



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM
Christopher Seppanen
Executive Director

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: October 14, 2016
MAHS Docket No.: 15-026491

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Carmen G. Fahie

HEARING DECISION FOR INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION

Upon the request for a hearing by the Department of Health and 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 45 CFR 235.110; and with Mich Admin Code, R 400.3130 and 400.3178 After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on September 27, 2016, from Lansing, Michigan. The Department was represented by [REDACTED], Regulation Agent of the Office of Inspector General (OIG). The Respondent was represented by herself.

ISSUES

1. Did Respondent receive an overissuance (OI) of Food Assistance Benefits (FAP) 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 the FAP program for 1 year?

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 December 17, 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 FAP program benefits.
3. Respondent and her two sons were recipients of FAP benefits issued by the Department. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 58.
4. On the Assistance Applications, DHS 1171, signed by Respondent on July 14, 2014 and the Redetermination Application, DHS 1010, signed by the Respondent December 1, 2014, the Respondent reported that she understood the responsibility to report changes in household group composition to the Department within 10 days. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 11-44 and 47-51.
5. Respondent **was** aware of the responsibility to report changes in household group composition where she applied for FAP benefits for herself only on her application because her sons had joined the military and were in and out of her home. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 45.
6. Respondent **did not have** an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement.
7. The Department's OIG indicates that the time period it is considering the fraud period is October 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014 (fraud period).
8. During the fraud period, Respondent was issued ██████ in FAP benefits by the State of Michigan, and the Department alleges that Respondent was entitled to ██████ in such benefits during this time period.
9. The Department alleges that Respondent received an OI in FAP benefits in the amount of ██████
10. This was Respondent's **first** alleged IPV.
11. 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 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 over issuances 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, ASM 165.

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; BAM 720.

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

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 (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.

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; BEM 708. 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. CDC clients who intentionally violate CDC program rules are disqualified for six months for the first occurrence, twelve months for the second occurrence, and lifetime for the third occurrence. BEM 708. 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.

Overissuance

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

In this case, the Respondent and her two sons were recipients of FAP benefits issued by the Department. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 58. On the Assistance Applications, DHS 1171, signed by Respondent on July 14, 2014 and the Redetermination Application, DHS 1010, signed by the Respondent December 1, 2014, the Respondent reported that she understood the responsibility to report changes in household group composition to the Department within 10 days. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 11-44 and 47-51. Respondent **was** aware of the responsibility to report changes in household group composition where she applied for FAP benefits for herself only on her application because her sons had joined the military and were in and out of her home. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 45. Respondent **did not have** an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement.

The Department's OIG indicates that the time period it is considering the fraud period is October 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014 (fraud period). During the fraud period, Respondent was issued ██████ in FAP benefits by the State of Michigan, and the Department alleges that Respondent was entitled to ██████ in such benefits during this time period. The Department alleges that Respondent received an OI in FAP benefits in the amount of ██████. This was Respondent's **first** alleged IPV. A notice of hearing was

mailed to Respondent at the last known address and **was not** returned by the US Post Office as undeliverable.

Additionally, the Respondent appeared at the hearing. She stated that she did not list her two sons on her application because they were grown and they came and went as they pleased. They had joined the military, but were still at her home except when they had training until they were deployed to a military base. The Department Caseworker insisted that since they were in the home that they had to listed on her FAP case. The Respondent did not list them on her FAP case at her application nor at her redetermination application. She only listed herself as applying for FAP benefits. The Respondent testified that her one son, ■, got deployed on January 2015 and the other son, ■, got deployed on February 2015. While they were in ■■■■■, she fed them with her FAP benefits since the Department Caseworker put them on her case and gave her benefits for them.

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 not** established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV.
2. Respondent **did not** receive an OI of program benefits in the amount of ■■■■■ from the following program(s) FAP.

The Department is ORDERED to delete the OI and cease any recoupment action.

It is FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent not be disqualified from the FAP for a period of **1 year**.

Carmen G. Fahie

■■■■■
Carmen G. Fahie

Administrative Law Judge

for Nick Lyon, Director

Department of Health and Human Services

NOTICE OF APPEAL: A party may appeal this Order in circuit court within 30 days of the receipt date. A copy of the circuit court appeal must be filed with the Michigan Administrative Hearing System (MAHS).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Order if the request is received by MAHS within 30 days of the date the Order was issued. The party requesting a rehearing or reconsideration must provide the specific reasons for the request. MAHS will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration.

A written request may be mailed or faxed to MAHS. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 335-6088; 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 48909-8139

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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