



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

March 22, 2010

Dear -----:

Attached is a copy of the findings of fact and conclusions of law on the SNAP Administrative Disqualification Hearing held October 20, 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; 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 May 1, 2010.

Sincerely,

Todd Thornton
State Hearing Officer
Member, State Board of Review

cc: Erika H. Young, Chairman, Board of Review
Marshall Daniels, Repayment Investigator

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

-----,

Defendant,

v.

Action Number: 09-BOR-1764

**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 March 22, 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 October 20, 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:

Marshall Daniels, 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 Benefit Recovery Referral screen print
- D-2 Case Comments screen print
- D-3 Combined Application and Review Form, dated December 1, 2008; Rights and Responsibilities form, dated December 1, 2008
- D-4 Application for Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), dated December 1, 2008
- D-5 Combined Application and Review Form, dated February 26, 2009; Rights and Responsibilities form, dated February 26, 2009
- D-6 Verification checklist and income verification
- D-7 Food Stamp Claim Determination form; Income verification; Calculation sheets
- D-8 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 20.2
- D-9 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 9.1

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 not reported from her daughter's Social Security benefits. This income was allegedly not reported during multiple reviews of eligibility for SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program.
- 2) The hearing convened as scheduled at 9:30 a.m., and as of 9:45 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. The Defendant did not respond to this State Hearing Officer with any explanation of good cause, subsequent to the hearing.
- 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 forms and Rights and Responsibilities forms (Exhibits D-3 and D-5) from SNAP eligibility reviews completed on December 1, 2008 and February 26, 2009, respectively. The Department additionally presented the Defendant's December 1, 2008 application for Low Income Energy Assistance Program, or LIEAP; this application, although not for SNAP, relays eligibility information to the Defendant's ongoing SNAP case. All forms were signed by the Defendant, and all forms omitted the Social Security income of the Defendant's daughter, -----. The two SNAP review forms listed the Supplemental Security Income, or SSI, of the Defendant's son, -----. The LIEAP application reported no income whatsoever.
- 5) The Department presented a verification checklist from May 15, 2009 (Exhibit D-6), requesting verification of the Social Security income of -----. This income verification was received by the Department, and included as part of Exhibit D-6.
- 6) The Department presented documentation (Exhibit D-7) showing the calculation of the SNAP claim resulting from the unreported income in the Defendant's case, and the verified historical income amounts for the Defendant's daughter. A claim was determined from January 2009 through May 2009 in the amount of \$1416.00. 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 did not report her daughter's Social Security income during multiple SNAP eligibility reviews. The Defendant's actions resulted in a SNAP overissuance claim totaling \$1416.00.
- 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 the unearned income for her son, but withheld reporting the unearned income of her daughter during two separate eligibility reviews. 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 May 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 March, 2010.

Todd Thornton
State Hearing Officer