



State of West Virginia
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
Office of Inspector General
State Capitol Complex
Building 6, Room 817-B
Charleston, WV 25305

Earl Ray Tomblin
Governor

Rocco S. Fucillo
Cabinet Secretary

October 10, 2012

Dear -----:

Attached is a copy of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Administrative Disqualification Hearing (ADH) held October 9, 2012, for the purpose of determining whether you committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV).

In arriving at a decision, the Deputy Director 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 SNAP is based on current policy and regulations. Some of these regulations state as follows: Intentional Program Violations 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 [SNAP] Act, the SNAP Regulations, or any State statute relating 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 period of 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 the hearing supports that you intentionally provided false information about your household's circumstances in order to receive SNAP benefits for which you were not entitled.

It is the decision of the Deputy Director to **uphold** the Agency's proposal to apply a one (1) year SNAP disqualification penalty against you based on the determination that you committed an IPV. Your disqualification penalty period will begin November 1, 2012.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Henson
Deputy Director
Board of Review

cc: Erika H. Young, Chairman, Board of Review / Jennifer Butcher, Kanawha DHHR

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

IN RE: -----,

Defendant,

v.

ACTION NO.: 12-BOR-1930

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

Movant.

DECISION OF DEPUTY DIRECTOR

I. INTRODUCTION:

This is a report of the Deputy Director resulting from an Administrative Disqualification Hearing (ADH) for ----- . This hearing was held in accordance with the provisions found in Chapter 700 of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources' Common Chapters Manual. This hearing was convened on October 9, 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:

Jennifer Butcher, Department representative

Presiding at the Hearing was Cheryl Henson, Deputy Director for the Board of Review.

IV. QUESTION TO BE DECIDED:

The question to be decided is whether the Defendant committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) and should be disqualified for one year from participation in SNAP.

V. APPLICABLE POLICY:

7 CFR § 273.16 USDA Code of Federal Regulations
Common Chapters Manual Chapter 700, Appendix A
West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual §1.2, 9.1.A.2.h and 20.2

VI. LISTING OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE ADMITTED:

Department's Exhibits:

- M-1 Benefit Recover Referral screen from Department's computer system
- M-2 Excerpt from West Virginia (WV) Income Maintenance Manual §1.2
- M-3 Code of Federal Regulations §7 CFR 273.16
- M-4 SNAP application, Rights and Responsibilities form, and other supporting documents dated January 20, 2011
- M-5 Case Comments screen from Department's computer system dated April 1, 2011
- M-6 Case Comments screen from Department's computer system dated April 13, 2011
- M-7 DFA-WVSC-1 Application form dated July 26, 2011
- M-8 SNAP review application, Rights and Responsibilities form, and other supporting documents dated August 9, 2011
- M-9 Case Comments screen from Department's computer system dated December 20, 2011
- M-10 Excerpt from WV Income Maintenance Manual §2.2
- M-11 Excerpt from WV Income Maintenance Manual §2.2
- M-12 Excerpt from WV Income Maintenance Manual §2.2
- M-13 Food Stamp [SNAP] Claim Determination Form and supporting documentation
- M-14 Excerpt from WV Income Maintenance Manual §20.6
- M-15 Notification letters to Defendant dated June 1, 2012
- M-16 Excerpt from WV Income Maintenance Manual §20.2
- M-17 Excerpt from WV Income Maintenance Manual §20.2
- M-18 Excerpt from WV Income Maintenance Manual §20.2

VII. FINDINGS OF FACT:

- 1) The Board of Review received a request for an ADH from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (Department) on August 9, 2012. The Department contends that the Defendant has committed an IPV and made fraudulent statements or misrepresentations regarding her household composition in order to receive SNAP benefits, and recommends that she be disqualified from participation in SNAP for a period of one (1) year.

- 2) Notification of the October 9, 2012 hearing was mailed to the Defendant on or about August 21, 2012, via first class mail delivery, as the Defendant was active and receiving benefits and services from the Department at the address, and it is known to be good by the Department.
- 3) The hearing was convened as scheduled at 9:00 AM, and as of 9:20 AM, the Defendant failed to appear or notify the Board of Review of any conflict preventing her from appearing. As set forth in Code of Federal Regulations 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 reported (M-5, M-6) during April 2011 that her husband, -----, moved out of her home. By doing so, his income from unemployment compensation was also removed from consideration. The evidence (M-5, M-6) shows that she applied for Emergency Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) benefits on April 1, 2011, at which time she reported that her husband was living in her household. The Department determined that the Defendant was not eligible for the program because her husband's unemployment compensation income put the household over-income. The Defendant contacted the Department (M-6) later that same month, on April 13, 2011, and reported that her husband moved out of her home.
- 5) The Defendant later self-completed a School Clothing Allowance application (M-7) on July 26, 2011, at which time she did not list her husband as a member of her household, and she did not list his unemployment compensation income. She signed the application indicating she was providing accurate and truthful information.
- 6) The Defendant completed a SNAP review interview (M-8) with the Department on August 9, 2011, at which time she again did not report that her husband lived in her household and she did not report his income. She signed the application (M-8) as well as the Rights and Responsibilities form (M-8) indicating she understood her responsibility to report accurate and truthful information and the penalties for failure to do so.
- 7) The evidence shows (M-9) that the Defendant contacted the Department on December 20, 2011, indicating that she wanted to report her husband "out of the household." The Department worker noted in case comments (M-9) that she asked the Defendant to tell her when he moved into her home, and that the Defendant stated "they had always lived together." The worker documented in comments that she surmised the Defendant may have forgotten that she previously reported her husband moved out of her home in April 2011.
- 8) West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual §1.2 (E) states that it is the client's responsibility to provide information about his circumstances so the worker is able to make a correct decision about his eligibility.
- 9) West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual § 20.2 (C) (2) states in pertinent part:

IPV's include making false or misleading statement, misrepresentations, concealing or withholding information, and committing any act that violates

the [SNAP] Act of 1977, [SNAP] regulations, or any State statute related to the use, presentation, transfer, acquisition, receipt, or possession of [SNAP].

The individual(s) who is found to have committed an IPV is ineligible to participate in the program for a specified time, depending on the number of offenses committed.

Once an IPV is established, a disqualification penalty is imposed on the AG member(s) who committed the IPV.

- 10) Common Chapters Manual 700, Appendix A, Section B, provides that an 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 the [SNAP] Act, the SNAP Regulations, or any State statute relating to the use, presentation, transfer, acquisition, receipt or possession of SNAP benefits.
- 11) Common Chapters Manual 700, Appendix A, Section G, states that the State Hearing Officer shall base the determination of IPV on clear and convincing evidence which demonstrates that the household member(s) committed, and intended to commit, an IPV as defined in Section B of this Appendix.
- 12) West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual §9.1.A.2.h states:

Intentional Program Violation (IPV)

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

- 1st Offense: 1 year
- 2nd Offense: 2 years
- 3rd Offense: Permanent

VIII. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

- 1) The policy and regulations that govern SNAP state that a SNAP violation has occurred when an individual intentionally makes a false or misleading statement, misrepresents, conceals, or withholds 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) The Defendant clearly was aware of her responsibility to report truthful and accurate information and the penalties involved for failing to do so. She read and signed numerous applications as well as Rights and Responsibilities forms during the period in question which clearly informed her of these responsibilities.

- 4) The totality of the evidence supports clearly and convincingly that the Defendant intentionally withheld that her husband lived in her household when she self-completed a School Clothing Allowance application on July 26, 2011, and when she completed a SNAP interview on August 9, 2011. She did not include her husband as a member of her household when the evidence supports that he lived with the Defendant. As a result, his income from unemployment compensation was not considered in determining her eligibility for SNAP.
- 5) Based on the above, the Department was correct in its determination that the Defendant has committed an IPV by reporting false information about her household's composition.

IX. DECISION:

The Agency's proposal to apply a one (1) year Food Stamp disqualification penalty is **upheld**. The Defendant's disqualification penalty period will begin November 1, 2012.

X. RIGHT OF APPEAL:

See Attachment

XI. ATTACHMENTS:

The Claimant's Recourse to Hearing Decision

Form IG-BR-29

ENTERED this 10th Day of October 2012.

**Cheryl Henson
Deputy Director**