



Ann Urling
Inspector General

June 29, 2026

[REDACTED]

RE: [REDACTED] v. WV DoHS/BFA
ACTION NO.: 26-BOR-2008

Dear [REDACTED]:

Enclosed is a copy of the decision resulting from the hearing held in the above-referenced matter.

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 Human Services. These same laws and regulations are used in all cases to ensure that all persons are treated alike.

You will find attached an explanation of possible actions you may take if you disagree with the decision reached in this matter.

Sincerely,

Todd Thornton
State Hearing Officer
Member, State Board of Review

Encl: Recourse to Hearing Decision
Form IG-BR-29

cc: Chandler Plotkin, Department Representative
Charles Cline, Department Representative

**WEST VIRGINIA OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
BOARD OF REVIEW**

██████████,

Appellant,

v.

Action Number: 26-BOR-2008

**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES
BUREAU FOR FAMILY ASSISTANCE,**

Respondent.

DECISION OF STATE HEARING OFFICER

INTRODUCTION

This is the decision of the State Hearing Officer resulting from a fair hearing for ██████████. This hearing was held in accordance with the provisions found in Chapter 700 of the Office of Inspector General Common Chapters Manual. This fair hearing was convened on June 16, 2026, on a timely appeal filed with the Board of Review on May 22, 2026.

The matter before the Hearing Officer arises from the March 31, 2026 decisions by the Respondent to impose a work registration penalty against the Appellant and terminate her SNAP benefits due to that penalty.

At the hearing, the Respondent appeared by Chandler Plotkin. The Appellant represented herself. All witnesses were placed under oath, and the following documents were admitted into evidence.

Department's Exhibits:

- D-1 [not entered]
- D-2 SNAP Work Rules notice, dated February 27, 2026
- D-3 SNAP work requirement penalty notice, dated March 31, 2026
- D-4 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual (WVIMM) excerpt
- D-5 Screen print from the Respondent's data system regarding the Appellant's case
WorkForce WV Registration Details
- D-6 Excerpt of case comments screen print from the Respondent's data system regarding
the Appellant's case
- D-7 Document log for the Appellant's case

Appellant's Exhibits:

None

After a review of the record, including testimony, exhibits, and stipulations admitted into evidence at the hearing, and after assessing the credibility of all witnesses and weighing the evidence in consideration of the same, the Hearing Officer sets forth the following Findings of Fact.

FINDINGS OF FACT

- 1) The Appellant was a recipient of SNAP benefits.
- 2) The Respondent sent the Appellant a notice dated February 27, 2026, advising her of the work rules related to SNAP eligibility. (Exhibit D-2)
- 3) This notice (Exhibit D-2) reads, in part, "[REDACTED], you must follow the Basic Work Rules."
- 4) The notice (Exhibit D-2) explained one of the basic work rules as, "register for job service with Workforce WV when approved for SNAP and every 12 months after."
- 5) The notice (Exhibit D-2) listed the Appellant as required to register with job service, with a deadline of March 28, 2026.
- 6) The notice (Exhibit D-2) explained that the Appellant "...must contact DoHS and let us know you have registered with job service."
- 7) The notice (Exhibit D-2) to the Appellant was not returned (Exhibit D-7) to the Respondent as undeliverable by the post office.
- 8) The Appellant did not register (Exhibit D-5) for job service by March 28, 2026.
- 9) The Respondent sent the Appellant a notice (Exhibit D-3) dated March 31, 2026, explaining that a third penalty sanction was applied to the Appellant for failure to register with Workforce WV.
- 10) The Respondent mailed a letter advising the Appellant that the SNAP work penalty would result in the closure of her SNAP benefits.
- 11) The SNAP penalty notice and the SNAP closure notice were not returned (Exhibit D-7) to the Respondent as undeliverable by the post office.

APPLICABLE POLICY

Code of Federal Regulations 7 CFR §273.7 describes work requirements and SNAP:

(a) Work requirements

(1) As a condition of eligibility for SNAP benefits, each household member who is not exempt under paragraph (b)(1) of this section must comply with the following SNAP work requirements:

(i) Register for work or be registered by the State agency at the time of application and every 12 months after initial registration. The member required to register need not complete the registration form.

(ii) Participate in a Food Stamp Employment and Training (E&T) program if assigned by the State agency, to the extent required by the State agency;

(iii) Participate in a workfare program if assigned by the State agency;

(iv) Provide the State agency or its designee with sufficient information regarding employment status or availability for work;

(v) Report to an employer to whom referred by the State agency or its designee if the potential employment meets the suitability requirements described in paragraph (h) of this section;

(vi) Accept a bona fide offer of suitable employment, as defined in paragraph (h) of this section, at a site or plant not subject to a strike or lockout, at a wage equal to the higher of the Federal or State minimum wage or 80 percent of the wage that would have governed had the minimum hourly rate under section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act been applicable to the offer of employment.

(vii) Do not voluntarily and without good cause quit a job of 30 or more hours a week or reduce work effort to less than 30 hours a week, in accordance with paragraph (j) of this section...

(3) Each State agency will determine the meaning of any other terms used in paragraph (a)(1) of this section; the procedures for establishing compliance with SNAP work requirements; and whether an individual is complying with SNAP work requirements. A State agency must not use a meaning, procedure, or determination that is less restrictive on SNAP recipients than is a comparable meaning, procedure, or determination under the State agency's program funded under title IV-A of the Social Security Act.

(f) Failure to comply —

(1) Ineligibility for failure to comply. A nonexempt individual who refuses or fails without good cause, as defined in paragraphs (i)(2), (3), and (4) of this section, to comply with SNAP work requirements listed under paragraph (a)(1) of this section is ineligible to participate in SNAP, and will be considered an ineligible household member, pursuant to §273.1(b)(7).

(i) As soon as the State agency learns of the individual's noncompliance it must determine whether good cause for the noncompliance exists, as discussed in paragraph (i) of this section. Within 10 days of establishing that the noncompliance was without good cause, the State agency must provide the individual with a notice of adverse action, as specified in §273.13. If the State agency offers a conciliation process as part

of its E&T program, it must issue the notice of adverse action no later than the end of the conciliation period.

(ii) The notice of adverse action must contain the particular act of noncompliance committed and the proposed period of disqualification. The notice must also specify that the individual may, if appropriate, reapply at the end of the disqualification period. Information must be included on or with the notice describing the action that can be taken to avoid the disqualification before the disqualification period begins. The disqualification period must begin with the first month following the expiration of the 10-day adverse notice period, unless a fair hearing is requested.

(iii) An E&T disqualification may be imposed after the end of a certification period. Thus, a notice of adverse action must be sent whenever the State agency becomes aware of an individual's noncompliance with SNAP work requirements, even if the disqualification begins after the certification period expires and the household has not been recertified.

(f)(2) Disqualification periods. The following disqualification periods will be imposed:

(i) For the first occurrence of noncompliance, the individual will be disqualified until the later of:

(A) The date the individual complies, as determined by the State agency; (B) One month; or (C) Up to three months, at State agency option.

(ii) For the second occurrence, until the later of: (A) The date the individual complies, as determined by the State agency; (B) Three months; or (C) Up to six months, at State agency option.

(iii) For the third or subsequent occurrence, until the later of: (A) The date the individual complies, as determined by the State agency; (B) Six months; (C) A date determined by the State agency; or (D) At the option of the State agency, permanently.

West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual Chapter 14 explains SNAP work requirements:

14.3.1.A Registration Requirements

All individuals must register for employment with WorkForce West Virginia, within 30 days of the date of the original approval, unless exempt. Clients must register every 12 months thereafter, regardless of the length of time that WorkForce West Virginia considers the registration valid.

The Consolidated Work Notice (CWN) is sent to the SNAP assistance group (AG) when an individual(s) is required to register with job service through Workforce WV. The CWN details who must register and the due date of registration. The CWN also explains why the individual(s) is required to register and how to register. Actions which constitute a registration are defined by WorkForce West Virginia and the eligibility system must:

- Match with WorkForce West Virginia. Registration date updated.

- Match the date returned from WorkForce West Virginia is more than 12 months old. The client must register again.
- Match with WorkForce West Virginia with inactive job status and no job preference. The client must choose a job preference and become active to be considered registered.
- Match with WorkForce West Virginia with inactive job status and with job preference. The client must become active to be considered registered.
- Match with WorkForce West Virginia with active job status and no job preference. The client must choose a job preference to be considered registered.

Once the client registers with WorkForce West Virginia for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) purposes, he cannot be required to register more often than every 12 months, even when the benefit is opened and closed within the 12-month period. This is tracked through the eligibility system. The client may register by visiting a WorkForce West Virginia office, or by registering online. The Worker must explain these requirements to the client and enter the registration date in the eligibility system.

A client who fails to comply by the due date established on the notice to register is subject to a SNAP penalty and the Worker must send an adverse action notice. See Section 14.5. The penalty is not imposed, and any lost benefits are restored if, before the end of the month in which the adverse notice expires, the following occurs:

- The client registers; and
- The client notifies the Department of Human Services (DOHS) that he has registered. If the Worker independently discovers before the penalty goes into effect that the client has registered before the end of the month in which the adverse notice expires, the penalty may be lifted, and benefits restored. There is no requirement on the Department, however, to attempt to independently verify if the client has registered after the date the penalty is entered into the system

14.2.1.B Exemptions from Work Requirements

The following SNAP clients are exempt from the SNAP work requirements and are not subject to a SNAP penalty for failure to comply:

- A person under age 16.
- A person age 16 or 17 who is not the SNAP payee or primary person.
- A person age 16 or 17 who is attending school or enrolled in an employment training program on at least a half-time basis.
- A person enrolled at least half-time in any recognized school, recognized training program, or institution of higher education. If enrolled in an institution of higher education, the student must meet one of the exceptions to the restriction on student participation listed in Section 3.2. This exemption continues through normal periods of vacation, unless the person does not intend to register for the next term, excluding summer terms.

- A person age 60 or over.
 - Individuals age 60 but not yet 65 are exempt from SNAP Work Requirements but may have to comply with ABAWD work requirements if another exemption does not exist.
- A parent, or other member of the AG who has the responsibility for the care of a child under the age of six, or of an incapacitated and/or disabled individual.
- Individuals receiving Unemployment Compensation Insurance (UCI) from any state.
- Individuals who are physically or mentally unfit to engage in full-time employment.
- Regular participants in a drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program, either on a resident or non-resident basis. Regular participation is defined by the drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program.
- Individuals who are employed or self-employed and working a minimum of 30 hours per week, or who are receiving weekly earnings equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours. When the client is employed or self-employed for at least 30 hours per week, no consideration is given to the amount earned.
- Individuals who receive WV WORKS and do not meet any of the other SNAP exemptions listed above, so long as they are subject to, and complying with, a WV WORKS work requirement. These individuals would be required to meet the SNAP work requirements if they did not receive WV WORKS.

14.5.1.B Non-Voluntary Quit Penalties

A client who refuses or fails to register with Workforce West Virginia, refuses employment, or refuses to provide information about employment status and job availability is subject to the following penalties for the full penalty period or until he reports a change which makes him exempt from the work requirements.

- First violation: The client is removed from the assistance group (AG) for at least three months or until he/she meets an exemption. If after three months, the client has not complied or met an exemption, the penalty continues until he/she does comply or meets an exemption for some reason other than Unemployment Compensation Insurance (UCI)- related activities.
- Second violation: The client is removed from the AG for six months or until he/she meets an exemption. If after six months, the client has not complied or met an exemption, the penalty continues until he/she does comply or meets an exemption for some reason other than UCI-related activities.
- Third and subsequent violations: The client is removed from the AG for twelve months or until he/she meets an exemption. If after 12 months, the client has not complied or met an exemption, the penalty continues until he/she does

comply or meets an exemption for some reason other than UCI-related activities.

DISCUSSION

The Respondent imposed a work registration penalty against the Appellant, which resulted in the termination of her SNAP benefits. The Appellant contests the Respondents' decisions to impose the penalty and terminate her SNAP benefits. The Respondent must show, by a preponderance of the evidence, that it properly took these actions.

The Appellant was required to follow "basic work rules" for SNAP eligibility and was advised of her requirements in a February 27, 2026 (Exhibit D-2) notice. The Appellant testified that she did not receive this notice. The Respondent maintains a log of documents received on all cases, including returned mail, and the log (Exhibit D-7) for the Appellant's case does not list the February 27, 2026 notice as returned by the post office as undeliverable. The Respondent properly notified the Appellant of the basic work rules.

The SNAP work rules notice (Exhibit D-2) advised the Appellant that she must register for job service by March 28, 2026. The Appellant testified that she registered for job service, and that she "called welfare" to advise the Respondent she had registered. The Respondent maintains a data exchange with Workforce WV to confirm job service registration and presented the screen print (Exhibit D-5) of the Appellant's work registration details. The Appellant registered in March 2025 but did not meet the March 28, 2026 "due date" (Exhibit D-5) to "register every 12 months thereafter" she was notified of in February 2026 (Exhibit D-2). The Respondent established that the Appellant has not registered for job service as required.

The Appellant believed that she did not have to comply with job requirements because she is homeless. Work requirements policy provides a list of exemptions and homelessness is not included. The Appellant did not propose another exemption from the policy requirements. The Appellant additionally testified regarding her homelessness to explain her mailing address issues. The Appellant provided confusing and contradictory testimony. The Appellant testified that she did not receive the letter telling her about her work requirements and the "due date" or deadline, but that she registered anyway because she believed it had been approximately a year since the last time she registered. Information obtained directly from Workforce WV by the Respondent shows the Appellant did not register in 2026 as required, and returned mail is not indicated for the February 2026 work rules notice or the March 2026 adverse action notices. The Appellant testified she became homeless in May 2026 and reported this information to the Respondent the same month. The Appellant's homelessness does not affect her work requirements, nor does it support the Appellant's claim she did not receive letters from the Respondent related to this action.

Based on the reliable evidence and testimony at the hearing, the Respondent showed that it properly notified the Appellant of her work requirements, and the Respondent properly notified the Appellant of the applicable penalty when she did not comply with her requirements. The Appellant did not dispute the Respondent's penalty count, and a third penalty results in a 12 month removal from SNAP benefits. The Respondent's decisions to impose a work registration third penalty against the Appellant, and the resulting termination of the Appellant's SNAP benefits, are affirmed.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- 1) The Appellant was properly notified of her work requirements and the deadline for compliance with those requirements.
- 2) Because the Appellant did not comply with those requirements by the established deadline, the Respondent must impose a work registration penalty against the Appellant.
- 3) Because the penalty in question is a third or subsequent penalty, the Respondent must exclude the Appellant from her SNAP assistance group for at least 12 months.
- 4) The Appellant was properly notified of her SNAP penalty and the resulting termination of her SNAP benefits.
- 5) Because the Respondent proved they acted in accordance with applicable policy in response to the Appellant's unmet work registration requirements and properly notified the Appellant of these requirements and the resulting adverse action, the Respondent's decisions are affirmed.

DECISION

It is the decision of the State Hearing Officer to **UPHOLD** the Respondent's March 31, 2026 decisions to impose of work registration penalty against the Appellant and terminate her SNAP benefits due to that penalty.

ENTERED this 29th day of June 2026.

Todd Thornton
State Hearing Officer