



**State of West Virginia
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
Office of Inspector General
Board of Review
2699 Park Avenue, Suite 100
Huntington, WV 25704**

Joe Manchin III
Governor

Martha Yeager Walker
Secretary

March 2, 2006

Dear Ms. _____:

Attached is a copy of the findings of fact and conclusions of law on your administrative disqualification hearing held March 1, 2006.

In arriving at a decision, the State Hearings 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.

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 (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 regulations, or any statute relating to the use, presentation, transfer, acquisition, receipt, or possession of Food Stamp coupons (Section B. Appendix A Chapter 700 of Common Chapters Manual). Individuals found to have committed an intentional program violation shall be ineligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program for a fixed period of time as explained in section 20.2(c)(2) and 9.1 (A)(2)(g) of the WV Income Maintenance Manual and 7 CFR Section 273.16.

The information which was submitted at your hearing revealed that you withheld the fact that you were receiving shelter assistance from Housing Authority of _____ Co. which caused an overissuance of Food Stamps in the amount of \$1317 for the period of May, 2004 through August, 2005.

It is the decision of the State Hearings Officer that you committed an Intentional Program Violation of the Food Stamp Program and you will be individually disqualified from participation in the Food Stamp Program for a period of one (1) year beginning April, 2006.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Smith
State Hearing Officer
Member, State Board of Review

cc: Erika H. Young, Chairman, Board of Review
Debbie Roberts, Repayment Investigator

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

_____,

Defendant,

v.

Action Number: 06-BOR-834

**West Virginia Department of
Health and Human Resources**

DECISION OF STATE HEARING OFFICER

I. INTRODUCTION:

This is a report of the State Hearing Officer resulting from an administrative disqualification hearing concluded on March 1, 2006 for _____. This hearing was held in accordance with the provisions found in the Common Chapters Manual, Chapter 700 of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. It should be noted that the defendant did not attend the hearing but the hearing was convened in her absence as an appointment letter was sent by regular mail on January 18, 2006 notifying her of the date, time, and location of the hearing and the defendant had an active Food Stamp case at the time the hearing was scheduled.

II. PROGRAM PURPOSE:

The Program entitled Food Stamp Program is set up cooperatively between the Federal and State governments and administered by the West Virginia Department of Health & Human Resources.

The purpose of the Food Stamp Program 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 EBT benefits to households who meet the eligibility criteria established by the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

III. PARTICIPANTS:

1. Debbie Roberts, Repayment Investigator.

Presiding at the Hearing was Thomas M. Smith, State Hearing Officer and a member of the State Board of Review.

IV. QUESTIONS TO BE DECIDED:

The question to be decided is whether it was shown by clear and convincing evidence that the defendant, _____, committed an intentional program violation of the Food Stamp Program.

V. APPLICABLE POLICY:

WV Income Maintenance Manual Section 1.2, 10.3, 10.4, 20.2.
Federal Food Stamp Regulations Sections 273.9, 273.10, 273.16.
Common Chapters Manual Section 700, Appendix A.

VI. LISTING OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE ADMITTED:

Department's Exhibits:

DHS-1 Copy of benefit recovery referral.
DHS-2 Copy of WV Income Maintenance Manual Section 1.2.
DHS-3 Copy of Food Stamp Claim determination (40 pages).
DHS-4 Copy of Federal Regulations Section 273.16 (12 pages).
DHS-5 Copy of case comments 4-22-04.
DHS-6 Copy of case comments 4-23-04.
DHS-7 Copy of case comments 5-5-04.
DHS-8 Copy of case comments 7-9-04.
DHS-9 Copy of case comments 7-7-04
DHS-10 Copy of case comments 7-13-04.
DHS-11 Copy of case comments 9-17-04.
DHS-12 Copy of case comments 11-30-04.
DHS-13 Copy of case comments and application form 1-3-05 (21 pages).
DHS-14 Copy of case comments 1-31-05.
DHS-15 Copy of case comments 3-10-05.
DHS-16 Copy of case comments 3-17-05.
DHS-17 Copy of case comments 3-23-05 and application form 3-15-05 (15 pages).
DHS-18 Copy of Rights and Responsibilities 3-15-05 (3 pages).
DHS-19 Copy of case comments 3-31-05.
DHS-20 Copy of case comments 9-15-05 and application form 9-8-05 (15 pages).
DHS-21 Copy of Rights and Responsibilities 9-8-05 (4 pages).
DHS-22 Copy of verification from Housing Authority of _____ Co. (3 pages).
DHS-23 Copy of WV Income Maintenance Manual Section 2.2 B (2 pages).
DHS-24 Copy of WV Income Maintenance Manual Section 20.6.
DHS-25 Copy of appointment letter 11-18-05 (3 pages).
DHS-26 Copy of WV Income Maintenance Manual Section 20.1 (7 pages).

VII. FINDINGS OF FACT:

- 1) The Investigations and Fraud Management (IFM) Unit received a referral that the defendant failed to report that she was not responsible for her entire shelter payment and that Housing Authority of _____ Co. was paying a portion of her shelter costs (Exhibit #DHS-1) causing an over-issuance of Food Stamps.
- 2) Verification from Housing Authority of _____ Co. (Exhibit #DHS-22) verifies that the defendant was receiving rental assistance of \$339 per month beginning 3-1-04 with her portion of the cost as \$92 and that on 3-1-05, the rental assistance increased to \$431 which covered her entire rent obligation. The defendant also began receiving a utility allowance of \$196 on 3-1-05.
- 3) A Food Stamp over-issuance of \$1317 was caused by the receipt of rental and utility assistance for the period of May, 2004 through August, 2005 (Exhibit #DHS-3).
- 4) The defendant had numerous opportunities to report that she was receiving the rental and utility assistance as she was in the local office on 4-22-04 (Exhibit #DHS-5), called the local office on 5-5-04 (Exhibit #DHS-7), 7-9-04 (Exhibits #DHS-8 and #DHS-9), provided verification of pay stubs on 7-13-04 (Exhibit #DHS-10), had a home visit conducted by a worker on 9-17-04 (Exhibit #DHS-11), called the local office on 11-30-04 (Exhibit #DHS-12), was in the local office for a review on 1-3-05 (Exhibit #DHS-13) and on 3-15-05 to apply for Emergency LIEAP and reapply for Food Stamps and Medicaid (Exhibits #DHS-16 and #DHS-17), and called the local office on 1-31-05 (Exhibit #DHS-14), 3-10-05 (Exhibit #DHS-15) and 3-31-05 (Exhibit #DHS-19). On all of these occasions, the defendant failed to report that she was receiving shelter assistance from Housing Authority of _____ Co.
- 5) The defendant completed and signed the application/review form on 1-3-05 and 3-15-05 and signed the rights and responsibilities acknowledging her understanding of her reporting requirements and the penalties for intentional program violation (Exhibits #DHS-13, #DHS-17, and #DHS-18).
- 6) According to Common Chapters Manual, Chapter 700, Appendix A, Section B, an intentional program violation consists of having intentionally made a false statement, or misrepresented, concealed or withheld facts, or committed any act that constitutes a violation of the Food Stamp Act, the Food Stamp Program Regulations, or any statute relating to the use, presentation, transfer, acquisition, receipt or possession of food stamp coupons.
- 7) WV Income Maintenance Manual Section 20.2, C, 2 states that once an IPV is established, a disqualification penalty is imposed on the AG member(s) who committed the IPV. See Section 9.1, A, 2, g.
- 8) WV Income Maintenance Manual Section 9.1, A, 2, g states that persons who have been found guilty of an IPV are ineligible as follows: 1st offense: 1 year, 2nd offense: 2 years, 3rd offense: permanent.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Common Chapters Section 700, Appendix A defines an intentional program violation as having intentionally made a false statement or concealed or withheld facts. The defendant concealed and withheld information about receiving rental and utility assistance from Housing Authority of _____ Co. during two (2) interviews for Food Stamps in the local office and during numerous phone calls which are documented in Findings of Facts #4. The defendant's failure to report that she was receiving shelter assistance from Housing Authority of _____ Co. was clearly intentional on her part and caused a Food Stamp over-issuance of \$1317 for the period of May, 2004 through August, 2005. The evidence shows that the defendant committed an intentional program violation of the Food Stamp Program.

IX. DECISION:

It is the decision of the State Hearing Officer that the defendant committed an intentional program violation of the Food Stamp Program and she will be individually disqualified from participation in the Food Stamp Program for a period of one (1) year beginning April, 2006.

X. RIGHT OF APPEAL:

See Attachment

XI. ATTACHMENTS:

The Claimant's Recourse to Hearing Decision

Form IG-BR-29

ENTERED this 2nd Day of March, 2006.

Thomas M. Smith
State Hearing Officer