



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 27, 2016
MAHS Docket No.: 16-012217

[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 October 11, 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 over issuance (OI) of 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 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 July 21, 2016, 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 FAP benefits issued by the Department. Department Exhibit 1, pg. 18.
4. On the Assistance Application, DHS 1171, signed by Respondent on April 3, 2011, the Respondent reported that she understood the responsibility to report changes in household income to the Department within 10 days. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 10-17.
5. Respondent **was** aware of the responsibility to report changes in household income of her boyfriend's earned income from employment at [REDACTED] starting on April 20, 2014. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 19-28.
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 July 1, 2014 through October 31, 2014 (fraud period).
8. During the fraud period, Respondent was issued [REDACTED] in FAP benefits by the State of Michigan, and the Department alleges that Respondent was entitled to [REDACTED] in such benefits during this time period. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 29-38.
9. The Department alleges that Respondent received an OI in FAP benefits in the amount of [REDACTED]
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.

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, 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, 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.

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, 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.

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 Respondent was a recipient of FAP benefits issued by the Department. Department Exhibit 1, pg. 18. On the Assistance Application, DHS 1171, signed by Respondent on April 3, 2011, the Respondent reported that she understood the responsibility to report changes in household income to the Department within 10 days. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 10-17. Respondent **was** aware of the responsibility to report changes in household income of her boyfriend's earned income from employment at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] starting on April 20, 2014. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 19-28. 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 July 1, 2014 through October 31, 2014 (fraud period). During the fraud period, Respondent was issued [REDACTED] in FAP benefits by the State of Michigan, and the Department alleges that Respondent was entitled to [REDACTED] in such benefits during this time period. Department Exhibit 1, pgs. 29-38. The Department alleges that Respondent received an OI in FAP benefits in the amount of [REDACTED]. 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.

During the hearing, the Respondent stated that she reported the income to her Department Caseworker and provided check stubs. The Department did not submit a Redetermination Application for 2012 and 2013 nor a 6 month Semi Annual Contact if required, that was able to contest the Respondent's testimony. The Respondent did receive an over issuance of FAP benefits that the Department is required to recoup. However, the Department did not meet their burden of clear and convincing evidence that the Respondent did not report the earned employment income. The Respondent did receive an overissuance of FAP benefits due to Department error. As a result, the Department needs to recalculate the overissuance due to Department error and the Respondent is eligible for the 20% earned income deduction.

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

The Department is **ORDERED** to recalculate the overissuance due to Department error and the Respondent is eligible for 20% earned income deduction and initiate recoupment/collection procedures in accordance with Department policy for the balance.



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]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]