



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
LANSING

SHELLY EDGERTON
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: April 10, 2018
MAHS Docket No.: 17-012981
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: OIG
Respondent: [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Kevin Scully

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 with Mich Admin Code, R 400.3130 and R 400.3178. After due notice, telephone hearing was held on March 8, 2018, 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 the Food Assistance Program (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. On an application for assistance dated [REDACTED], Respondent acknowledged his duties and responsibilities including the duty to report changes of employment status and increases in earned income. Respondent did not have

an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement. Exhibit A, pp 12-45.

2. On [REDACTED], the Department mailed a notice that the group was approved for the FAP based on \$ [REDACTED] gross monthly income. Exhibit A, pp 46-52.
3. On an application for assistance dated [REDACTED], Respondent acknowledged his duties and responsibilities including his duty to report changes in employment status and increases in earned income. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement. Exhibit A, pp 54-81.
4. Respondent acknowledged under penalties of perjury that his [REDACTED], application form was examined by or read to him, and, to the best of his knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Exhibit A, p 62.
5. Respondent reported on his [REDACTED], application for assistance, that no one in his household was employed. Exhibit A, pp 60.
6. Respondent was employed and received earned income in [REDACTED], and from [REDACTED], through [REDACTED]. Exhibit A, p 94.
7. On a Redetermination (DHS-1010) received by the Department on [REDACTED], Respondent reported receiving \$ [REDACTED] of gross weekly earned income. Exhibit A, pp 82-87.
8. On [REDACTED], the Department mailed notice that the group was no longer eligible for FAP benefits effective [REDACTED]. Exhibit A, pp 90-93.
9. Respondent received FAP benefits as a group of two including his wife, totaling \$ [REDACTED] from [REDACTED], through [REDACTED]. Exhibit A, p 95.
10. On [REDACTED], the Department sent Respondent an Intentional Program Violation Repayment Agreement (DHS-4350) with notice of a \$ [REDACTED] overpayment, and a Request for Waiver of Disqualification Hearing (DHS-826). Exhibit A, pp 6-9.
11. 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. Exhibit A, p 3.
12. This was Respondent's first established IPV.
13. A notice of hearing was mailed to Respondent at the last known address and was not returned by the United States Postal Service as undeliverable.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Department policies are contained in the Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), Department of Health and Human Services Reference Tables Manual (RFT), and Department of Health and Human Services Emergency Relief Manual (ERM).

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-.3011.

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 \$500 or more, or
 - the total OI 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.

Department of Health and Human Services Bridges
Administrative Manual (BAM) 720 (January 1, 2016), pp 12-
13.

Overissuance

When a client group receives benefits than they are entitled to receive, the Department must attempt to recoup the overissuance. Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM) 700 (October 1, 2016), p 1.

Clients must report changes in circumstance that potentially affect eligibility or benefit amount within 10 days of receiving the first payment reflecting the change. Changes that must be reported include changes of employment status and increases in earned income. Department of Human Services Bridges Assistance Manual (BAM) 105 (January 1, 2018), pp 1-20.

Clients must report changes in circumstance that potentially affect eligibility or benefit amount. Changes must be reported within 10 days of receiving the first payment reflecting the change. Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM) 105 (January 1, 2018), p 12. The Department will act on a change reported by means other than a tape match within 15 workdays after becoming aware of the change, except that the Department will act on a change other than a tape match within 10 days of becoming aware of the change. Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM) 220 (January 1, 2018), p 7. A pended negative action occurs when a negative action requires timely notice based on the eligibility rules in this item. Timely notice means that the action taken by the department is effective at least 12 calendar days following the date of the department's action. BAM 220, p 12.

Simplified reporting groups are required to report only when the group's actual gross monthly income (not converted) exceeds the SR income limit for their group size. No other change reporting is required. Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM) 200 (January 1, 2017), p 1.

The simplified reporting income limit for a group of two was \$ [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. Department of Health and Human Services Reference Table Manual (RFT) 250 (December 1, 2013), p 1.

FAP group composition is established by determining who lives together, the relationship of the people who live together, whether the people living together purchase and prepare food together or separately, and whether the persons resides in an eligible living situation. Spouses who are legally married and live together must be in the same group. Department of Human Services Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM) 212 (January 1, 2017), p 1.

On an application for assistance dated [REDACTED], Respondent acknowledged the duty to report changes in employment status and increases in earned income. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement. On [REDACTED], the Department approved Respondent's application based on a \$ [REDACTED] gross monthly income. The [REDACTED], notice instructed Respondent to report if his household income exceeded \$ [REDACTED] per month.

On another application for assistance dated [REDACTED], Respondent acknowledged the duty to report changes in employment status and increases in earned income. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement. Respondent acknowledged under

penalties of perjury that his [REDACTED], application form was examined by or read to him, and, to the best of his knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Respondent reported on his [REDACTED], application for assistance that no one in his household was employed.

Respondent failed to report to the Department that he received earned income in [REDACTED], and from [REDACTED] through [REDACTED]. Respondent's earned income exceeded the simplified limit from January 1, 2014, through [REDACTED]. Respondent's FAP benefits closed effective [REDACTED], after he failed to respond to the Department's request for him to verify whether anyone in the household was receiving an income. If Respondent had reported his earned income in [REDACTED], the Department would have redetermined his eligibility for ongoing FAP benefits by [REDACTED]. Respondent received FAP benefits totaling \$ [REDACTED] from [REDACTED], through [REDACTED], but would have been eligible for only \$ [REDACTED] if all household income had been reported to the Department. Therefore, Respondent received a \$ [REDACTED] OI of FAP benefits.

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 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).

The Department has the burden of establishing by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV. The clear and convincing evidence standard, which is the most demanding standard applied in civil cases, is established where there is evidence so clear, direct and weighty and convincing that a conclusion can be drawn without hesitancy of the truth of the precise facts in issue. *Smith v Anonymous Joint Enterprise*, 487 Mich 102; 793 NW2d 533 (2010), reh den 488 Mich 860; 793 NW2d 559 (2010).

Clear and convincing proof is that which produces in the mind of the trier of fact a firm belief or conviction as to the truth of the precise facts in issue. Evidence may be uncontroverted and yet not be clear and convincing. Conversely, evidence may be clear and convincing even if contradicted. *Id.*

On applications for assistance dated [REDACTED], and [REDACTED], Respondent acknowledged his duties and responsibilities including his duty to report changes in employment status and increases in earned income. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the understanding or ability to fulfill this requirement. Respondent falsely reported that no one in his household was receiving any income, which resulted in an overissuance of FAP benefits.

This Administrative Law Judge finds that the Department has presented clear and convincing evidence that Respondent intentionally failed to report countable earned income to the Department in a timely manner for the purposes of maintaining his eligibility for FAP benefits that he would not have been eligible for otherwise.

Disqualification

A court or hearing decision that finds a client committed IPV disqualifies that client from receiving program benefits. BAM 720, p. 15-16. 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.

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 (July 1, 2013), 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.

The record evidence indicates that this is Respondent's first established IPV.

The Department has established an 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, if any, 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]
3. The Department is ORDERED to initiate recoupment procedures for the amount of \$ [REDACTED] in accordance with Department policy.
4. It is FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent be disqualified from receiving FAP benefits for a period of 12 months.

KS/bb



Kevin Scully
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]