

**WAC 388-446-0020 What penalties will I receive if I break a food assistance rule on purpose?** (1) Breaking a rule on purpose for food assistance is known as an intentional program violation (IPV) under WAC 388-446-0015. These rules apply to all DSHS food assistance programs including:

- (a) Washington basic food program or basic food;
- (b) The Washington combined application project (WASHCAP) under chapter 388-492 WAC;
- (c) Transitional food assistance (TFA) under chapter 388-489 WAC; and
- (d) The state-funded food assistance program (FAP) for legal immigrants.

(2) You will have a disqualification period if we have shown that you have committed an IPV in any of the following three ways:

(a) We establish that you committed an IPV through an administrative disqualification hearing (ADH) under WAC 388-446-0015;

(b) You signed a waiver of administrative disqualification hearing or a disqualification consent agreement that waives your right to an administrative disqualification hearing and states you accept the IPV penalty; or

(c) A federal, state or local court found that you committed an IPV or found you guilty of a crime that breaks food assistance rules.

(3) **Special penalties for certain crimes** - If you are convicted in a court of law for crimes that are an intentional program violation, we disqualify you for the period of time set in the court order. If the court order does not state a disqualification period, we set a disqualification period based on the crime you were convicted of committing:

(a) **Drugs** - If you are convicted in a federal, state, or local court of trading or receiving food benefits for a controlled substance, we disqualify you:

- (i) For a period of twenty-four months for a first offense; and
- (ii) Permanently for a second offense.

(b) **Weapons** - If you are convicted in a federal, state, or local court of trading your food assistance benefits for firearms, ammunition, or explosives, we permanently disqualify you from receiving food assistance on the first offense.

(c) **Trafficking** - If you are convicted in a federal, state, or local court of knowingly buying, selling, trading, or presenting for redemption food assistance benefits totaling five hundred dollars or more, we permanently disqualify you from receiving food assistance on the first offense.

(d) **False identification** - If you are found to have provided false identification to receive benefits in more than one assistance unit, we disqualify you from receiving food assistance:

- (i) For ten years on the first offense.
- (ii) For ten years on the second offense.
- (iii) Permanently for the third offense.

(e) **Receiving benefits in more than one state** - If you are found to have provided false residency information to receive benefits in more than one household or state, we disqualify you from receiving food assistance:

- (i) For ten years on the first offense.
- (ii) For ten years on the second offense.
- (iii) Permanently for the third offense.

(4) In addition to penalties for crimes described in subsection (3), if you commit an IPV you will not be eligible for food assistance:

(a) For a period of twelve months for any first intentional program violation;

(b) For a period of twenty-four months for any second intentional program violation; and

(c) Permanently for any third intentional program violation.

(5) We only apply a disqualification penalty to the person or persons who have committed an intentional program violation.

(6) Start date of a disqualification. The date of a disqualification depends on how a person was disqualified. We will send you a letter telling you when your disqualification period will start.

(a) **ADH or consent agreement** - If you were found to have committed an IPV in an administrative disqualification hearing or you signed an ADH or consent agreement waiving this hearing and accepting the disqualification, we start the disqualification period by the second month after we sent you a letter informing you of the disqualification.

(b) **Conviction in court** - If you are convicted in court of a crime that is an intentional program violation, your disqualification period in subsection (4) is in addition to any civil or criminal penalties. We disqualify you from food assistance within forty-five days of the court order unless this timing conflicts with the court order.

(7) **Disqualifications apply in all states** - If you have an IPV disqualification, this stays with you until the penalty period is over, even if you move to another state:

(a) If we disqualify you from food assistance, you are also disqualified from receiving supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits in another state during the disqualification period.

(b) If you are disqualified from receiving SNAP benefits for an IPV from another state, you can't receive food assistance in Washington during the disqualification period.

(8) Even though we only disqualify the persons who have committed an IPV from receiving food assistance benefits, all adults in the assistance unit are responsible to repay any benefits you were overpaid as described under WAC 388-410-0020 and 388-410-0025.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, 74.04.770, 74.08.090, 74.08.580, 74.12.260, 9.91.14, [9.91.142] and 7 C.F.R. §§ 271.2 and 273.16. WSR 20-13-090, § 388-446-0020, filed 6/16/20, effective 8/1/20. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090, 74.04.510, 74.04.770, 74.12.260, 74.08.580, 9.91.142, and 7 C.F.R. 273.16. WSR 14-03-027, § 388-446-0020, filed 1/8/14, effective 2/8/14; WSR 12-14-012, § 388-446-0020, filed 6/21/12, effective 7/22/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090, 74.04.510, 74.04.770, 74.12.260, 74.08.580, 9.91.142, 7 C.F.R. 273.16, the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 as amended and 42 U.S.C. 601a; and 2011 c 42. WSR 11-19-047, § 388-446-0020, filed 9/13/11, effective 10/14/11. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057 and 74.08.090. WSR 98-16-044, § 388-446-0020, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98.]