

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

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Reg. No.: 2013 18017
Issue No.: 3052
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: April 10, 2013
County: Wayne (15)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Lynn M. Ferris

HEARING DECISION FOR INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION

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 hearing. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on April 10, 2013, from Detroit, Michigan. The Department was represented by ██████████ck, Regulation Agent of the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Respondent did not appear at the hearing and it was held in Respondent's absence pursuant to 7 CFR 273.16(e), Mich Admin Code R 400.3130(5), or Mich Admin Code R 400.3187(5).

ISSUES

1. Did Respondent receive an overissuance (OI) of

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Independence Program (FIP) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food Assistance Program (FAP) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Disability Assistance (SDA) | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Development and Care (CDC) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Assistance (MA) | |

benefits that the Department is entitled to recoup?

2. Did Respondent commit an Intentional Program Violation (IPV)?

3. Should Respondent be disqualified from receiving

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Independence Program (FIP) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food Assistance Program (FAP) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Disability Assistance (SDA) | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Development and Care (CDC)? |

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. The Department's OIG filed a hearing request on December 12, 2012 to establish an OI of benefits received by Respondent as a result of Respondent having allegedly committed an IPV.
2. The OIG has has not requested that Respondent be disqualified from receiving program benefits.
3. Respondent was a recipient of FIP FAP SDA CDC MA benefits during the relevant periods at issue.
4. Respondent was was not aware of the responsibility to report changes in circumstances, including address changes, to the Department.
5. Respondent had no apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement.
6. The Department's OIG indicates that the time period they are considering the fraud period is May 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012.
7. During the alleged fraud period, Respondent was issued \$1,000 in FIP FAP SDA CDC MA benefits from the State of Michigan.
8. The OIG alleges that Respondent was entitled to \$0 in FIP FAP SDA CDC MA during this time period.
9. Respondent did did not receive an OI in the amount of \$1,000 under the FIP FAP SDA CDC MA program.
10. The Department has has not established that Respondent committed an IPV.
11. This was Respondent's first second third alleged IPV.
12. A notice of hearing was mailed to Respondent at the last known address and was was not returned by the US Post Office as undeliverable.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and the Reference Tables Manual (RFT). Prior to August 1, 2008, Department policies were contained in

the Department of Human Services, Program Administrative Manuals (PAM), Program Eligibility Manual (PEM), and Reference Schedules Manual (RFS).

☒ 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 Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 through R 400.3015.

The Department's OIG requests IPV 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. [BEM 720 (August 1, 2012), p 10.]

Subsequent to the scheduling of the current hearing and the hearing date, the Notice of Hearing and accompanying documents (which established due notice) were mailed to Respondent via first class mail at the last known address and were returned by the United States Postal Service as undeliverable. Department policy dictates that when correspondence sent to Respondent concerning an intentional program violation (IPV) is returned as undeliverable, the hearing cannot proceed with respect to any program other than Food Assistance Program (FAP). BAM 720, p 10. Thus, the hearing proceeded with respect to the alleged FAP IPV.

Intentional Program Violation

Suspected IPV means an overissuance (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. [BAM 720, p 1 (emphasis in original).]

An IPV requires that the Department establish by clear and convincing evidence that the client has intentionally withheld or misrepresented information for the **purpose** of establishing, maintaining, increasing or preventing reduction of program benefits or eligibility. BAM 720, p 1 (emphasis in original). Clear and convincing evidence is evidence sufficient to result in a clear and firm belief that the proposition is true. See M Civ JI 8.01.

In this case, the Department alleges that Respondent committed an IPV of her FAP benefits because she failed to notify the Department that she no longer resided in Michigan but continued to receive and use Michigan-issued FAP benefits while out of state. To be eligible for FAP benefits issued by the Department, an individual must be a Michigan resident. BEM 220 (July 1, 2009 and January 1, 2012), p 1. A person is considered a resident while living in Michigan for any purpose other than a vacation, even if he has no intent to remain in the state permanently or indefinitely. BEM 220, p 1. A client who resides outside the State of Michigan for more than thirty days is not eligible for FAP benefits issued by the State of Michigan. BEM 212 (October 1, 2008), pp 2-3.

The Department established that from May 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012, Respondent used her FAP benefits issued by the State of Michigan exclusively out of state in New York. While this evidence may be sufficient to establish that Respondent no longer resided in Michigan and was no longer eligible for FAP benefits, to establish an IPV the Department must present clear and convincing evidence that Respondent **intentionally** withheld or misrepresented information for the purpose of maintaining benefits.

To establish Respondent's intent to defraud, the Department testified that Respondent signed an application on February 10, 2006, in which Respondent reported that she was living in Michigan and provided a Michigan mailing address and certified that she received an information booklet containing important things to know, including the necessity of notifying the Department of changes of address. Because Respondent used her Michigan-issued FAP benefits in Michigan after she filed the application, the application is not evidence of an intent to defraud. The Department pointed out that Respondent acknowledged that she was required to report a changes in address when she signed the application and Respondent's use of her Michigan FAP benefits out-of-state showed a change in address that she failed to report. While Respondent used her benefits in New York, there was evidence of her use of a Niagra Falls, New York address presented which was never reported during the entire 9 months the Claimant continued to receive FAP benefits from Michigan. The failure to report a change in address after several months' absense is sufficient to establish an intent to defraud when all the other evidence is considered. Because there is clear and convincing evidence presented by the Department that Respondent intentionally withheld or misrepresented information for the purpose of maintaining FAP eligibility, the Department has established that Respondent committed an IPV of her FAP benefits.

Disqualification

A court or hearing decision that finds a client committed an IPV 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, p 12.

Clients who commit an IPV are disqualified for a standard disqualification period except when a court orders a different period, or except when the overissuance relates to MA. Refusal to repay will not cause denial of current or future MA if the client is otherwise eligible. BAM 710 (October 1, 2009), p 2. 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, p 13.

In this case, the Department has satisfied its burden of showing that Respondent committed an IPV. Therefore, Respondent is subject to a disqualification under the FAP program.

Recoupment of Overissuance

When a client group receives more benefits than they are entitled to receive, the Department must attempt to recoup the OI. BAM 700 (December 1, 2011), p 1. The amount of the OI is the benefit amount the client actually received minus the amount the client was eligible to receive. BAM 720, p 6; BAM 715 (December 1, 2011), pp 1, 5; BAM 705 (December 1, 2011), p 5.

At the hearing, the Department established that \$1,000 in FAP benefits were issued by the State of Michigan to Respondent from May 1, 2012 to September 30, 2012. The Department alleges that Respondent was eligible for \$0 in FAP benefits during this period.

In support of its FAP OI case, the Department presented Respondent's FAP transaction history showing use of FAP benefits issued by the State of Michigan exclusively out of state beginning March 11, 2012. Respondent became ineligible for FAP benefits once her FAP transaction history showed that she was using her Michigan-issued FAP benefits outside Michigan for more than 30 days. See BEM 212, pp 2-3. Therefore, she became ineligible for FAP benefits on April 2012. However, in situations where reliable information indicates that the group left the state, BAM 220 provides that the action must take effect no later than the month after the change. BAM 220 (January 1, 2011), p 4.

Therefore, the Department is entitled to recoup \$1,000 in FAP benefits it issued to Respondent between May 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012.

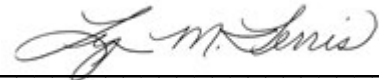
DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, concludes that:

1. Respondent did did not commit an IPV.
2. It is further ORDERED that the Claimant is disqualified from receiving FAP benefits for a one year period this being the Claimant's first intentional program violation.
3. Respondent did did not receive an OI of program benefits in the amount of \$1,000 from the following program(s) FIP FAP SDA CDC MA.

The Department is ORDERED to

initiate recoupment procedures for the amount of \$1,000 in accordance with Department policy.



Lynn M. Ferris
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: July 1, 2013

Date Mailed: July 1, 2013

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.

LMF/cl

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