



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

Patsy A. Hardy, FACHE, MSN, MBA
Cabinet Secretary

August 20, 2010

Dear -----:

Attached is a copy of the findings of fact and conclusions of law on the SNAP Administrative Disqualification Hearing held June 25, 2010, 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; 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, 2010.

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: 10-BOR-1073

**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 concluded on August 20, 2010, 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 June 25, 2010.

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:

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 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapters 1.2; 2.2; 20.2; 20.6; Code of Federal Regulations, 7 CFR §273.16
- D-2 Application for Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), dated March 19, 2009
- D-3 Benefit Recovery Referral screen print
- D-4 Combined Application and Review Form (CAF), dated June 16, 2009
- D-5 Rights and Responsibilities form (DFA-RR-1), dated June 16, 2009
- D-6 Income verification
- D-7 Food Stamp Claim Determination form (ES-FS-5); supporting calculations
- D-8 Appointment letter; Notification of intent to disqualify; Waiver of Administrative Disqualification Hearing

VII. FINDINGS OF FACT:

- 1) The Department is alleging an act of Intentional Program Violation, or IPV, in the Defendant's case, due to not reporting earned income affecting the Defendant's eligibility 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 {SNAP} Act, the Food Stamp Program {SNAP} 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 applications (Exhibits D-2 and D-4) for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) on March 19, 2009, and Emergency Assistance (EA) on June 16, 2009, and the Rights and Responsibilities form (Exhibit D-5) from the June 16, 2009 EA application. These forms were signed by the Defendant. The applications listed no earned income in the Defendant's household. The information reported on these applications directly affects SNAP eligibility.
- 5) The Department presented verification (Exhibit D-6) that the Defendant's spouse was working for [REDACTED] at the time of the March 2009 and June 2009 applications. The Defendant's spouse was reported in her household, but not his income. This income was not considered in determining SNAP eligibility for the Defendant's household.
- 6) The Department presented documentation (Exhibit D-7) showing the calculation of the SNAP over issuance claim resulting from the unreported earned income in the Defendant's case. A claim was determined from May 2009 through August 2009 in the amount of \$1801.00. The Department additionally confirmed that the Defendant has no prior IPV offenses, and that the proposed IPV would be a first offense.
- 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 did not report earned income in her household from her husband's employment during multiple applications affecting SNAP eligibility. The Department showed that this resulted in a SNAP over issuance claim of \$1801.00.

- 2) The Department also clearly established the intent of the Defendant to provide misleading information to receive SNAP benefits for which she would not have otherwise been entitled. The Defendant reported no earned income in her household during two separate applications, when, in fact, her husband was employed with ongoing earned income. 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 SNAP disqualification is **upheld**. The Defendant will be disqualified from participation in SNAP for a period of twelve (12) months to begin effective October 1, 2010.

X. RIGHT OF APPEAL:

See Attachment

XI. ATTACHMENTS:

The Defendant's Recourse to Hearing Decision

Form IG-BR-29

ENTERED this _____ Day of August, 2010.

Todd Thornton
State Hearing Officer