

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

IN THE MATTER OF:

██████████
██████████
████████████████████

Reg. No.: 2014-27825
Issue No(s): 3005
Case No.: ██████████
Hearing Date: April 14, 2014
County: Kent

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Eric Feldman

HEARING DECISION FOR CONCURRENT BENEFITS
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 Regulations, 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 April 14, 2014, from Detroit, Michigan. The Department was represented by ██████████
██████████

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) Food Assistance Program (FAP)
 Medical Assistance Program (MA)
benefits that the Department is entitled to recoup?
2. Did Respondent, by clear and convincing evidence, 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 February 20, 2014, 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 issued by the Department.
4. On the Assistance Application signed by Respondent on January 3, 2012, and July 19, 2012, Respondent reported that she is a resident of Michigan, but did not indicate if she intended to stay in Michigan.
5. Respondent was aware of the responsibility to report changes in her residence to the Department.
6. Respondent had no apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement.
7. Respondent began using FAP FIP MA benefits outside of the State of Michigan beginning in June 2012.
8. The OIG indicates that the time period they are considering the fraud period is July 20, 2012, to March 31, 2013.
9. During the alleged fraud period, Respondent was issued \$7,030 in FAP FIP MA benefits from the State of Michigan.
10. During the alleged fraud period, Respondent was issued FAP FIP MA benefits from the [REDACTED].
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 271.1 to 285.5. The Department (formerly known as the Family Independence Agency) administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10 and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 to .3015.

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 (July 2013), p. 12.

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 (July 2013), p. 7; 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 alleges that Respondent committed an IPV of her FAP benefits because she failed to update residency information for the purpose of receiving FAP benefits from more than one state.

Clients must report changes in circumstance that potentially affect eligibility or benefit amount. BAM 105 (May 2012), p. 7. Other changes must be reported within 10 days after the client is aware of them. BAM 105, p. 7. These include, but are not limited to, changes in: address and shelter cost changes that result from the move. BAM 105, p. 7.

Concurrent receipt of benefits means assistance received from multiple programs to cover a person's needs for the same time period. BEM 222 (June 2011), p. 1.

Benefit duplication means assistance received from the same (or same type of) program to cover a person's needs for the same month. BEM 222, p. 1. For example, FIP from Michigan and similar benefits from another state's cash assistance program. BEM 222, p. 1. As specified in the balance of BEM 222, benefit duplication is prohibited except for MA and FAP in limited circumstances. BEM 222, p. 1.

A person cannot receive FAP in more than one state for any month. BEM 222, p. 2. Out-of-state benefit receipt or termination may be verified by one of the following: DHS-3782, Out-of-State Inquiry; letter or document from other state; or collateral contact with the state. BEM 222, p. 3.

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 (October 2011), p. 1.

The Department's OIG indicates that the time period it is considering the fraud period is July 20, 2012, to March 31, 2013. At the hearing, the Department presented evidence to show why it believed Respondent was aware of her responsibility to report changes in residence and that she made a fraudulent statement or representation regarding her residence in order to receive multiple FAP benefits simultaneously.

First, the Department presented Respondent's application dated January 3, 2012, to show that she acknowledged her responsibility to report changes as required.

Second, the Department presented Respondent's application dated July 19, 2012, to show that she misrepresented circumstances of eligibility. See Exhibit 1. Respondent indicated in the application that she is a Michigan resident, has a Michigan mailing address, she is homeless, and that she is staying with relatives. See Exhibit 1.

Third, the Department presented Respondent's FAP transaction history. A review of the transaction history indicated she used her FAP benefits issued by the State of Michigan out of state exclusively in [REDACTED] from June 5, 2012, to March 21, 2013 (during the alleged fraud period). See Exhibit 1.

Fourth, the Department presented an out-of-state e-mail correspondence from an OIG investigator located in [REDACTED] dated December 5, 2013. See Exhibit 1. This e-mail confirmed that Respondent received duplicate FAP benefits in [REDACTED] from July 2012, ongoing. See Exhibit 1.

Fifth, the Department presented Respondent's benefit summary inquiries to show that she received FAP benefits from July 2012 to March 2013. See Exhibit 1.

Based on the foregoing information and evidence, the Department has established that Respondent committed an IPV of FAP benefits.

First, it has to be established that Respondent made a fraudulent statement or representation regarding her residence. The fraudulent statement or representation at issue is the application dated July 19, 2012. See Exhibit 1. At the time of application, Respondent indicated she is a Michigan resident, has a Michigan mailing address, she is homeless, and that she is staying with relatives. See Exhibit 1. However, the evidence presented that Respondent was not a Michigan resident at the time of application. Instead, the evidence indicated that Respondent resided in [REDACTED].

A review of the FAP transaction history indicated she used her FAP benefits issued by the State of Michigan out of state exclusively in [REDACTED] from June 5, 2012, to March 21, 2013 (during the alleged fraud period). See Exhibit 1. Respondent used her FAP benefits exclusively in [REDACTED] more than a month prior to the application. Then, when Respondent applied for FAP benefits on July 19, 2012, and indicated Michigan residency, this was incorrect. Rather, the FAP transaction history continued to show she used her FAP benefits issued by the State of Michigan out of state exclusively in [REDACTED] subsequent to her application. There were no transactions conducted in

Michigan more than a month before her application or after. See Exhibit 1. This evidence presented that Respondent resided in [REDACTED] since June 5, 2012, ongoing. As such, at the time of application, Respondent made a fraudulent statement that she resided in Michigan (resided in [REDACTED] instead) in order to received multiple FAP benefits simultaneously.

Second, it also has to be established that Respondent received multiple FAP benefits simultaneously ([REDACTED] and Michigan) during the alleged fraud period. The Department presented Respondent's benefit summary inquiries to show that she received FAP benefits from July 2012 to March 2013. See Exhibit 1. Moreover, the e-mail correspondence showed that Respondent received duplicate FAP benefits in [REDACTED] from July 2012 ongoing. See Exhibit 1. As such, Respondent received multiple FAP benefits simultaneously ([REDACTED] and Michigan) during the alleged fraud period.

In summary, the evidence is sufficient to establish that Respondent made a fraudulent statement or representation regarding her residence in order to receive multiple FAP benefits simultaneously. BEM 203, p. 1. There was clear and convincing evidence that Respondent was aware of her responsibility to report changes in residence and that she intentionally withheld information for the purpose of maintaining Michigan FAP eligibility. Therefore, the Department has established that Respondent committed an IPV of FAP benefits.

Disqualification

A court or hearing decision that finds a client committed IPV disqualifies that client from receiving program benefits. BAM 720, p. 15. 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. 15.

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. 16. Refusal to repay will not cause denial of current or future MA if the client is otherwise eligible. BAM 710 (July 2013), 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 has satisfied its burden of showing that Respondent committed an IPV concerning FAP benefits. Therefore, Respondent is disqualified for ten years for a FAP concurrent receipt of benefits. BAM 720, p. 16.

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. The amount of the OI is the benefit amount the group or provider actually received minus the amount the group was eligible to receive. BAM 720, p. 8.

As previously stated, the Department has established that Respondent committed an IPV of FAP benefits. The Department presented Respondent's FAP transaction history that indicated she used her FAP benefits issued by the State of Michigan out of state exclusively in ██████ from June 5, 2012, to March 21, 2013 (during the alleged fraud period). See Exhibit 1. Moreover, the e-mail correspondence showed that Respondent received duplicate FAP benefits in ██████ from July 2012 ongoing. See Exhibit 1. As such, the evidence showed that Respondent did not reside in Michigan. Thus, she was not eligible for FAP benefits and was overissued FAP benefits for any period she was ineligible to receive FAP benefits.

Under Department policy, the OI period begins the first month (or pay period for CDC) the benefit issuance exceeds the amount allowed by policy or 72 months (6 years) before the date the OI was referred to the Recoupment Specialist (RS), whichever is later. BAM 720, p. 7. To determine the first month of the OI period, the Department allows time for: the client reporting period; the full standard of promptness (SOP) for change processing; and the full negative action suspense period. BAM 720, p. 7. Based on the above policy, the Department would apply the 10-day client reporting period, the 10-day processing period, and the 12-day negative action suspense period. BAM 720, p. 7.

Applying the above standard and in consideration of the out-of-state use that began on June 5, 2012, and the subsequent application Respondent conducted which resulted in a FAP issuance beginning on July 20, 2012, it is determined that the OI period begin date is July 20, 2012. BAM 720, p. 7.

In establishing the OI amount, the Department presented a benefit summary inquiry showing that Respondent was issued FAP benefits by the State of Michigan from July 2012 to March 2013 totaling \$7,030. See Exhibit 1. Thus, the Department is entitled to recoup \$7,030 of FAP benefits it issued to Respondent between July 20, 2012, to March 31, 2013. See BAM 720, pp. 7 and 8.

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. The Department has established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent did did not commit an intentional program violation (IPV).
2. Respondent did did not receive an OI of program benefits in the amount of \$7,030 from the following program(s) FAP FIP MA.

The Department is ORDERED to

initiate recoupment procedures for the amount of \$7,030 in accordance with Department policy.

It is FURTHER ORDERED that

Respondent be personally disqualified from participation in the FAP program for 10 years.



Eric Feldman
Administrative Law Judge
for Maura Corrigan, Director
Department of Human Services

Date Signed: April 21, 2014

Date Mailed: April 21, 2014

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.

EJF/pf

cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]