

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 June 15, 2015, to establish an OI of benefits received by Respondent as a result of Respondent having allegedly committed an IPV.
2. The OIG **has** requested that Respondent be disqualified from receiving program benefits.
3. Respondent was a recipient of FIP and FAP benefits issued by the Department.
4. Respondent **was** aware of the responsibility to notify the Department of any changes in her circumstances that might affect her benefits.
5. Respondent **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 December 1, 2009, through April 30, 2010 (fraud period).
7. During the fraud period, Respondent was issued \$7,335 in FIP and FAP benefits by the State of Michigan, and the Department alleges that Respondent was entitled to \$1,504 in such benefits during this time period.
8. The Department alleges that Respondent received an OI in FIP benefits in the amount of \$2,579 and an OI in FAP benefits in the amount of \$3,252.
9. This was Respondent's **first** alleged IPV for FIP and the second alleged IPV for FAP benefits.
10. A notice of hearing was mailed to Respondent at the last known address and **was not** returned by the US Post Office as undeliverable.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), Adult Services Manual (ASM), and Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

The Family Independence Program (FIP) was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-193, and 42 USC 601 to 679c. The Department (formerly known as the Department of Human Services) administers FIP pursuant to 45 CFR 233-260; MCL 400.10; the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b; and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3101 to .3131.

The Food Assistance Program (FAP) [formerly known as the Food Stamp program] is established by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, 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 Department of Human Services) administers FAP

pursuant to MCL 400.10; the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b; and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 to .3015.

Effective October 1, 2014, the Department's OIG requests IPV hearings for the following cases:

- Willful overpayments of \$500.00 or more under the AHH program.
- FAP trafficking overissuances 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 amount for the FIP, SDA, CDC, MA and FAP programs combined is \$500 or more, or
 - the total amount is less than \$500, 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 (October 2014), 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 (May 2014), p. 7; BAM 720, p. 2.

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 has provided documentation of Respondent's employment and income from [REDACTED]. Respondent's failure to notify the Department of her employment and income caused an OI in both FIP and FAP benefits.

On April 1, 2010, Respondent submitted a redetermination on which she failed to notify the Department of her income. On July 22, 2010, Respondent reported that she was on maternity leave from [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Respondent reported that she started her employment at [REDACTED] on April 26, 2010. However, Documentation provided at the hearing shows that Respondent received her first paycheck from [REDACTED] on October 5, 2009.

This Administrative Law Judge finds that Respondent intentionally withheld or misrepresented information in order to maintain her benefits and, thus, committed an IPV.

Disqualification

A client who is found to have committed an IPV by a court or hearing decision is disqualified from receiving program benefits. BAM 720, p. 15. Clients are disqualified for ten years for a FAP IPV involving concurrent receipt of benefits, and, for all other IPV cases involving FIP, FAP or SDA, for standard disqualification periods of one year for the first IPV, two years for the second IPV, and lifetime for the third IPV. BAM 720, p. 16. 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. 16.

In this case, this is Respondent's second FAP IPV and first FIP IPV. The OIG is requesting a disqualification of 12 months for FIP and a disqualification period of 24 months for FAP.

Overissuance

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

In this case, the OIG has documented an FIP OI in the amount of \$2,579 and an FAP OI in the amount of \$3,252, totaling \$5,831.

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** established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV.
2. Respondent **did** receive an FIP OI in the amount of \$2,579 and an FAP OI in the amount of \$3,252.

The Department is ORDERED to initiate recoupment/collection procedures for the amount of \$5,831 in accordance with Department policy.

It is FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent be disqualified from FAP for a period of 24 months and disqualified from FIP for a period of 12 months.



Michael J. Bennane
Administrative Law Judge
for Nick Lyon, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

Date Signed: **11/9/2015**

Date Mailed: **11/9/2015**

MJB / pf

NOTICE OF APPEAL: A party may appeal this Hearing Decision in the circuit court in the county in which he/she resides, or the circuit court in Ingham County, within 30 days of the receipt date. A copy of the claim or application for appeal must be filed with the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS).

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