

441—7.21(17A) Food assistance hearings and appeals.

7.21(1) Appeal hearings. All appeal hearings in the food assistance program shall be conducted in accordance with 7 CFR 273.15.

7.21(2) Food assistance administrative disqualification hearings. All food assistance administrative disqualification hearings shall be conducted in accordance with 7 CFR 273.16.

7.21(3) Conduct of a food assistance administrative disqualification hearing. Hearings over disqualification of a household member for an intentional program violation shall be conducted by a presiding officer.

a. The department of inspections and appeals shall serve an Intentional Program Violation Hearing Notice upon the household member by first-class mail, postage prepaid, addressed to household member at the last-known address 30 calendar days before the initial hearing date.

b. The household member or that person's representative may request to postpone the hearing for up to 30 days, provided the request is made at least 10 calendar days before the scheduled hearing date.

c. At the hearing, the presiding officer shall advise the household member or that person's representative that the household member has the right to refuse to answer questions during the hearing and that the state or federal government may use the information in a civil or criminal action.

7.21(4) Consolidating hearings. Appeal hearings and food assistance administrative disqualification hearings may be consolidated if the issues arise out of the same or related circumstances, and the household member has been provided with notice of the consolidation by the department of inspections and appeals.

a. If the hearings are combined, the time frames for conducting a food assistance administrative disqualification hearing shall apply.

b. If the hearings are combined for the purpose of setting the amount of the overpayment at the same time as determining whether or not an intentional program violation has occurred, the household shall lose its right to a subsequent hearing on the amount of the overpayment.

7.21(5) Attendance at hearing. The household member shall be allowed ten days from the scheduled hearing to present reasons indicating good cause for not attending the hearing.

a. The appeals section shall certify the motion to vacate to the department of inspections and appeals for the presiding officer to review the motion, hold any additional proceedings, as appropriate, and determine if good cause exists for the default as specified in subrule 7.13(5). Timely filed motions to vacate shall be granted only for good cause shown. The burden of proof as to good cause is on the moving party.

b. Unless good cause is determined, when the household member or that person's representative cannot be located or fails to appear at the scheduled hearing, the hearing shall be conducted without that person. In that instance, the presiding officer shall consider the evidence and determine if the evidence is clear and convincing that an intentional program violation was committed.

c. If the household member who failed to appear at the hearing is found to have committed an intentional program violation, but the presiding officer later determines that this person or the person's representative had good cause for not appearing, the previous hearing decision shall no longer be valid. A new hearing shall be conducted.

7.21(6) Food assistance administrative disqualification hearing decisions. The presiding officer shall base the determination of an intentional program violation on clear and convincing evidence that demonstrates the person committed, and intended to commit, an intentional program violation.

a. The proposed and final hearing decisions shall be made in accordance with rule 441—7.16(17A) unless otherwise specified.

b. The appeals section shall notify the household member and the local office of the final decision within 90 days of the date the household member is notified in writing that the hearing has been scheduled. If the hearing was postponed pursuant to subrule 7.21(3), paragraph "b," the 90 days for notifying the household member of the final decision shall be extended for as many days as the hearing is postponed.

c. The department shall take no action to disqualify a person from receiving food assistance before receiving the final appeal decision finding that the person has committed an intentional program violation.

d. No further administrative appeal procedure shall exist after the final decision is issued. The determination of an intentional program violation shall not be reversed by a subsequent hearing decision. However, the person may appeal the case to the Iowa district court.

e. When a court decision reverses a determination of an intentional program violation, the appeals section shall notify the local office of the specifics of the court decision.

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