

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

JOSEPH RUPERTO
[REDACTED]

Reg. No: 201253264
Issue No: 3055
[REDACTED]
Hearing Date: August 2, 2012
Genesee County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Gary F. Heisler

HEARING DECISION

This matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge for an 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 August 2, 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 March 1, 2011 and August 31, 2011, which 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. Respondent was an ongoing recipient of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits. Respondent was on parole through the Michigan Department of Corrections.
2. From February 6, 2011 through February 11, 2011, Respondent used his Michigan Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits in New Mexico.
3. From February 12, 2011 until May 9, 2011, Respondent was incarcerated for violating his parole by leaving the State of Michigan.

4. On July 28, 2011, Respondent submitted a Redetermination Form (DHS-1010). The form asked if anyone was currently in violation of probation or parole. Respondent responded no.
5. On May 22, 2012, the Office of Inspector General submitted the agency request for hearing of this case.

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 AACRS R 400.3001-3015.

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)

**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.

**BAM 804 INCARCERATION MATCHES
DEPARTMENT POLICY
All Programs**

A person in a federal, state or local correctional facility for more than 30 days is not eligible to receive FIP, SDA or FAP benefits.

**BEM 203 CRIMINAL JUSTICE DISQUALIFICATIONS
DEPARTMENT POLICY
FIP, RAP, SDA, CDC and FAP**

People convicted of certain crimes, fugitive felons, and probation or parole violators are not eligible for assistance.

**PROBATION AND PAROLE VIOLATORS
FIP and FAP**

A person who is violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under a federal or state law is disqualified. The person is disqualified as long as the violation occurs.

In this case the Department alleges that Respondent was not eligible for Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits the entire time he was incarcerated. The Department also alleges that Respondent was not eligible for Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits after he was released from incarceration because he was classified as a parole absconder. The policy cited above does not support that assertion. The policy states that a person "who is" violating is disqualified. The policy does not state a person "who has" violated is disqualified.

The alleged over-issuance period in this case is not in accordance with Department policy. The evidence in this record only supports a n assertion that Respondent was not eligible for Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits from March 14, 2011 (February 12 plus 30 days) until May 9, 2011. The amount of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits that would have been over-issued during this period does not exceed the Bridges Administration Manual 720 IPV limit of [REDACTED]0.

DECISION AND ORDER

The alleged over-issuance amount in this matter is less than the [REDACTED] minimum dictated by Bridges Administration Manual 720. Therefore, this request for hearing is dismissed without prejudice.

/s/

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

Date Signed: August 13, 2012

Date Mailed: August 13, 2012

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:

[REDACTED]