



State of West Virginia  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
Office of Inspector General  
Board of Review  
P.O. Box 1736  
Romney, WV 26757

Earl Ray Tomblin  
Governor

Rocco S. Fucillo  
Cabinet Secretary

August 31, 2012

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Dear -----:

Attached is a copy of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law on your Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Administrative Disqualification Hearing held August 22, 2012. The purpose of this hearing was to determine whether or not you committed an Intentional Program Violation.

In arriving at a decision, the State Hearing Officer is governed by the Public Welfare Laws of West Virginia and the rules and regulations established by the Department of Health and Human Resources. These same laws and regulations are used in all cases to assure that all persons are treated alike.

Eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is based on current policy and regulations. These regulations provide that an Intentional Program Violation consists of having intentionally made a false or misleading statement, or misrepresented, concealed or withheld facts; or committed any act that constitutes a violation of the Food Stamp Act, SNAP regulations, or any State statute related to the use, presentation, transfer, acquisition, receipt, or possession of SNAP benefits. Individuals found to have committed an act of Intentional Program Violation will be ineligible for a specified time determined by the number of previous Intentional Program Violation disqualifications (West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual § 20.2 and Code of Federal Regulations-7 CFR § 273.16).

The information submitted at your hearing revealed that you intentionally withheld information concerning your household's income in order to receive SNAP benefits for which you were not entitled.

It is the decision of the State Hearing Officer that you committed an Intentional Program Violation and a disqualification penalty of one (1) year will be applied. This disqualification will begin effective October 1, 2012.

Sincerely,

Eric L. Phillips  
State Hearing Officer  
Member, State Board of Review

cc: Erika Young-Chairman, Board of Review  
Lori Woodward-Repayment Investigator

**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
BOARD OF REVIEW**

**IN RE:** -----,

**Defendant,**

**v.**

**ACTION NO.: 12-BOR-1411**

**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES,**

**Movant.**

**DECISION OF STATE HEARING OFFICER**

**I. INTRODUCTION:**

This is a report of the State Hearing Officer resulting from an Administrative Disqualification Hearing for ----- . This hearing was held in accordance with the provisions found in the Chapter 700 of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources' Common Chapters Manual. This hearing convened on August 22, 2012.

**II. PROGRAM PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is to provide an effective means of utilizing the nation's abundance of food "to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation's population and raise levels of nutrition among low-income households." This is accomplished through the issuance of benefits to households who meet the eligibility criteria established by the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**III. PARTICIPANTS:**

Lori Woodward, Repayment Investigator

Presiding at the hearing was Eric L. Phillips, State Hearing Officer and a member of the Board of Review.

**IV. QUESTION TO BE DECIDED:**

The question to be decided is whether or not the Defendant committed an Intentional Program Violation and should be disqualified for one year from participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP.

**V. APPLICABLE POLICY:**

Code of Federal Regulations, 7 CFR § 273.16  
Common Chapters Manual, Chapter 700  
West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 20.2; Chapter 9.1.A.2.h

**VI. LISTING OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE ADMITTED:**

**Department's Exhibits:**

- D-1 WV InROADS electronic SNAP recertification form dated January 11, 2012
- D-2 Unemployment Compensation Benefit Payment History December 2011 to May 2012
- D-3 Food Stamp Claim Determination for February 2012
- D-4 Notification of Intent to Disqualify dated May 10, 2012
- D-5 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual Chapter 1.2, 2.2, and 9.1
- D-6 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual Chapter 20.2, and Common Chapters 740.11

**VII. FINDINGS OF FACT:**

- 1) On June 11, 2012, a request for an Administrative Disqualification Hearing was received by the Board of Review from the Department's Repayment Investigator, Lori Woodward (Investigator Woodward). Investigator Woodward contends that the Defendant committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) and recommends that she be disqualified from participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for a twelve (12) month period.
- 2) A Notice of Scheduled Hearing was issued to the Defendant on June 18, 2012, via first class mail delivery, to her address of -----, - West Virginia. At the discretion of the State Hearing Officer, the hearing was rescheduled to August 22, 2012, and notice was issued via certified restricted mail delivery on July 19, 2012, to the Defendant's address. A return receipt documents that the Defendant received notice of the hearing on July 20, 2012.
- 3) The hearing convened as scheduled at 10:30 A.M., on the requested date, and as of 10:45 A.M., the Defendant failed to appear. As set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations found at § 7 CFR 273.16 (e) (4) and State policy (West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Common Chapters Manual Chapter 740.20), the hearing was conducted without the Defendant in attendance.

- 4) The Department contends that the Defendant intentionally violated SNAP regulations by withholding information concerning her household's income. Investigator Woodward testified that the Defendant completed a telephonic SNAP recertification (Exhibit D-1) on January 12, 2012. During the interview, the Defendant reported child support as the only income available to the household, which consisted of herself and her two children. Investigator Woodward testified that the Economic Service Worker (ESW), who completed the interview, received a data exchange alert which indicated that the Defendant was currently receiving unemployment compensation benefits. Upon questioning, the Defendant denied receipt of this income.
- 5) Investigator Woodward testified that upon further investigation, the Department discovered that the Defendant had been receiving \$304.00 in weekly unemployment compensation benefits since December 12, 2011.
- 6) Investigator Woodward presented a Food Stamp Claim Determination (Exhibit D-3) to demonstrate that by withholding information concerning her unemployment compensation, an overpayment of SNAP benefits was issued to the Defendant in the amount of \$354.00 for the month of February 2012.

7) West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual Chapter 1.2 indicates:

The client's responsibility is to provide information about his circumstances so the Worker is able to make a correct decision about his eligibility.

8) West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 9.1 indicates:

Persons who have been found guilty of an IPV are disqualified as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: 1 Year
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: 2 Years
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Permanent

9) Common Chapters Manual 740.11.D states as follows:

Intentional Program Violation - For the purpose of determining through an Administrative Disqualification Hearing whether or not a person has committed an Intentional Program Violation, the following criteria will be used. Intentional Program Violation 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 the Food Stamp Act, the Food Stamp Program Regulations, or any State statute for the purpose of using, presenting, transferring, acquiring, receiving, possessing or trafficking of coupons, authorization cards or reusable documents used as part of an automated benefit delivery system access device.

10) Common Chapters Manual 740.22 states as follows:

Decision – The Hearing Officer shall base the determination of Intentional Program Violation on clear and convincing evidence that demonstrates that the defendant committed, and intended to commit, Intentional Program Violation as defined in Section 740.11 of this Chapter. The Hearing Officer shall weigh the evidence and testimony presented and render a decision based solely on proper evidence given at the hearing. In rendering a decision, the Hearing Officer shall consider all applicable policies of the Department, state and federal statutes, rules or regulations, and court orders. The decision shall include reference to all pertinent law or policy. If the Hearing Officer rules that the defendant committed an Intentional Program Violation, he or she will include the length and the beginning date of the disqualification penalty.

### **VIII. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

- 1) The policy and regulations that govern SNAP benefits specify that a program violation has occurred when an individual intentionally makes a false or misleading statement, or misrepresented, concealed or withheld facts relating to the use, presentation, transfer, acquisition, receipt or possession of SNAP benefits.
- 2) The regulations state there must be clear and convincing evidence that demonstrates the Defendant intentionally committed an IPV.
- 3) Evidence is clear that the Defendant began receiving unemployment compensation benefits in December 2011, and withheld information concerning this income at a recertification interview in January 2012. The Defendant's action to deny receipt of this income establishes intent to mislead the Department.
- 4) In accordance with SNAP policy and regulations, an IPV has been committed and a disqualification penalty must be applied. The disqualification penalty for a first offense is one (1) year.
- 5) The Defendant is the only assistance group member subject to said disqualification penalty. The one year disqualification penalty will begin October 1, 2012.

### **IX. DECISION:**

Intentionally making a false or misleading statement or misrepresenting facts to secure SNAP benefits constitutes a clear violation of the regulations. Based on the evidence presented, I find the violation intentional.

The Department's proposal to apply a twelve (12) month disqualification penalty is upheld.

**X. RIGHT OF APPEAL:**

See Attachment

**XI. ATTACHMENTS:**

The Claimant's Recourse to Hearing Decision

Form IG-BR-29

**ENTERED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of August 2012.**

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**Eric L. Phillips**  
**State Hearing Officer**