

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
APPEALS OFFICE

Department of Human Services

V.

DOCKET No. 26-0019

██████████

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

A hearing on the above-entitled matter was conducted by an Administrative Disqualification Hearing Officer on March 3, 2026. The Department of Administration, Office of Internal Audit, Fraud Unit (hereinafter the “Agency”), on behalf of the Department of Human Services (DHS), initiated this matter for an Administrative Disqualification Hearing and held to examine the charge that the Respondent, ██████████, had committed an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in her SNAP case, Bridges Case ID # ██████████. The Respondent attended the hearing in person while the Agency was present on video camera using Microsoft Teams. The Agency argues that the Respondent withheld information about her earned income on her SNAP Recertification Form and during a SNAP Recertification Interview. The Agency is seeking that the Respondent be charged with an IPV and be disqualified from SNAP for a period of 12 months. For the reasons discussed in more detail below the Administrative Disqualification Hearing has been decided in the Agency’s favor.

II. JURISDICTION

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is authorized and designated by RIGL § 42-7.2-6.1 and EOHHS regulation 210-RICR-10-05-2 to be the entity responsible for appeals and hearings related to human services. The Administrative Hearing was held in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (R.I.G.L. § 42-35-1 et seq.) and EOHHS regulation 210-RICR-10-05-2.

III. ISSUE

Did the Respondent commit a SNAP IPV by intentionally withholding her earned income information from DHS?

IV. STANDARD OF PROOF

The Administrative Disqualification Hearing Officer is required to carefully consider the evidence and determine by clear and convincing evidence if an IPV occurred. The Agency's burden to support claims with clear and convincing evidence requires that they present clear, direct, and convincing facts that the Hearing Officer can accept as highly probable. See 7 C.F.R. §273.16(e)(6).

V. PARTIES AND EXHIBITS

Brittney Medeiros, Internal Audit Manager for the Office of Internal Audit and Program Integrity, investigated the Respondent's case and provided testimony based on the facts established in determining an IPV of the SNAP regulations. The Agency offered the following exhibits as evidence at the hearing:

Exhibit #1 – Relevant Rhode Island Regulations.

Exhibit #2 – The Work Number Social Services Verification.

Exhibit #3 – SNAP Recertification, Signed by the Respondent on September 21, 2022.

Exhibit #4 – DHS Case Note for Bridges Case ID # [REDACTED] Date: February 7, 2023.

Exhibit #5 – Electronic Disqualified Recipient System (eDRS) Search Results.

Exhibit #6 – SNAP IPV Packet, Date: December 6, 2025.

Exhibit #7 – Email from the Agency to the Respondent.

The Respondent attended the hearing and testified on her own behalf. She did not offer any exhibits into evidence.

VI. RELEVANT LAW/REGULATIONS

An IPV is defined as intentionally making false or misleading statements, or misrepresenting, concealing, or withholding facts. See 7 C.F.R. §273.16(c). To determine whether an IPV has occurred, 7 CFR 273.16(e)(6), requires the State agency to conduct an Administrative Disqualification Hearing to determine whether there is clear and convincing evidence that an IPV occurred.

Similarly, Rhode Island state counterpart, 218-RICR-20-00-1.9, provides that the “Office of Internal Audit is responsible for investigating any case of alleged IPV and ensuring that appropriate cases are acted upon, either through Administrative Disqualification Hearings or referral to a court of appropriate jurisdiction.” It further provides that “Administrative disqualification procedures or referral for prosecution action be initiated whenever there is sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate” that an IPV occurred.

Household income shall mean all income from whatever source with limited exceptions. Earned income shall include all wages and salaries of an employee. See 7 C.F.R. §273.9(b)(1)(i).

If there is a finding that there was an IPV, the disqualification penalty for the violation is 12 months for the first violation. See 7 C.F.R. §273.16(b)(1)(i).

VII. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Respondent was previously receiving SNAP.
2. The Respondent was hired by [REDACTED] on September 19, 2022, and her first paycheck was received on September 23, 2022.

3. The Respondent completed a SNAP Recertification on September 21, 2022. Page one of the form instructs the Respondent to review the information on the form to make sure it's correct and to cross out any wrong information and write the correct information in the space provided. Page five of the Recertification requests information about the Respondent's earned income. The Respondent left this section completely blank. Page nine of the Recertification explains the penalty for perjury, explaining that the Respondent would be breaking the law if they purposely gave the wrong information and that they could be punished by federal law, state law, or both for doing so. The Respondent signed the Recertification on Page nine.
4. The Respondent completed a SNAP Recertification Interview with DHS on February 7, 2023. During the interview the Respondent told DHS that she was not working. DHS then utilized the Work Number Social Services Verification to discover that the Respondent was working for [REDACTED] and receiving earned income. DHS updated the Respondent's case and referred it to the Agency as a potential case of fraud.
5. The Agency ran the Respondent through the Electronic Disqualified Recipient Systems (eDRS) and determined that there were no previous SNAP program violations for the Respondent. As such this would constitute the Respondent's first SNAP IPV.
6. On December 6, 2025, a SNAP Packet was mailed to the Respondent's last known address. The SNAP Packet included a waiver of right to administrative disqualification hearing, the IPV notice for unreported earned income from September 21, 2022, to February 28, 2023, and a notice of potential overpayment referral to the claims collection recovery unit. The Agency also emailed the Snap Packet to the Respondent.

VIII. DISCUSSION

As stated above, an IPV can be defined as intentionally making false or misleading statements, or misrepresenting, concealing, or withholding facts. The Agency testified that by intentionally withholding information about her earned income from [REDACTED] on her SNAP Recertification Form and by

withholding that same information during her SNAP Recertification Interview on February 7, 2023, the Respondent committed an IPV. The SNAP Recertification form provided clear instructions as to how to complete the earned income section and the Respondent chose to leave it blank. The Respondent also had the chance to clarify her earned income information during her SNAP Recertification Interview and she chose to continue to withhold that information from DHS. Furthermore, the Respondent testified that she was at fault for not reporting her earned income to DHS. Because the Respondent intentionally failed to report her earned income to DHS there is a preponderance of evidence to show that the Respondent committed a SNAP IPV.

IX. CONCLUSION OF LAW

After careful review of the testimony and evidence present at the administrative hearing, this Appeals Officer concludes that:

1. The Respondent was receiving earned income from [REDACTED] when she completed her SNAP Recertification Form and SNAP Rectification Interview.
2. The Respondent's failure to report her earned income to DHS on her SNAP Recertification Form and during her SNAP Recertification Interview constitutes a SNAP IPV.
3. This is the Respondent's first violation of the SNAP program.

X. DECISION

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, evidence, and testimony it is found that a final order be entered that the respondent committed an IPV and hereby is barred from participating in SNAP for 12 months.

AGENCY'S INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION CHARGE IS GRANTED.

/s/ Jack Pelquin

Jack Peloquin

Administrative Disqualification Hearing Officer

NOTICE OF APPELLATE RIGHTS

This decision is a final order under R.I.G.L. § 42-35-12. Under R.I.G.L. § 42-35-15, this Order may be appealed to court within thirty (30) days of the mailing of this decision. Such appeal, if taken, must be completed by filing a complaint in court. The filing of the complaint does not itself stay enforcement of this order. The agency may grant, or the reviewing court may order, a stay upon the appropriate terms.

Appeals are generally filed in the Providence County Superior Court. However, appeals affecting or concerning children under the age of eighteen (18) and/or appeals of a DCYF action may need to be filed in Providence Family Court. If you have any questions about which court a complaint for appeal should be made, you should seek the advice of an attorney, Rhode Island Legal Services, or the clerk of the court where you wish to file your appeal. The courts' contact information can be found on the judiciary's website (<https://www.courts.ri.gov>). Copies of the appeal must be served upon all parties in your case within ten (10) days of the filing of your appeal.

If you exercise any of these appellate rights, please inform the EOHHS appeals office of this so we can prepare a copy of the record for the court. You can contact the Appeals Office at OHHS.AppealsOffice@ohhs.ri.gov, 401.462.2132 (Phone), 401.462.0458 (Fax), or at 3 West Road, Virks Building, Cranston, RI 02908.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I mailed, via regular mail, postage prepaid, a true copy of the foregoing to [REDACTED]; copies were sent, via email, to Kimberly Seebeck, Brittny Medeiros, Iwona Ramian, Esq., Denise Tatro, Kimberly Rauch, Kirsten Cornford, Jenna Simeone, and the DHS Policy Office at DHS.PolicyQuestions@dhs.ri.gov on this 5th day of MARCH, 2026.

Rebecca Abrams