

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

██████████
██████████
██████████

Reg. No.: 14-003285
Issue No.: 3005
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: July 14, 2014
County: CALHOUN (DISTRICT 21)

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Lynn M. Ferris

HEARING DECISION FOR INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION

Upon the request for a hearing by the Department of Human Services (Department), this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge pursuant to MCL 400.9, and in accordance with Titles 7, 42 and 45 of the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), particularly 7 CFR 273.16, and with Mich Admin Code, R 400.3130 and R 400.3178. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on July 14, 2014 from Detroit, Michigan. The Department was represented by ██████████, Regulation Agent 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 400.3178(5).

ISSUES

1. Did Respondent receive an overissuance (OI) of
 Family Independence Program (FIP) State Disability Assistance (SDA)
 Food Assistance Program (FAP) Child Development and Care (CDC)
 Medical Assistance (MA)
benefits that the Department is entitled to recoup?
2. Did the Department establish, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV)?
3. Should Respondent be disqualified from receiving benefits for
 Family Independence Program (FIP)? State Disability Assistance (SDA)?
 Food Assistance Program (FAP)? 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 May 30, 2014, 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 issued by the Department.
4. Respondent was was not aware of the responsibility to report changes of residence and incarceration.
5. Respondent had did not have an 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 it is considering the fraud period is February 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011 (fraud period).
7. During the fraud period, Respondent was issued ██████ in FIP FAP SDA CDC MA benefits by the State of Michigan, and the Department alleges that Respondent was entitled to \$0 in such benefits during this time period.
8. The Department also seeks recoupment of SDA cash assistance in the amount of ██████ for the period December 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011. Exhibit 1 pp 79
9. The Department alleges that Respondent received an OI in FIP FAP SDA CDC MA benefits in the amount of ██████. Exhibit 1 pp 93-95.
10. The Claimant was incarcerated on :

December 7, 2009 through May 11, 2010;
August 16, 2010 through December 29, 2010;
March 16, 2011 through April 27, 2011 and
October 20, 2011 to present.
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), Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and Department of Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT). Prior to August 1, 2008, Department policies were contained in the Department of Human Services Program Administrative Manuals (PAM), Department of Human Services Program Eligibility Manual (PEM), and Department of Human Services Reference Schedules Manual (RFS).

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 273. The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10; the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b; and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 to .3015.

The State Disability Assistance (SDA) program is established by the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b. The Department of Human Services (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers the SDA program pursuant to 42 CFR 435, MCL 400.10 and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3151-.3180.

The Department's OIG requests IPV hearings for the following cases:

- FAP trafficking OIs that are not forwarded to the prosecutor,
- 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 is \$1000 or more, or
 - the total OI amount is less than \$1000, **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.

BAM 720 (7/1/13), p. 10.

Intentional Program Violation

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 reporting responsibilities.

BAM 700 (7/1/13), p. 6; BAM 720, p. 1.

An IPV is also suspected for a client who is alleged to have trafficked FAP benefits. BAM 720, p. 1.

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); see also 7 CFR 273(e)(6). 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 seeks and intentional program violation for the Respondent's failure to report his incarceration while receiving Food Assistance. 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. BAM 804, pp.1 (7/1/14). In this case, the evidence presented shows that the Respondent consistently advised the Department of his release from prison on several occasions when reapplying after release from prison. A review of the numerous applications made at no time misrepresented any facts about being incarcerated for the period prior to each application. Additionally, several of the applications note that the Respondent is seeking disability due to his inability to work due to a mental disability involving bi-polar disorder and ADHD. Given these circumstances it is determined that his failure to report incarceration does not establish and IPV, it does only establish untimely reporting. Therefore, no IPV is established.

Disqualification

A court or hearing decision that finds a client committed IPV disqualifies that client from receiving program benefits. BAM 720, p. 12. A disqualified recipient remains a member of an active group as long as he lives with them, and other eligible group members may continue to receive benefits. BAM 720, p. 13.

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. BAM 720, p. 13. Refusal to repay will not cause denial of current or future MA if the client is

otherwise eligible. BAM 710 (7/1/13), 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 FAP concurrent receipt of benefits. BAM 720, p. 16.

In this case, the Department did not establish by clear and convincing evidence that an IPV occurred and thus is not entitled to a disqualification of the Respondent from receipt of FAP benefits and therefore its request for disqualification is denied.

Overissuance

When a client group receives more benefits than they are entitled to receive, the Department must attempt to recoup the OI. BAM 700, p. 1.

In this case, the Department sought an overissuance for those periods the Respondent was incarcerated and therefore ineligible to receive Food Assistance benefits based on Department policy. The Benefits issuance summary was reviewed for the periods of incarceration and only those FAP benefits issued during periods of incarceration were included. Exhibit 1, pp 76-80 . After a thorough review, it is determined that the Department did correctly calculate the OI for FAP in the amount of [REDACTED]. As regards the SDA benefits issued in the amount of [REDACTED], the evidence presented demonstrated that the Respondent was incarcerated at the time and thus not entitled to the SDA issued. At the time of the hearing, no benefit usage EBT usage was presented, thus the Department should insure that no FAP benefits remain unused and require expungement before actual recoupment is undertaken. BAM 725 requires that the Department apply all expunged benefits to existing overissuances:

Expunged electronic benefit transfer benefits are applied to existing overissuances for the program at the time the expungement occurs. BAM 725, pp. 9 (7/1/14).

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, if any, concludes that:

1. The Department has has not established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV.
2. Respondent did did not receive an OI of program benefits in the amount of [REDACTED] (FAP) and [REDACTED] (SDA) from the following program(s) FIP FAP SDA CDC MA.

