



June 17, 2026

[REDACTED]

RE: [REDACTED] v. DoHS/BFA
ACTION NO.: 26-BOR-2059

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,

Kristi Logan
Certified State Hearing Officer
Member, State Board of Review

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

cc: Kayla Vaught, [REDACTED] DoHS

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

██████████

Appellant,

v.

Action Number: 26-BOR-2059

**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 an appeal filed with the Board of Review on May 28, 2026.

The matter before the Hearing Officer arises from the May 21, 2026, decision by the Respondent to deny the Appellant's application for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

At the hearing, the Respondent appeared by Kayla Vaught, ██████████ DoHS. The Appellant represented herself. The witnesses were placed under oath, and the following documents were admitted into evidence.

Department's Exhibits:

- D-1 Board of Review Scheduling Order dated June 3, 2026
- D-2 Case Summary
- D-3 Correspondence from ██████████ dated April 9, 2026
- D-4 West Virginia Income Maintenance Manual §§14.3 and 14.2.B.1
- D-5 Case Comments
- D-6 Notice of SNAP Penalty dated February 26, 2026
- D-7 Client Notices Summary

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 for a one-person household.
- 2) The Respondent mailed the Combined Work Notice to the Appellant on January 27, 2026, advising that she was required to register with WorkForce WV within thirty days to continue receiving SNAP benefits (Exhibit D-7).
- 3) On February 25, 2026, the Respondent imposed a fourth work registration penalty against the Appellant effective April 1, 2026, when she failed to register with WorkForce WV (Exhibits D-5 and D-6).
- 4) The Respondent sent a notice on February 26, 2026, advising the Appellant that she was ineligible for SNAP benefits for twelve months due to her failure to register with WorkForce WV (Exhibit D-6).
- 5) The Appellant applied for Emergency Assistance on March 6, 2026, and was advised during the application to register with WorkForce WV and report the registration (Exhibit D-5).
- 6) The Appellant's SNAP benefits were terminated March 31, 2026.
- 7) The Appellant registered with WorkForce WV on March 31, 2026 (Exhibit D-5).
- 8) The Appellant reported her registration to the Respondent on April 1, 2026 (Exhibit D-5).
- 9) No action was taken on the Appellant's SNAP benefits as the registration penalty had already taken effect (Exhibit D-5).
- 10) The Appellant submitted a letter from [REDACTED] advising that she participates in substance abuse counseling sessions on a weekly basis (Exhibit D-3).
- 11) The Appellant reapplied for SNAP benefits on May 16, 2026, and requested an exemption from work registration due to her participation in a substance abuse program (Exhibit D-5).

- 12) The Respondent spoke with [REDACTED] on June 2, 2026, who reported that the Appellant is able to and encouraged to work (Exhibit D-5).
- 13) The Respondent denied the Appellant's application due to the previously imposed work registration penalty.

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.

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. 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.*** (Emphasis added) 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.*** (Emphasis added)
- 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

Pursuant to policy and federal regulations, an individual must register with WorkForce WV within 30 days of the date of initial SNAP approval and every 12 months thereafter as a condition of eligibility to receive SNAP benefits, unless exempt. An individual who fails to comply by the due date established on the notice to register is subject to a SNAP penalty. The Respondent terminated the Appellant's SNAP benefits and denied her subsequent application when it was determined that she failed to register with WorkForce WV by the established deadline.

The Respondent imposed a work registration penalty against the Appellant when she failed to register with WorkForce WV and report the registration prior to the effective date of the penalty. The Appellant was notified on January 27, 2026, of the requirement to register with WorkForce WV within thirty days. The Appellant registered with WorkForce WV on March 31, 2026, but did not report the registration until April 1, 2026, the effective date of the penalty. Pursuant to policy, if an individual does not register with WorkForce WV by the deadline listed on the Combined Work Notice, but registers and reports the registration prior to the end of the month in which adverse action expires, a penalty is not imposed. The Respondent is not required to independently verify work registration after a penalty has been imposed.

The Appellant reapplied for SNAP benefits in May 2026 and requested an exemption from work registration due to her participation in a drug rehabilitation program. Policy stipulates that regular participants in a drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program may be exempt from work registration requirements. However, regular participation is defined by the drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation programs. Kayla Vaught, representative for the Respondent testified that she spoke with the Appellant's counselor with [REDACTED] who advised that the Appellant is encouraged to work.

The Appellant testified that she was unaware that she had to notify the Respondent of her registration and was told that the Respondent and WorkForce WV were "connected" and the Respondent would be notified of her registration. The Appellant stated that she was told she needed to submit a statement from the treatment facility regarding her participation as a possible exemption. The Appellant felt that was unfair to count previous SNAP penalties against her.

Based on the testimony and documentation provided, the Respondent acted in accordance with policy in the imposition of a work registration penalty and subsequent denial of the Appellant's application for SNAP benefits. The Appellant failed to report her WorkForce WV registration or an exemption prior to the effective date of the SNAP penalty. The Appellant's participation in a drug treatment program does not prevent her from complying with work requirements as defined by the drug treatment program.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- 1) Pursuant to policy and federal regulations, an individual must register with Workforce WV within 30 days of the date of initial SNAP approval and every 12 months thereafter as a condition of eligibility to receive SNAP benefits, unless exempt.

- 2) The Appellant was notified on January 27, 2026, that she was required to register with WorkForce WV within 30 days or report an exemption to continue receiving SNAP benefits.
- 3) The Respondent imposed a work registration penalty against the Appellant on February 25, 2026, when she failed to register with WorkForce WV.
- 4) The Appellant registered with WorkForce WV on March 31, 2026, but did not report the registration until April 1, 2026, the effective date of the penalty.
- 5) Once a penalty has been imposed, it is the responsibility of the SNAP recipient to report the WorkForce WV registration before the effective date of the penalty.
- 6) Participation in a drug treatment program may be an exemption from work requirements.
- 7) Participation is defined by the drug treatment program.
- 8) The Appellant attends weekly counseling sessions and is able to and encouraged to work.
- 9) The Appellant's participation in a drug treatment program is not an exemption from work requirements.
- 10) The Respondents denial of the Appellant's SNAP application is affirmed.

DECISION

It is the decision of the State Hearing Officer to **uphold** the Respondent's denial of the Appellant's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program application.

ENTERED this 17th day of June 2026.

Kristi Logan
Certified State Hearing Officer