



**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

August 18, 2009

Dear -----:

Attached is a copy of the findings of fact and conclusions of law on the SNAP Administrative Disqualification Hearing held April 21, 2009 for the purpose of determining whether an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) was committed by you.

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 SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, 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 Food Stamp Act, the Food Stamp Program Regulations, or any State statute relating to the use presentation, transfer, acquisition, receipt or possession of Food Stamp coupons. 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, Chapter 20.2 and Code of Federal Regulations 7 CFR ' 273.16)

Information submitted at the hearing reveals that you intentionally provided false and misleading information about your household income in order to receive SNAP benefits for which you were not entitled.

It is the decision of the State Hearing Officer that an Intentional Program Violation was committed by you and a disqualification penalty of one (1) year will be applied. Your disqualification from SNAP will begin effective October 1, 2009.

Sincerely,

Todd Thornton
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: 09-BOR-726

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

Respondent.

DECISION OF STATE HEARING OFFICER

I. INTRODUCTION:

This is a report of the State Hearing Officer resulting from an Administrative Disqualification Hearing concluded on August 18, 2009 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. This hearing was convened on April 21, 2009.

II. PROGRAM PURPOSE:

The purpose of SNAP, formerly known as 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:

Debbie Roberts, Repayment Investigator

Presiding at the Hearing was Todd Thornton, State Hearing Officer and a member of the State Board of Review.

IV. QUESTION TO BE DECIDED:

The question to be decided is whether or not the Defendant committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) and should be disqualified for a specified period from participation in SNAP.

V. APPLICABLE POLICY:

7 CFR §273.16 Code of Federal Regulations
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 7 CFR §273.16 Code of Federal Regulations
- D-2 Benefit Recovery Referral Screen Print
- D-3 Food Stamp Claim Determination form; Food Stamp Allotment Determination Screen Prints
- D-4 Combined Application and Review form, dated January 11, 2008
- D-5 Rights and Responsibilities form, dated January 11, 2008
- D-6 Income Verification
- D-7 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 2.2
- D-8 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 20.6
- D-9 Notification of Intent to Disqualify; Waiver of Administrative Disqualification Hearing
- D-10 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 1.2.E
- D-11 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 20.2

VII. FINDINGS OF FACT:

- 1) The Department is alleging an act of Intentional Program Violation, or IPV, in the Defendant's case, due to income withheld during an application for SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program.
- 2) The hearing convened as scheduled at 10:00 a.m., and as of 10:15 a.m., the Defendant failed to appear. As set forth in regulations (7 CFR §273.16(e)(4)), and State Policy (West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Common Chapters Manual, 740.20), the hearing was conducted without the Defendant in attendance.
- 3) The Code of Federal Regulations, 7 CFR §273.16(c), defines an IPV as:
 - (c) Definition of intentional Program violation. 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 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).

- 4) The Department presented the Combined Application and Review form (Exhibit D-4) from the Defendant's January 11, 2008 application interview. This form was signed by the Defendant. During the same interview, the Defendant signed the Rights and Responsibilities form (Exhibit D-5).

Exhibit D-4 listed the Defendant's husband in the household. The form listed no earned income in the household.

- 5) The Department obtained verification (Exhibit D-6) that the Defendant's husband was employed from December 2007 through June 2008. The verification showed continuous weekly wages for the Defendant's husband during these months, including the January 2008 month of SNAP application.
- 6) The Department presented documentation (Exhibit D-3) showing the calculation of the SNAP claim resulting from the income not counted against the Defendant's case. A claim was determined from January 2008 through June 2008 in the amount of \$2400.00. The Department additionally confirmed that the Defendant has no prior IPV offenses.
- 7) The West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 9.1.A.2.h, states:

h. 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 Department clearly established that the Defendant withheld information about her husband's earnings during a SNAP application. The Department showed that this resulted in a SNAP overissuance totaling \$2400.00.
- 2) The Department also clearly established the intent of the Defendant to conceal or withhold this information to receive SNAP benefits for which she would not have otherwise been entitled. The Defendant reported no earned income from any source while her husband was employed with regular, ongoing wages. The Department was correct in its determination that an IPV was committed by the Defendant.

IX. DECISION:

Intentionally withholding, concealing, or providing misleading facts to secure SNAP benefits constitutes a clear violation of the regulations. Based on the evidence presented, I find the violation intentional.

The Agency's proposal to apply a Food Stamp disqualification is **upheld**. The Defendant will be disqualified from participation in the Food Stamp program, or SNAP, for a period of twelve (12) months to begin effective October 1, 2009.

X. RIGHT OF APPEAL:

See Attachment

XI. ATTACHMENTS:

The Defendant's Recourse to Hearing Decision

Form IG-BR-29

ENTERED this ____ Day of August, 2009.

**Todd Thornton
State Hearing Officer**