

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

[REDACTED]

Reg. No: 2014225
Issue No: 1000, 1006
Case No: [REDACTED]
Hearing Date: March 13, 2014
Eaton County DHS

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Suzanne D. Sonneborn

HEARING DECISION

Upon a hearing request by the Department of Human Services (Department) to establish an over issuance (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 telephone hearing was held on March 13, 2014 from Lansing, Michigan. Respondent appeared and provided testimony. The Department was represented by [REDACTED] a recoupment specialist with the Department's Eaton County office.

ISSUE

Whether Respondent received an over issuance of Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits that the department is entitled to recoup?

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

1. Respondent was a recipient of FIP benefits at all times relevant to this matter.
2. On March 9, 2012, the Department discovered that, due to agency error, the Department failed to accurately budget Respondent's countable income despite Respondent having timely reported her employment with the Department. (Department Exhibit 1, p. 1; Department Exhibit 2, pp. 2-21; Department Exhibit 3, pp. 22-24; Department Exhibit 4, pp. 25-26; Department Exhibit 5, pp. 27-28)
3. Due to the Department's error, Respondent received an over issuance of FIP benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] for the period October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011. (Department Exhibit 6, pp. 29-36)
4. On August 26, 2013, the Department mailed Respondent a written notice (DHS-4358-A) that she received an over issuance of FIP benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] for the period October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

5. On September 11, 2013, Respondent submitted a hearing request, protesting the department's determination that she must repay the FIP over issuance.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Clients have the right to contest a department decision affective eligibility for benefit levels whenever it is believed that the decision is incorrect. BAM 600. The department will provide an administrative hearing to review the decision and determine the appropriateness of that decision. BAM 600. The regulations governing the hearing and appeal process for applicants and recipients of public assistance in Michigan are found in the Michigan Administrative Code, MAC R 400.901-400.951. An opportunity for a hearing shall be granted to an applicant who requests a hearing because his claim for assistance is denied. MAC R 400.903(1)

The Family Independence Program (FIP) was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, 8 USC 601, et seq. The Department administers the FIP program pursuant to MCL 400.10, et seq., and MAC R 400.3101-3131. Department policies for the FIP program are found in the Department of Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), the Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) and the Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

An over issuance is the amount of benefits issued to the client group in excess of what they were eligible to receive. BAM 705. The amount of the over issuance is the amount of benefits the group actually received minus the amount the group was eligible to receive. BAM 720. When a client group receives more benefits than they are entitled to receive, the Department must attempt to recoup the over issuance. BAM 700.

Department errors are caused by incorrect actions by the Department. BAM 705. than \$250 per program. BAM 705. Client errors occur when the customer gave incorrect or incomplete information to the Department. Client errors are not established if the over issuance is less than \$125 unless the client group is active for the over issuance program, or the over issuance is a result of a quality control audit finding. BAM 700.

In this case, at the March 13, 2014 hearing, the Department's representative, recoupment specialist, Patrick Lynaugh, provided sufficient testimony and documentary evidence establishing that, despite Respondent having timely reported to the Department her employment with Sulai Hospitality, Inc., the Department failed to accurately and timely budget her employment earnings, resulting in Respondent's receipt of an over issuance of FIP benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] for the period October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

In response to the Department's presentation, Respondent testified that she felt she made a timely effort to report her employment earnings to the Department and that it was unfair that she must pay back an over issuance that was caused by the Department's error.

Testimony and other evidence must be weighed and considered according to its

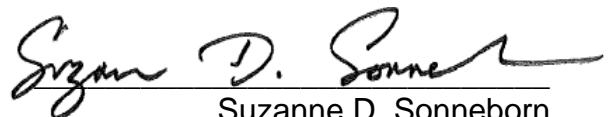
reasonableness. *Gardiner v Courtright*, 165 Mich 54, 62; 130 NW 322 (1911); *Dep't of Community Health v Risch*, 274 Mich App 365, 372; 733 NW2d 403 (2007). Moreover, the weight and credibility of this evidence is generally for the fact-finder to determine. *Dep't of Community Health*, 274 Mich App at 372; *People v Terry*, 224 Mich App 447, 452; 569 NW2d 641 (1997).

This Administrative Law Judge has carefully considered and weighed the testimony and other evidence in the record, including Respondent's sincere testimony regarding her efforts to timely report her income and principles of fairness, and this Administrative Law Judge must note that administrative adjudication is an exercise of executive power rather than judicial power, and restricts the granting of equitable remedies. *Michigan Mutual Liability Co. v Baker*, 295 Mich 237; 294 NW 168 (1940). Accordingly, this Administrative Law Judge finds, based on the competent, material, and substantial evidence presented during the March 13, 2014 hearing, the Department properly determined that Respondent received an over issuance of FIP benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] for the period October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011, which the Department is required by department policy to recoup.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above findings of fact and conclusions of law, decides that the Department properly determined that Respondent received an over issuance of FIP benefits of in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] for the period October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011, which the Department is required by department policy to recoup. Therefore, the Department's recoupment of Respondent's over issuance of FIP benefits in the amount of [REDACTED] is **UPHELD** and the Department is **ORDERED** to initiate collection procedures in this amount in accordance with Department policy.

It is **SO ORDERED**.



Suzanne D. Sonneborn
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura D. Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: March 19, 2014

Date Mailed: March 20, 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

SDS/hj

cc:

