



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
MICHIGAN OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND RULES

ORLENE HAWKS  
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], MI [REDACTED]

Date Mailed: September 18, 2019  
MOAHR Docket No.: 19-004603  
Agency No.: [REDACTED]  
Petitioner: OIG  
Respondent: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:** Jeffrey Kemm

### **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 Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), particularly 7 CFR 273.16. After due notice, a telephone hearing was held on September 18, 2019, from Lansing, Michigan. The Department was represented by Adriane Laugavitz, Regulation Agent of the Office of Inspector General (OIG). Respondent, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] did not appear. The hearing was held in Respondent's absence pursuant to 7 CFR 273.16(e)(4).

One exhibit was admitted into evidence during the hearing. A 53-page packet of documents provided by the Department was admitted collectively as the Department's Exhibit A.

### **ISSUES**

1. Did the Department establish, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV)?
2. 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 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 2015, Respondent applied for assistance from the Department, including FAP benefits. Respondent asserted in her application that she did not have any income from employment. The Department instructed Respondent to report all changes which could affect her eligibility for assistance to the Department

within 10 days of the date of the change, including changes in income and employment.

2. Respondent did not have any apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit her understanding or ability to answer completely and truthfully.
3. Petitioner was employed by [REDACTED] beginning [REDACTED] 2015, and continuing through 2015. Petitioner earned \$ [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] 2015 through [REDACTED] 2015. Petitioner earned \$ [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] 2015 through [REDACTED] 2015.
4. Petitioner did not report to the Department that she obtained employment or that she had income.
5. The Department issued FAP benefits to Respondent without budgeting her income from employment.
6. The Department investigated Respondent's case and determined that she was overissued FAP benefits because she had unreported income from employment.
7. The Department attempted to contact Respondent to obtain her explanation for failing to report her income from employment, but the Department was unable to obtain an explanation from Respondent.
8. On April 26, 2019, the Department's OIG filed a hearing request to establish that Respondent received an overissuance of benefits and that Respondent committed an IPV.
9. The OIG requested Respondent be disqualified from FAP for 12 months for a first IPV. The OIG did not request recoupment because it already established a debt in the amount of the overissuance.
10. A notice of hearing was mailed to Respondent at her last known address and it was not returned by the United States Postal Service as undeliverable.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal food assistance program designed to promote general welfare and to safeguard well-being by increasing food purchasing power. 7 USC 2011 and 7 CFR 271.1. The Department administers its Food Assistance Program (FAP) pursuant to MCL 400.10; the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1-.119b; and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 to .3015. Department policies are contained in the Department of Health and Human Services Bridges Administrative Manual (BAM), Bridges Eligibility Manual (BEM), and Reference Tables Manual (RFT).

### **Intentional Program Violation**

An intentional program violation (IPV) “shall consist of having intentionally: (1) Made a false or misleading statement, or misrepresented, concealed or withheld facts; or (2) Committed any act that constitutes a violation of SNAP, SNAP regulations, or any State statute for the purpose of using, presenting, transferring, acquiring, receiving, possessing or trafficking of SNAP benefits or EBT cards.” 7 CFR 273.16(c). 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. 7 CFR 273.16(e)(6). Clear and convincing evidence is evidence, which is so clear, direct, weighty, and convincing that it enables a firm belief as to the truth of the allegations sought to be established. *In re Martin*, 450 Mich 204, 227; 538 NW2d 399 (1995) (citing *In re Jobes*, 108 NJ 394 (1987)).

In this case, I find that the Department has met its burden. Respondent was required to completely and truthfully answer all questions on her application. BAM 105 (January 1, 2019), p. 9. Respondent withheld information about her employment on her application because she did not disclose that she was employed when she was employed by Redwood. Respondent’s failure to report her employment to the Department must be considered an intentional misrepresentation to obtain benefits from the Department since Respondent knew or should have known that he was required to disclose her employment to the Department and that doing so would have caused her benefits to be denied or reduced. Respondent did not have any apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit her understanding or ability to fulfill her reporting requirement.

### **Disqualification**

In general, individuals found to have committed an intentional program violation through an administrative disqualification hearing shall be ineligible to participate in FAP: (i) for a period of 12 months for the first violation, (ii) for a period of 24 months for the second violation, and (iii) permanently for a third violation. 7 CFR 273.16(b). Only the individual who committed the violation shall be disqualified – not the entire household. 7 CFR 273.16(b)(11).

In this case, there is no evidence that Respondent has ever been found to have committed an IPV related to FAP benefits. Thus, this is Respondent’s first IPV related to FAP benefits. Therefore, Respondent is subject to a 12-month disqualification from FAP.

**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 should be disqualified from FAP.

IT IS ORDERED that Respondent shall be disqualified from FAP for a period of 12 months.

JK/nr



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Jeffrey Kemm  
Administrative Law Judge  
for Robert Gordon, 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 Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR).

A party may request a rehearing or reconsideration of this Order if the request is received by MOAHR 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. MOAHR will not review any response to a request for rehearing/reconsideration.

A written request may be mailed or faxed to MOAHR. If submitted by fax, the written request must be faxed to (517) 763-0155; Attention: MOAHR Rehearing/Reconsideration Request.

If submitted by mail, the written request must be addressed as follows:

Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules  
Reconsideration/Rehearing Request  
P.O. Box 30639  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-8139

**DHHS**

Brenda Buhl  
1505 Suncrest Drive  
Lapeer, MI  
48846

Lapeer County DHHS- via electronic mail

MDHHS- Recoupment- via electronic mail

L. Bengel- via electronic mail

**Petitioner**

OIG  
PO Box 30062  
Lansing, MI  
48909-7562

**Respondent**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], MI  
[REDACTED]