



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

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

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR



Date Mailed: January 5, 2017
MAHS Docket No.: 16-015056
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: OIG
Respondent: [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Darryl Johnson

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 January 4, 2017, from Lansing, Michigan. The Department was represented by [REDACTED] Regulation Agent of the Office of Inspector General (OIG). 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 Food Assistance Program (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 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 September 28, 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.
4. Respondent was aware of the responsibility to report changes in his address, and changes in his state of residence.
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 March 1, 2015, through June 30, 2015 (fraud period).
7. 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.
8. The Department alleges that Respondent received an OI in FAP benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED].
9. This was Respondent's first alleged IPV.
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 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 January 1, 2016, 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 (1/1/16), pp. 12-13.

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 (1/1/16), p. 6; 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, Respondent applied for benefits on June 9, 2014, (Exhibit 1 Page 29) when he gave a Michigan address for his mailing address (Page 30). The Department received information (Pages 48-50) establishing that he had moved to Tennessee. He received a Tennessee driver's license on May 11, 2015. In a series of Facebook posts (Pages 50-56) he said that he had moved to Nashville, Tennessee. In a post dated January 17, 2015 (Page 55) he wrote, "It feels so GREAT to be back home in Nashville, TN !!!!! Hit me up Nashville friends so we can hang out." He began using his FAP in Tennessee on January 17, 2015, (Page 44) and he continued to use his FAP in Tennessee through June 12, 2015 (Page 47). He never reported to the Department that he had changed his address from Michigan to Tennessee.

BEM 220 (1/1/16) p 1 says a person must be a Michigan resident to receive FIP, RCA, SDA, CDC, MA, or FAP. For FAP, "A person is considered a resident while living in Michigan for any purpose other than a vacation, even if there is no intent to remain in the state permanently or indefinitely."

The evidence is clear and convincing that Respondent intentionally withheld information regarding his change of address from the Department in order to continue receiving FAP that he would otherwise have been ineligible to receive. He used his FAP exclusively outside of Michigan for more than seven months. That is persuasive evidence that he left Michigan with no intention to return.

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; BEM 708 (4/1/14), p. 1. 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. 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, p. 1. 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, Respondent committed an intentional program violation in the FAP program. He had no prior IPV's. He will be disqualified for 12 months from the FAP program.

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, Respondent received \$ [REDACTED] (Page 57) during the fraud period. That is to be recouped.

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 received an OI of program benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] from the FAP program.

The Department is ORDERED to initiate recoupment/collection procedures for the amount of \$ [REDACTED] in accordance with Department policy.

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

DJ/mc



Darryl Johnson
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

Petitioner

[Redacted]

DHHS

[Redacted]

Respondent

[Redacted]