a disqualification hearing to establish an over-issuance of benefits as a result of an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) and the Department has asked that Respondent be disqualified from receiving benefits. Department policies provide the following guidance and are available on the internet through the Department's website.

BAM 720 INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATIONS

DEPARTMENT POLICY

All Programs

Recoupment policies and procedures vary by program and over-issuance (OI) type. This item explains Intentional Program Violation (IPV) processing and establishment.

PAM 700 explains OI discovery, OI types and standards of promptness. PAM 705 explains agency error and PAM 715 explains client error.

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.

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.

Clear and convincing evidence is evidence that “produce[s] in the mind of the trier of fact a firm belief or conviction as to the truth of the allegations sought to be established, evidence so clear, direct, and weighty and convincing as to enable [the fact finder] to come to a clear conviction, without hesitancy, of the truth of the precise facts in issue.” *In re Martin*, 450 Mich 204, 227; 538 NW2d 399 (1995), quoting *In re Jobes*, 108 NJ 394, 407-408; 529 A2d 434 (1987).

FAP Only

IPV is suspected for a client who is alleged to have trafficked FAP benefits.

IPV FIP, SDA and FAP

The client/authorized representative (AR) is determined to have committed an IPV by:

- A court decision.
- An administrative hearing decision.
- The client signing a DHS-826, Request for Waiver of Disqualification Hearing or DHS-830, Disqualification Consent Agreement or other recoupment and disqualification agreement forms.

FAP Only

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

MA and CDC Only

IPV exists when the client/AR or CDC provider:

- Is found guilty by a court, **or**
- Signs a DHS-4350 **and** the prosecutor or the office of inspector general (OIG), authorizes recoupment in lieu of prosecution, **or**
- Is found responsible for the IPV by an Administrative Law Judge conducting an IPV or debt establishment hearing.

OVER-ISSUANCE PROCESSING

Recoupment Specialist Referral

FIP, SDA, CDC and FAP Only

Bridges refers most client errors, CDC provider errors and suspected IPV to the RS. Use the DHS-4701, Over-issuance Referral, to refer manual OIs.

MA and AMP Only

Do not refer these OIs to the RS. See BAM 710 for suspected IPV processing.

SER and ESS Only

Refer these OIs to the RS only when IPV is suspected and a FIP, SDA or FAP OI also exists for the same period. Follow procedures in the SER manual for recoupment of SER. Follow procedures in [BEM 232](#) for Direct Support Services (DSS) OIs.

OVER-ISSUANCE PERIOD

OI Begin Date

FIP, SDA, CDC and FAP

The OI period begins the first month (or pay period for CDC) benefit issuance exceeds the amount allowed by policy **or** 72 months (6 years) before the date the OI was referred to the RS, whichever is later.

To determine the first month of the OI period (for OIs 11/97 or later) Bridges allows time for:

- The client reporting period, per BAM 105.
- The full standard of promptness (SOP) for change processing, per BAM 220.
- The full negative action suspense period.

Note: For FAP simplified reporting, the household has until 10 days of the month following the change to report timely. See BAM 200.

**OI End Date
FIP, SDA, CDC and FAP**

The OI period ends the month (or pay period for CDC) before the benefit is corrected.

**OVER-ISSUANCE AMOUNT
FIP, SDA, CDC and FAP**

The amount of the OI is the benefit amount the group or provider actually received minus the amount the group was eligible to receive. (Use BAM 715 inserted below)

**BAM 715
OVERISSUANCE CALCULATION
FIP, SDA, CDC and FAP
Benefits Received FIP, SDA and CDC Only**

The amount of benefits received in an OI calculation includes:

- Regular warrants.
- Supplemental warrants.
- Duplicate warrants.
- Vendor payments.
- Administrative recoupment deduction.
- EBT cash issuances.
- EFT payment.
- Replacement warrants (use for the month of the original warrant).

Do **not** include:

- Warrants that have not been cashed.

- Escheated EBT cash benefits (SDA only).

Warrant history is obtained from Bridges under Benefit Issuance; see RFT 293 and 294.

FAP Only

The amount of EBT benefits received in the OI calculation is the **gross** (before AR deductions) amount **issued** for the benefit month. FAP participation is obtained in Bridges under Benefit Issuance.

Determining Budgetable Income FIP, SDA, CDC and FAP

If improper reporting or budgeting of income caused the OI, use actual income for the OI month for that income source. Bridges converts all income to a monthly amount.

Exception: For FAP only, do not convert the averaged monthly income reported on a wage match.

Any income properly budgeted in the issuance budget remains the same in that month's corrected budget.

FAP Only

If the FAP budgetable income included FIP/SDA benefits, use the grant amount actually received in the OI month. Use the FIP benefit amount when FIP closed due to a penalty for non-cooperation in an employment-related activity.

For client error OIs due, at least in part, to failure to report earnings, do **not** allow the 20 percent earned income deduction on the unreported earnings.

Back to BAM 720 OIG RESPONSIBILITIES All Programs

Suspected IPV cases are investigated by OIG. Within 18 months, OIG will:

- Refer suspected IPV cases that meet criteria for prosecution to the Prosecuting Attorney.
- Refer suspected IPV cases that meet criteria for IPV administrative hearings to the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS).
- Return non-IPV cases to the RS.

**IPV Hearings
FIP, SDA, CDC, MA and FAP**

OIG represents DHS during the hearing process for IPV hearings.

OIG requests IPV hearings 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.

Exception: For FAP only, OIG will pursue an IPV hearing when correspondence was sent using first class mail and is returned as undeliverable.

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 [REDACTED] or more, **or**
 - The total OI amount is less than [REDACTED], **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.

In this case the Department alleges that Respondent failed to report her [REDACTED]. The evidence submitted does not support all of the allegations made in the Hearing Summary (DHS-3050) or the Investigation Report. There is no evidence in the record to support the allegation that Respondent's [REDACTED] began employment in July 2009. There is no evidence in the record to support the allegation that Respondent's [REDACTED] received a lumps sum [REDACTED] check in October for weeks in June and July 2009. The evidence does show that Respondent's [REDACTED] began employment at Omni Transportation on September 14, 2009.

The evidence contains a March 20, 2009 application from Respondent. On that application Respondent reported that her [REDACTED] lived with her and that her [REDACTED] is disabled and received [REDACTED] per month of [REDACTED]. Respondent listed that she was caring for her [REDACTED] in the home. Respondent also listed that she had applied for and been denied Supplemental Security

Income (SSI) benefits. On the application Respondent only requested FAP for her [REDACTED]. Based on the notes made by the Department case worker, the worker qualified someone for State Disability Assistance (SDA). Respondent's [REDACTED] had too much income to qualify for SDA. There is nothing in the record which indicates Respondent unable to work. The evidence in this record makes the strongest case for the issuance of State Disability Assistance (SDA) to have been an agency error.

The record does not contain any evidence of what was discovered or reported and caused Respondent's FAP benefits to go down at the beginning of July and October 2009. While the Investigation Report alleges the over-issuance period as September 2009 through February 2010, the earliest FAP budget in evidence is for November 2009.

This record does not contain clear and convincing evidence to support the alleged IPVs nor over-issuances.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, finds that the Department has not established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) which resulted in over-issuances of Food Assistance Program (FAP) and State Disability Assistance (SDA) benefits that the Department is entitled to recoup.

It is ORDERED that the actions of the Department of Human Services, in this matter, are REVERSED.

/s/ _____
Gary F. Heisler
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: July 10, 2012

Date Mailed: July 11, 2012

201248217/GFH

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.

GFH/tb

cc:

