

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

IN THE MATTER OF:



Reg. No.: 2013-11154
Issue Nos.: 1052, 3055
Case No.: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: January 16, 2013
County: Wayne (82-57)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Robert J. Chavez

HEARING DECISION FOR CONCURRENT BENEFITS
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 January 16, 2013, from Detroit, Michigan. The Department was represented by [REDACTED] of the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Participants on behalf of Respondent included: .

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

- Family Independence Program (FIP) Food Assistance Program (FAP)
 Medical Assistance Program (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

- Family Independence Program (FIP) Food Assistance Program (FAP)

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 November 7, 2012, to establish an OI of benefits received by Respondent as a result of Respondent having received concurrent program benefits and, as such, 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 FAP FIP MA benefits during the period of November 1, 2010, through April 1, 2012.
4. The fraud period in question is from November 1, 2010, through April 1, 2012.
5. During the alleged fraud period, Respondent was issued \$13,534 in FAP benefits and \$7,868 in FIP benefits from the State of Michigan.
6. During the alleged fraud period, Respondent was issued FAP FIP MA benefits from the State of Louisiana.
7. This was Respondent's first second third alleged IPV.
8. 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 Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and the Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

The Family Independence Program (FIP) was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, 42 USC 601, *et seq.* The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FIP pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and 1999 AC, Rule 400.3101 through Rule 400.3131. FIP replaced the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program effective October 1, 1996.

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 1999 AC, Rule 400.3001 through Rule 400.3015.

The Medical Assistance (MA) program is established by the Title XIX of the Social Security Act and is implemented by Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department of Human Services (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the MA program pursuant to MCL 400.10, *et seq.*, and MCL 400.105.

When a client group receives more benefits than they are entitled to receive, DHS must attempt to recoup the OI. BAM 700.

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 has intentionally withheld or misrepresented information for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, increasing or preventing reduction of program benefits or eligibility. BAM 720.

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).

- (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).

The Department's OIG requests IPV hearings for cases when:

- benefit overissuance 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, or
 - the alleged fraud is committed by a state/government employee.

A court or hearing decision that finds a client committed 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.

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

A person is disqualified for a period of 10 years if found guilty through the Administrative Hearing Process, convicted in court or by signing a repayment and disqualification agreement (e.g., DHS-826, DHS-830) of having made a fraudulent statement or representation regarding his identity or residence in order to receive multiple FAP benefits simultaneously. BEM 203 (2011), p. 1.

Therefore, the undersigned may only find an IPV if there is clear and convincing evidence that Respondent intentionally made a false or misleading statement, or intentionally withheld information with the intention to commit an IPV, with regard to the FAP program. Thus, the Department must not only prove that Respondent committed an act, but that there was intent to commit the act.

In this case, the Department has established that Respondent was aware of the responsibility to report all changes to the Department. Respondent has no apparent physical or mental impairment that limits the understanding or ability to fulfill the reporting responsibilities. Additionally, the undersigned is convinced that the Department has met its burden of proof in providing clear and convincing evidence that the respondent intended to defraud the Department with regard to their FAP eligibility.

The burden of proof that the Department must meet in order to prove Intentional Program Violation is very high. It is not enough to prove that Respondent was aware of the requirements to report at some point, nor is it enough to prove that Respondent did not report in a timely manner. The Department must prove in a clear and convincing manner that, not only did Respondent withhold critical information, but also Respondent withheld this information with the intent to commit an IPV.

In other words, the Department must prove that Respondent did not simply forget to meet her obligations to report but, rather, actively sought to defraud the Department.

The Department has proven that in the current case. Respondent initially applied for FAP benefits in Michigan in November 2010. These benefits were approved and started around that same time. In the same month, Respondent began using her benefits in the State of Louisiana. More incriminatingly, Respondent applied for and began receiving benefits from that state around August 2011, which is around the same time Respondent had a redetermination for benefits in Michigan. Respondent, therefore, received benefits for these states at identical times and did not report this fact.

The Administrative Law Judge believes that this is clear and convincing evidence that Respondent intended to defraud the Department.

Therefore, the undersigned holds that Respondent unlawfully received concurrent FAP benefits and was, therefore, overissued for the period of November 1, 2010, through April 30, 2012, when the benefits in question were stopped. While Respondent may have indeed possibly been entitled to benefits for a period between November 2010 and August 2011 (when she began receiving benefits in Louisiana), the Department has met its burden of proof in providing clear and convincing evidence of Respondent changing residency during that time period, as evidenced by the fact of Respondent applying for benefits in her new state and never returning to Michigan. It is up to Respondent to provide evidence of residency in Michigan during that time period, which she has not done.

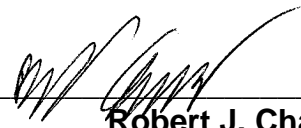
As Respondent intended to defraud the Department for the purposes of receiving benefits, Respondent has committed an IPV.

Because Respondent committed an IPV, the Department has properly requested a 1-year disqualification period for FAP and FIP eligibility and a recoupment of the \$13,534 in FAP benefits and \$7,868 in FIP benefits that were unlawfully issued.

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. Respondent did did not receive an OI of program benefits in the amount of \$13,534 in FAP benefits and \$7,868 in FIP benefits.
- The Department is ORDERED to delete the OI and cease any recoupment action.
- The Department is ORDERED to initiate recoupment procedures for the amount of \$21,402 in accordance with Department policy.
- The Department is ORDERED to reduce the OI to \$ _____ for the period _____, and initiate recoupment procedures in accordance with Department policy.
- It is FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent be personally disqualified from participation in the FAP and FIP programs for 1 year. This disqualification period shall begin immediately as of the date of this Order.



Robert J. Chavez
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: January 25, 2013

Date Mailed: January 25, 2013

2013-11154/RJC

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.

RJC/pf

cc:

