



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: [REDACTED]
MAHS Docket No.: 17-003640

September 5,
2017

[REDACTED]

Petitioner: OIG

[REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Landis Lain

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, 42 CFR 431.230(b), 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 August 24, 2017, from [REDACTED], 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 twelve months?

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 [REDACTED], 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 convictions for drug felonies.
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 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (fraud period).
7. Rights and Responsibilities in accordance with BAM 105 were acknowledged when Respondent applied for FAP benefits on [REDACTED], and [REDACTED].
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.
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 United States Postal Services 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.

Pertinent Department policy dictates:

Criminal Justice Disqualifications

People convicted of certain crimes and probation or parole violators are not eligible for assistance. BEM 203, p 1 (10/1/2015). An individual convicted of a felony for the use, possession, or distribution of controlled substances two or more times in separate periods will be permanently disqualified if both offenses occurred after August 22, 1996. BEM 203, p 2.

In this case Respondent's son, who was a part of Respondent's FAP group, has felony drug convictions dated October 8, 1999 and October 26, 1999 from ██████ County.

Effective January 1, 2016, 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 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, pp 12-13 (1/1/2016).

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 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.

Evidence on the record shows that Respondent, applied for and received Michigan FAP benefits for herself, her husband, [REDACTED] and her two children, from [REDACTED] through [REDACTED] and from [REDACTED] through [REDACTED]. Respondent applied for and was approved for FAP benefits on DHS Notice of Case Action dated [REDACTED]. Respondent acknowledged reporting responsibilities and failed to report information to DHHS on DHS 1010 Redeterminations dated [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. When questioned if convicted of a drug felony Respondent "Omitted" to answer. On DHHS Online Application signed and dated [REDACTED], when questioned if convicted of a drug felony, Respondent responded, "Yes", but, responded "No" to the question of more than one conviction. Respondent's husband was not active on the FAP grant from [REDACTED] through [REDACTED].

An electronic data match revealed Respondent's husband, [REDACTED], Bridges case number [REDACTED], has been convicted of two or more separate drug related felonies on [REDACTED] docket # [REDACTED], [REDACTED] docket # [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], in [REDACTED] County. This was verified via [REDACTED] Judicial Circuit Court Register of Actions. Per BEM 203, an individual convicted of a felony for the use, possession, or distribution of controlled substances two or more times in separate instances will be permanently disqualified from FIP and FAP if both offenses occurred after August 22, 1996. The permanent disqualification referenced here is a criminal justice disqualification not an IPV. The IPV occurred by not reporting the multiple drug-related convictions.

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 Family Independence Program, FAP, or State Disability Assistance, for standard disqualification periods of one year for the first IPV, two years for the second IPV, and **lifetime for the third IPV or conviction of two felonies for the use, possession, or distribution of controlled substances in separate periods if both offenses occurred after August 22, 1996.** BEM 203, p 2; BAM 720, p 18. A disqualified recipient remains a member of an active group as long as he/she lives with them, and other eligible group members may continue to receive benefits. BAM 720, p 17.

Here, the Department has requested a lifetime disqualification. Because Respondent's husband/partner's felony drug convictions occurred after August 22, 1996, Respondent's husband (partner) was not eligible for FAP benefits. Consequently, Respondent is disqualified from receiving FAP benefits for lifetime.

Overissuance

When a client group receives more benefits than entitled to receive, the Department must attempt to recoup the over issuance. BAM 700, p 1 (1/1/2016).

In this case, Respondent had two felony drug convictions after August 22, 1996. As a result of the felony drug convictions, Respondent was not eligible for FAP benefits. Therefore, Respondent received an OI of \$ [REDACTED] in FAP for the months of [REDACTED] and \$ [REDACTED] in FAP benefits for the months of [REDACTED].

DECISION AND ORDER

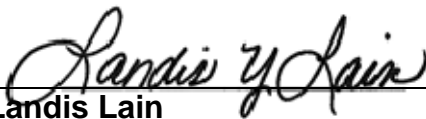
The Administrative Law Judge, based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and for the reasons stated on the record, concludes that:

1. The Department has established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV.
2. Respondent did receive an OI of FAP benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED]

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

It is FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent be disqualified from receiving FAP benefits for the requested lifetime in accordance with Department policy.

LL/hb



Landis Lain
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]