



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
MICHIGAN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING SYSTEM

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: December 20, 2017
MAHS Docket No.: 17-008289
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: [REDACTED]
Respondent: [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Michael Crews

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 November 22, 2017, from Detroit, 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 the Department establish, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) of Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits?
2. Should Respondent be disqualified from receiving FAP benefits?
3. Did Respondent receive an overissuance (OI) of FAP benefits that the Department is entitled to recoup?

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 May 30, 2017, 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 for 12 months.
3. Respondent was a recipient of FAP benefits issued by the Department.
4. The Department alleges that Respondent was aware of the responsibility to completely and truthfully answer all questions in his application for benefits, including, but not limited to, those regarding drug felony convictions from offenses that occurred after August 22, 1996.
5. The Department alleged that 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, 2014 through January 31, 2016 (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 \$0 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 5 [REDACTED] MI and was returned by the United States Postal Services as undeliverable on October 6, 2017.
11. On October 16, 2017, the Department provided an updated address for Respondent at [REDACTED] MI [REDACTED]
12. A new notice of hearing was mailed to Respondent at the [REDACTED] address and was not returned by the United 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.

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 \$500.00 or more, or
 - the total amount is less than \$500.00, 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 (January 2016), p. 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 (January 2016), p. 7; 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, the Department alleges that Respondent intentionally withheld or misrepresented information regarding two drug felony convictions that occurred after August 22, 1996 in order to establish, maintain, increase, or prevent reduction of FAP benefits or eligibility and, as such, he committed an IPV.

Individuals convicted of certain crimes and probation or parole violators are not eligible for assistance. BEM 203 (July 2013), p. 1. Clients must completely and truthfully answer all questions on forms and in interviews. BAM 105 (January 2014), p. 7.

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. The disqualification does not apply if the conviction is for conduct occurring on or before August 22, 1996. 21 USC 862a(d)(2). The offense must be classified as a felony by the law of the State and have as an element the possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance. The term "distribute" means to deliver (other than administering or dispensing) a controlled substance or a listed chemical. The term "deliver" or "delivery" means the actual, constructive, or attempted transfer of a controlled substance or a listed chemical, whether or not there is an agency relationship. 21 USC section 862a(a)(1) and (2); 21 USC 802(8) and (11).

The Department presented applications submitted by Respondent on February 12, 2014 and on January 21, 2015 (Exhibit A, p. 12 and p. 42). In the applications, Respondent indicated that he had not been convicted of a drug-related felony (Exhibit A, p. 15 and p. 46). Under the penalty of perjury, Respondent signed the applications, either manually or electronically, as confirmation that the information contained in the applications was true and complete (Exhibit A, p. 22 and p. 49).

However, in support of its allegation that Respondent committed an IPV, the Department presented two [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Judgment of Sentence/Commitment to Jail which showed that Respondent pled guilty to Controlled Substance-Possession Less Than 25 Grams on June 19, 2003 and two counts of Controlled Substance-Possession Less Than 25 grams on March 11, 2004 (Exhibit A, p.

50 and p. 52). Here, based on the record evidence, the aforementioned offenses occurred after August 22, 1996 and resulted in drug felony convictions.

As such, as of February 12, 2014, Respondent had two drug felony convictions from offenses that occurred after August 22, 1996, but he failed to completely and truthfully report the convictions on his application. If this information had been properly disclosed, Respondent would have been ineligible for FAP benefits.

Therefore, it is found that the Department established that Respondent intentionally withheld or misrepresented information regarding his drug felony convictions for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, increasing, or preventing the reduction of FAP benefits or eligibility. Therefore, the Department established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV as to his FAP benefits.

Disqualification

A court or hearing decision that finds a client committed an IPV disqualifies that client from receiving program benefits. BAM 720 (July 2013), p. 15. 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. 15.

Clients who commit an IPV are disqualified for a standard disqualification period except when a court orders a different period. BAM 720, p. 16. 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 concurrent receipt of FAP benefits. BAM 720, p. 16.

In this case, the Department has satisfied its burden of showing that Respondent committed an IPV concerning FAP benefits. Accordingly, because this is Respondent's first IPV, he is subject to a 12-month disqualification from receipt of FAP benefits.

Overissuance

When a client group receives more benefits than entitled to receive, the Department must attempt to recoup the OI. BAM 700 (July 2013), p. 1. The amount of a FAP OI is the benefit amount the client actually received minus the amount the client was eligible to receive. BAM 720, p. 8.

In this case, the Department alleged that Respondent was overissued FAP benefits totaling \$ [REDACTED] during the fraud period. However, the Department presented a benefit issuance summary showing that Respondent was issued \$ [REDACTED] in FAP benefits. (Exhibit A, pp. 54-58). Respondent was the only member of the FAP group.

Respondent did not appear at the hearing. Therefore, Respondent failed to refute the evidence presented which revealed that he failed to report his two drug felony convictions for offenses that occurred after August 22, 1996 when he provided applications for FAP benefits. Because of the two drug felony convictions, Respondent

was not entitled to benefits, and as such, he received an OI of FAP benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] during the fraud period.

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 as to his FAP benefits.
2. Respondent did receive an OI of FAP benefits in the amount of \$ [REDACTED]

The Department is ORDERED to initiate recoupment/collection procedures for the amount of \$ [REDACTED] in accordance with Department policy, less any amounts already recouped/collected.

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

MC/kl



Michael Crews
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

Via email



Respondent via USPS

