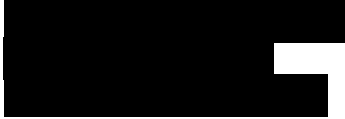


**STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No.: 201237065
Issue No.: 3006
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: February 4, 2014
County: Wayne (17)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: C. Adam Purnell

HEARING DECISION

Upon a hearing request by the Department of Human Services (Department) to establish an overissuance (OI) of benefits to Respondent, this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9, 400.43a, and 24.201, *et seq.*, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.941, and in accordance with 7 CFR 273.15 to 273.18, 42 CFR 431.200 to 431.250, 45 CFR 99.1 to 99.33, and 45 CFR 205.10. After due notice, a three-way telephone hearing was held on February 4, 2014 from Lansing, Michigan. Participants on behalf of the Department included [REDACTED] (Recoupment Specialist) and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Hearing Coordinator). Respondent personally appeared and provided testimony.

ISSUE

Did Respondent receive an OI of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. Respondent was a recipient of FAP benefits from the Department.
2. The Department alleges Respondent received a FAP OI during the period of November 1, 2010 through March 31, 2012 due to the Department's error.
3. The Department alleges that Respondent received a [REDACTED] OI that is still due and owing to the Department.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and Department of Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) [formerly known as the Food Stamp program] is established by the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, 7 USC 2011 to 2036a and is implemented by the federal regulations contained in 7 CFR 271.1 to 285.5. The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10 and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 to .3015.

When a client group receives more benefits than it is entitled to receive, DHS must attempt to recoup the overissuance (OI). BAM 700, p 1 (12-1-2011). An overissuance (OI) is the amount of benefits issued to the client group or CDC provider in excess of what it was eligible to receive. For FAP benefits, an OI is also the amount of benefits trafficked (traded or sold). BAM 700, p 1 (12-1-2011).

An agency error OI is caused by incorrect action (including delayed or no action) by DHS staff or department processes. BAM 700, p 4 (12-1-2011). If unable to identify the type of OI, the Department records it as an agency error. BAM 700, p 4 (12-1-2011).

A client error OI occurs when the client received more benefits than they were entitled to because the client gave incorrect or incomplete information to the department. BAM 700, p 6 (12-1-2011).

Here, the Department contends that Respondent is a resident alien who, by policy, is only entitled to FAP for the first five years following entry to the United States. The Department indicates that Respondent, due to an agency error, received an OI of FAP benefits. According to the Department, Respondent's spouse and child came to the U.S. on December 15, 2012. Specifically, the Department contends that it incorrectly approved FAP benefits for Respondent, his spouse and child contrary to BEM 225 which provides that only certain resident alien persons are eligible for FAP under certain circumstances. The Department indicates that it failed to properly determine the correct alien status of Respondent's spouse and child when they were awarded FAP. In addition, the Department contends that it failed to correctly include and budget Respondent's earned income from employment which began in July, 2010. Due to these agency errors, the Department asserts, Respondent received an OI of FAP benefits. Respondent, on the other hand, contends that he came to the US in September of 2002, but that he is not familiar with the Department's policies concerning FAP benefits.

Testimony and other evidence must be weighed and considered according to its reasonableness. *Gardiner v Courtright*, 165 Mich 54, 62; 130 NW 322 (1911); *Dep't of Community Health v Risch*, 274 Mich App 365, 372; 733 NW2d 403 (2007). The weight and credibility of this evidence is generally for the fact-finder to determine. *Dep't of*

Community Health, 274 Mich App at 372; *People v Terry*, 224 Mich App 447, 452; 569 NW2d 641 (1997). Moreover, it is for the fact-finder to gauge the demeanor and veracity of the witnesses who appear before him, as best he is able. See, e.g., *Caldwell v Fox*, 394 Mich 401, 407; 231 NW2d 46 (1975); *Zeeland Farm Services, Inc v JBL Enterprises, Inc*, 219 Mich App 190, 195; 555 NW2d 733 (1996).

This Administrative Law Judge has carefully considered and weighed the testimony and other evidence in the record. Respondent did not directly challenge the Department's determination of an agency error nor did he dispute that the error resulted in an OI of FAP benefits. The record evidence included all relevant paystubs and budgets. The record shows that the Department, on November 15, 2011, discovered that Respondent along with his wife and child had been issued FAP benefits when they were not eligible for FAP. According to the record, Respondent began working at [REDACTED] on July 23, 2010, but the Department failed to timely record this earned income. Respondent received his first paycheck from this job on July 24, 2010, but it was not recorded until December, 2011. Respondent's household received [REDACTED] in FAP benefits from December, 2009 through November, 2010 and [REDACTED] in FAP per month from December, 2010 through November, 2011. Based on all of the record evidence, Respondent was not eligible for FAP during the time period. The Department made a serious error when it provided Respondent's family with FAP benefits for 16 months. This resulted in a substantial OI of FAP benefits that the Department must recoup.

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, if any, finds that the Department did a FAP benefit OI to Respondent totaling [REDACTED].

DECISION AND ORDER

Accordingly, the Department is AFFIRMED.

The Department is ORDERED to initiate collection procedures for a [REDACTED] OI in accordance with Department policy.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



C. Adam Purnell
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: February 7, 2014

Date Mailed: February 10, 2014

NOTICE OF APPEAL: 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 or Reconsideration was made, within 30 days of the receipt date of the Decision and Order of Reconsideration or Rehearing Decision.

Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS) 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. MAHS 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 (60 days for FAP cases).

A Request for Rehearing or Reconsideration may be granted when one of the following exists:

- Newly discovered evidence that existed at the time of the original hearing that could affect the outcome of the original hearing decision;
- Misapplication of manual policy or law in the hearing decision which led to a wrong conclusion;
- Typographical, mathematical or other obvious error in the hearing decision that affects the rights of the client;
- Failure of the ALJ to address in the hearing decision relevant issues raised in the hearing request.

The Department, AHR or the claimant must specify all reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration. A request must be *received* in MAHS within 30 days of the date the hearing decision is mailed.

The written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088 and be labeled as follows:

Attention: MAHS Rehearing/Reconsideration Request

If submitted by mail, the written request must be addressed as follows:

Michigan Administrative Hearings
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request
P.O. Box 30639
Lansing, Michigan 48909-07322

CAP/aca

cc:

