



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
LANSING

SHELLY EDGERTON  
DIRECTOR



Date Mailed: June 22, 2018  
MAHS Docket No.: 18-000570  
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, a telephone hearing was held on May 17, 2018, from Lansing, Michigan. The Department was represented by Patrick Cousineau, 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 April 14, 2016, Respondent acknowledged her duties and responsibilities including 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. Exhibit A, pp 12-40.

2. Respondent acknowledged under penalties of perjury that her April 14, 2016, application form was examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Exhibit A, p 22.
3. Respondent reported on her April 14, 2016, application for assistance that she was not employed. Exhibit A, pp 17.
4. On April 19, 2016, the Department notified Respondent that her April 14, 2016, had been approved based on a group of one receiving no income. Exhibit A, pp 41-44.
5. Respondent received Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits totaling \$1,661 from April 14, 2016, through December 31, 2016. Exhibit A, pp 66-67.
6. Respondent failed to report to the Department that she was employed and receiving earned income from employment from January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2016. Exhibit A, pp 53-54.
7. On January 17, 2018, the Department sent Respondent an Intentional Program Violation Repayment Agreement (DHS-4350) with notice of a \$1,309 overpayment, and a Request for Waiver of Disqualification Hearing (DHS-826). Exhibit A, pp 6-9.
8. The Department's OIG filed a hearing request on January 17, 2018, to establish an OI of benefits received by Respondent as a result of Respondent having allegedly committed an IPV. Exhibit A, p 3.
9. This was Respondent's first established IPV.
10. 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 employment status and increases in earned income. Department of Human Services Bridges Assistance Manual (BAM) 105 (January 1, 2018), pp 1-20.

On an application for assistance dated April 14, 2016, Respondent acknowledged 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. Respondent acknowledged under penalties of perjury that her April 14, 2016, application form was examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Respondent reported on her April 14, 2016, application for assistance that she was not receiving any income.

The information Respondent reported on her April 14, 2016, application for assistance was neither true nor complete. Respondent falsely reported to the Department that she was not employed when she had been employed and receiving earned income throughout all of 2016.

On April 19, 2016, the Department notified Respondent that she was approved for FAP benefits as a group of one based on no income. Respondent received FAP benefits totaling \$1,661 from April 14, 2016, through December 31, 2016. If Respondent had truthfully reported her earned income to the Department then she would have been eligible for \$352 of FAP benefits during that period. Therefore, Respondent received a \$1,309 overissuance 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 the reporting responsibilities, and
- The client has no apparent physical or mental impairment that limits the 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 Intentional Program Violation (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.*

Respondent acknowledged her duties and responsibilities including her duty to report her 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 her April 14, 2016, application form was examined by or read to her, and, to the best of her knowledge, contained facts that were true and complete. Respondent falsely reported that she was not employed on April 14, 2016, 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 her earned income for the purposes of becoming eligible for FAP benefits that she 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 Intentional Program Violation (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 Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits in the amount of \$1,309.
3. The Department is ORDERED to initiate recoupment procedures for the amount of \$1,309 in accordance with Department policy.

4. It is FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent be disqualified from the Food Assistance Program (FAP) for a period of 12 months.

KS/hb

  
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**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) 763-0155; 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**

OIG  
PO Box 30062  
Lansing, MI 48909-7562

**DHHS**

Renee Swiercz  
51111 Woodward Ave 5th Floor  
Pontiac, MI 48342

Oakland County (District 4), DHHS

Policy-Recoupment via electronic mail

M. Shumaker via electronic mail

**Respondent**

