



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

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

MARLON I. BROWN
DIRECTOR

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date Mailed: May 2, 2024
MOAHR Docket No.: 23-005850
Agency No.: [REDACTED]
Petitioner: OIG
Respondent: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Colleen Lack

HEARING DECISION FOR INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS or the Department) requested a hearing alleging that Respondent [REDACTED] [REDACTED] committed an intentional program violation (IPV). Pursuant to MDHHS' request and in accordance with MCL 400.9, 7 CFR 273.16, 42 CFR 431.230(b), and 45 CFR 235.110, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3130 and R 400.3178, this matter is before the undersigned Administrative Law Judge. After due notice, a hearing was held via telephone conference on April 3, 2024.

Doyle Owens, Regulation Agent of the Office of Inspector General (OIG), represented MDHHS.

Respondent did not appear at the hearing, and it was held in Respondent's absence pursuant to 7 CFR 273.16(e)(4); Mich Admin Code, R 400.3130(5); or Mich Admin Code, R 400.3178(5).

ISSUES

1. Did MDHHS establish, by clear and convincing evidence, that Respondent committed an IPV concerning Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits?
2. Should Respondent be disqualified from receiving benefits for 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. From October 1, 2020 to November 30, 2020, Respondent received \$[REDACTED] in FAP benefits. (Exhibit A, p. 115)

2. From June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022, Respondent received \$[REDACTED] in FAP benefits. (Exhibit A, pp. 117-120)
3. On September [REDACTED] 2020, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for FAP. Respondent reported a household composition of three, herself, a living together partner, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 10-16)
4. On October [REDACTED] 2020, a Notice of Case Action was issued to Respondent approving FAP for a household of two, Respondent and her minor child CK, effective October 1, 2020. (Exhibit A, pp. 56-64)
5. On May [REDACTED] 2021, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for FAP. Respondent reported a household composition of three, herself, a living together partner, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 17-22)
6. On June [REDACTED] 2021, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for FAP and other benefits. Respondent reported a household composition of three, herself, a living together partner, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 23-29)
7. During a June [REDACTED] 2021, interview Respondent reported her minor child CK completed kindergarten at [REDACTED] and is in the home all 30 days of the month. The rights and responsibilities were reviewed with Respondent. (Exhibit A, pp. 44-47)
8. On June [REDACTED] 2021, a Notice of Case Action was issued to Respondent approving FAP for a household of three, including Respondent's minor child CK, effective June 23, 2021. (Exhibit A, pp. 72-78)
9. On June [REDACTED] 2021, a Notice of Case Action was issued to Respondent approving FAP for a household of three, including Respondent's minor child CK, effective August 1, 2021. (Exhibit A, pp. 65-71)
10. On August [REDACTED] 2021, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for other benefits. Respondent reported a household composition of four, herself, two non-relatives, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 30-35)
11. On December [REDACTED] 2021, Respondent submitted a Renew Benefits and reported a household composition of four, including her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 36-37)
12. On March [REDACTED] 2022, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for other benefits. Respondent reported a household composition of four, herself, two non-relatives, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 38-43)
13. Respondent's signature on the Assistance Applications certified that the information she provided was accurate and that she read and understood the rights and responsibilities, which would include providing accurate information and timely

reporting any changes. (Exhibit A, pp. 16, 22, 29, 35, and 43; Regulation Agent Testimony)

14. During a March [REDACTED] 2022 interview, Respondent reported her minor child CK was in the home 30 nights per week and attends [REDACTED] elementary. Respondent also reported one of the unrelated adults moved out of the home that month. The rights and responsibilities were reviewed with Respondent. (Exhibit A, pp. 38-43 and 48-55)
15. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] records show that Petitioner's minor child CK was enrolled at [REDACTED] elementary school on September [REDACTED] 2015 and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was listed as the first parent/guardian. CK was listed as having the same address as [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and Respondent had a different address. (Exhibit A, pp. 97-100)
16. During an April [REDACTED] 2022 interview, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated the CK is her grandson and has lived with her full time for over three years. Respondent has not stayed with her. (Exhibit A, p. 4)
17. During an April [REDACTED] 2022 interview, Respondent acknowledged that C.K. had been staying with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Exhibit A, p. 4)
18. Respondent was aware of the responsibility to accurately report information. (Exhibit A, pp. 16, 22, 29, 35, 43, 47, and 54-55; Regulation Agent Testimony)
19. Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the ability to understand or fulfill the reporting requirements. (Exhibit A, pp. 13, 20, 33, 41, 49; Regulation Agent Testimony)
20. Respondent has no prior FAP IPV disqualifications. (Exhibit A, pp. 1 and 4)
21. The Department has established the FAP claim and provided due process. (Exhibit A, pp. 1 and 122-123)
22. On September 19, 2023, MDHHS' OIG filed a hearing request alleging that Respondent intentionally failed to report the household's accurate group composition to the Department and as a result, received FAP benefits from October 1, 2020 to November 30, 2020 (fraud period 1) and June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022 (fraud period 2) that Respondent was ineligible to receive. OIG requested that Respondent be disqualified from receiving FAP benefits for a period of 12 months due to committing an IPV. (Exhibit A, pp. 1-127)
23. 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

MDHHS policies are contained in the MDHHS 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 funded under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) established by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, 7 USC 2011 to 7 USC 2036a. It is implemented by the federal regulations contained in 7 CFR 273. MDHHS administers FAP pursuant to MCL 400.10 of the Social Welfare Act, MCL 400.1 *et seq.*, and Mich Admin Code, R 400.3001 to R 400.3031.

Intentional Program Violation

An IPV occurs when a recipient of MDHHS benefits intentionally made a false or misleading statement, or misrepresented, concealed, or withheld facts. 7 CFR 273.16(c)(1). Effective October 1, 2014, MDHHS's OIG requests IPV hearings for cases where (1) the total repayment amount sought from Respondent for all programs combined is \$500 or more or (2) the total repayment amount sought from Respondent for all programs combined is less than \$500 but the group has a previous IPV, the matter involves concurrent receipt of assistance, the IPV involves FAP trafficking, or the alleged fraud is committed by a state government employee. BAM 720 (October 1, 2017), p. 12-13.

To establish an IPV, MDHHS must present clear and convincing evidence that the household member committed, and intended to commit, the IPV. 7 CFR 273.16(e)(6); BAM 720, p. 1. Clear and convincing evidence is evidence sufficient to result in "a firm belief or conviction as to the truth of the precise facts in issue." *Smith v Anonymous Joint Enterprise*, 487 Mich 102, 114-115; 793 NW2d 533 (2010); see also M Civ JI 8.01. Evidence may be uncontroverted and yet not be clear and convincing; conversely, evidence may be clear and convincing despite the fact that it has been contradicted. *Smith* at 115. The clear and convincing standard is "the most demanding standard applied in civil cases." *In re Martin*, 450 Mich 204, 227; 538 NW2d 399 (1995). For an IPV based on inaccurate reporting, MDHHS policy also requires that the individual have been clearly and correctly instructed regarding the reporting responsibilities and have no apparent physical or mental impairment that limits the ability to understanding or fulfill these reporting responsibilities. BAM 720, p. 1.

In this case, MDHHS alleges that Respondent committed an IPV based on Respondent intentionally failing to report the household's accurate group composition to the Department, resulting in receiving FAP benefits from October 1, 2020 to November 30, 2020 (fraud period 1) and June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022 (fraud period 2) that Respondent was ineligible to receive.

The Department has established that Respondent was aware of the responsibilities to accurately report information to the Department. Department policy requires clients to completely and truthfully answer all questions on forms and in interview. BAM 105 (July 1, 2020) p. 9. Households must also report all changes in household composition, such as the addition or loss of a household member, as well as changes in residence and the resulting change in shelter costs. 7 CFR 273.12(a)(1)(ii) and 7 CFR 273.12(a)(1)(iii) Department policy requires clients to report any change in circumstances that will affect eligibility or benefit amount within 10 days. This includes changes with household composition and residence. BAM 105, pp. 11-13. Respondent's signature on the Assistance Applications certified that the information she provided was accurate and that she read and understood the rights and responsibilities, which would include providing accurate information. The rights and responsibilities were also reviewed during the interviews. (Exhibit A, pp. 16, 22, 29, 35, 43, 47, and 54-55; Regulation Agent Testimony). Respondent did not have an apparent physical or mental impairment that would limit the ability to understand or fulfill the reporting requirements. (Exhibit A, pp. 13, 20, 33, 41, 49; Regulation Agent Testimony).

On September █ 2020, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for FAP. Respondent reported a household composition of three, herself, a living together partner, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 10-16). On October █ 2020, a Notice of Case Action was issued to Respondent approving FAP for a household of two, Respondent and her minor child CK, effective October 1, 2020. (Exhibit A, pp. 56-64).

On May █ 2021, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for FAP. Respondent reported a household composition of three, herself, a living together partner, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 17-22). On June █ 2021, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for FAP and other benefits. Respondent reported a household composition of three, herself, a living together partner, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 23-29). During a June █ 2021, interview Respondent reported her minor child CK completed kindergarten at █ █ █ and is in the home all 30 days of the month. (Exhibit A, pp. 44-47). On June 25, 2021, a Notice of Case Action was issued to Respondent approving FAP for a household of three, including Respondent's minor child CK, effective June 23, 2021. (Exhibit A, pp. 72-78). On June █ 2021, a Notice of Case Action was issued to Respondent approving FAP for a household of three, including Respondent's minor child CK, effective August 1, 2021. (Exhibit A, pp. 65-71).

On August █ 2021, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for other benefits. Respondent reported a household composition of four, herself, two non-relatives, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 30-35). On December █ 2021, Respondent submitted a Renew Benefits and reported a household composition of four, including her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 36-37). On March █ 2022, Respondent submitted an Assistance Application for other benefits. Respondent reported a household composition of four, herself, two non-relatives, and her minor child CK. (Exhibit A, pp. 38-43). During a March █ 2022 interview, Respondent reported her minor child CK was in the home 30 nights per week and attends █ █ █ Respondent also reported one of the unrelated adults moved out of the home that month. (Exhibit A, pp. 38-43 and 48-55)

██████████ records show that Petitioner's minor child CK was enrolled at ██████████ elementary school on September ██████████ 2015 and ██████████ was listed as the first parent/guardian. CK was listed as having the same address as ██████████ and Respondent had a different address. (Exhibit A, pp. 97-100)

During an April ██████████ 2022 interview, ██████████ stated the CK is her grandson and has lived with her full time for over three years. Respondent has not stayed with her. (Exhibit A, p. 4). During an April ██████████ 2022 interview, Respondent acknowledged that C.K. had been staying with ██████████ (Exhibit A, p. 4).

The evidence shows that Respondent did not accurately report the household composition when she was receiving FAP benefits, as required per policy. Respondent's failure to accurately report the household composition resulted in an OI of FAP benefits. Therefore, MDHHS has presented clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV.

IPV Disqualification

An individual who is found pursuant to an IPV disqualification hearing to have committed a FAP IPV is disqualified from receiving benefits for the same program for 12 months for the first IPV, 24 months for the second IPV, and lifetime for the third IPV. 7 CFR 273.16(b)(1); BAM 720, p. 16. As discussed above, MDHHS has established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV. Respondent has no prior FAP IPV disqualifications. (Exhibit A, pp. 1 and 4). Because this was Respondent's first IPV for FAP, Respondent is subject to a 12-month disqualification from receipt of FAP benefits.

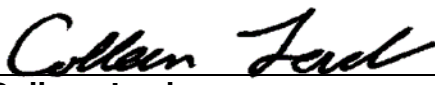
DECISION AND ORDER

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. MDHHS has established by clear and convincing evidence that Respondent committed an IPV.
2. Respondent is subject to a 12-month disqualification from FAP.

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

CL/dm



Colleen Lack
Administrative Law Judge

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

Via-Electronic Mail :

Petitioner
OIG
MDHHS-OIG-
HEARINGS@michigan.gov

DHHS
Julie Claffey
Clare County DHHS
MDHHS-Clare-
Hearings@michigan.gov

Policy-Recoupment

StebbinsN

MOAHR

Via-First Class Mail :

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]