



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

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

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: April 11, 2017
MAHS Docket No.: 16-015461
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: OIG
Respondent: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Gary Heisler

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 March 28, 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. The Notice of Disqualification Hearing (MAHS-827) sent to Respondent was not returned as undeliverable. In accordance with 7 CFR 273.16(e), Mich Admin Code R 400.3130(5), or Mich Admin Code R 400.3178(5), and Bridges Administration Manual (BAM) 720 the hearing proceeded in Respondent's absence.

ISSUE

1. Did the Department establish, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV)?
2. Did Respondent receive an over-issuance (OI) of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits that the Department is entitled to recoup?

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the clear and convincing evidence on the whole record, finds as material fact:

1. Respondent was an ongoing recipient of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits who had certified knowledge of reporting requirements as well as the conditions that constitute fraud/IPV and trafficking and the potential consequences.

Respondent's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefit group consisted of herself and her two children. Respondent's household consisted of: herself; her living together partner [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and Petitioner's two children from a previous relationship. Petitioner and [REDACTED] resided in a home owned by [REDACTED]

2. On February 25, 2015, Respondent gave birth to a child fathered by [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
3. On March 7, 2015, Respondent failed to meet the 10 day reporting requirement for reporting the change in her household.
4. On May 22, 2015, Petitioner contacted the Department and requested that her child fathered by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] be added to her Food Assistance Program (FAP) group. When Respondent was told [REDACTED] would have to also be part of her Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefit group, Respondent fraudulently stated that [REDACTED] did not live with her.
5. On May 29, 2015, Respondent's fraudulent assertions that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was not a member of her household were used to certify her Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefit group. A referral was made for an Office of Inspector General investigation, regarding Respondent's Food Assistance Program (FAP) group composition.
6. On November 23, 2015, Regulation Agent [REDACTED] completed the investigation and concluded that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was a member of Petitioner's household.
7. Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) by 1) intentionally failing to meet the 10 day reporting requirement for reporting the change in her household and 2) fraudulently reporting that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was not a member of her household in order to avoid his earned income being used to determine her Food Assistance Program (FAP) eligibility.
8. In accordance with Bridges Administration Manual (BAM) 720 April 1, 2015 to October 31, 2015 has correctly been determined as the over-issuance period associated with this Intentional Program Violation (IPV).
9. During the over-issuance period Respondent received a \$ [REDACTED] over-issuance of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits.
10. This is Respondent's 1st Intentional Program Violation (IPV).

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.

Bridges Administration Manual (BAM) 720 Intentional Program Violation (10-1-2015) governs the Department's actions in this case. OIG requests IPV hearing for cases involving:

1. FAP trafficking over-issuances that are not forwarded to the prosecutor.
2. 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.

INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION

BAM 720 states that a 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.

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. In other words, the Department must show that the Respondent engaged in a

fraudulent act or omission they knew would result in receiving assistance they were not eligible for.

In this case, the Department presented evidence that Respondent fraudulently misrepresented her household in order to avoid [REDACTED] [REDACTED] earned income being used to determine her Food Assistance Program (FAP) eligibility. This constitutes clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV).

OVER-ISSUANCE

Over-issuance Period

BAM 720 states that the over-issuance period begins the first month (or pay period for CDC) benefit issuance exceeds the amount allowed by policy or 72 months (6 years) before the date it was referred to the RS, whichever is later.

To determine the first month of the over-issuance period (for over-issuances 11/97 or later) Bridges allows time for:

The client reporting period, per BAM 105.

The full standard of promptness (SOP) for change processing, per BAM 220.

The full negative action suspense period.

The over-issuance period ends the month (or pay period for CDC) before the benefit is corrected.

7 CFR § 273.16 Disqualification for intentional Program violation

(e) Disqualification Hearings (8) Imposition of disqualification penalties (i) states:

If the hearing authority rules that the individual has committed an intentional Program violation, the household member must be disqualified in accordance with the disqualification periods and procedures in paragraph (b) of this section. The same act of intentional Program violation repeated over a period of time must not be separated so that separate penalties can be imposed.

In this case, the Department submitted evidence showing that Respondent gave birth to a child fathered by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. The evidence also shows that Respondent intentionally failing to meet the 10 day reporting requirement for reporting the change in her household and fraudulently reported that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was not a member of her household. In accordance with Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 212 Food Assistance Program Group Composition, once the child was born, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] became a mandatory member of Respondent's Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefit group. Applying the requirements cited above, the over-issuance period was properly calculated to begin April 1, 2015.

Over-issuance Amount

BAM 720 states the over-issuance amount is the benefit amount the client actually received minus the amount the client was actually eligible to receive. The Department

presented a benefit summary showing that the State of Michigan issued Respondent a total of \$ [REDACTED] of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits during the over-issuance period. The Department submitted evidence of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] earned income during the over-issuance period. That evidence shows that [REDACTED] earned income, exceeded the FAP gross income limit for a benefit group of 5, in every month of the over-issuance period. Therefore, Respondent was not eligible for any Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits during the over-issuance period. Respondent received a \$ [REDACTED] over-issuance of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits.

DISQUALIFICATION

In accordance with 7 CFR §273.16(e)(8)(i), BAM 720 states that a court or hearing decision that finds a client committed an IPV disqualifies that client from receiving program benefits. 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.

Clients who commit an IPV are disqualified for a standard disqualification period of one year for the first IPV, two years for the second IPV and a lifetime disqualification for the third IPV.

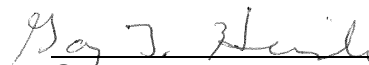
DECISION AND ORDER

The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, finds that the Department has established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) which resulted in a \$ [REDACTED] over-issuance of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits that the Department is entitled to recoup in accordance with Department policies in BAM 705, BAM 710, BAM 720, and BAM 725.

This is Respondent's 1st Intentional Program Violation (IPV) of the Food Assistance Program (FAP) and the Department must disqualify Respondent from receiving Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits in accordance with 7 CFR §273.16(e)(8)(i) and Bridges Administration Manual (BAM) 720.

It is ORDERED that the actions of the Department of Health and Human Services, in this matter, are UPHeld.

GH/nr



Gary Heisler
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

DHHS

[REDACTED]

Petitioner

[REDACTED]

Respondent

[REDACTED]