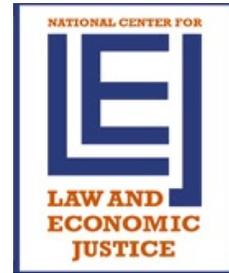


PRESS RELEASE

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COURT ENTERS PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION REQUIRING STATE TO IMPROVE TIMELY DECISIONS ON FOOD STAMP APPLICATIONS

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana has ordered state officials to improve their performance in timely deciding food stamp applications. Federal law requires the state to act on applications within 30 days, and within 7 days for very low income households eligible for expedited processing. The preliminary injunction came in a class action lawsuit on behalf of food stamp applicants challenging the state's failure to timely process food stamp applications.

Under the injunction on consent of the parties, the state agency must increase their rate of timely decisions on food stamp applications. Within 18 months the state must decide at least 90% of the food stamp applications within the federal time frames. The injunction requires the state agency to provide monitoring data to plaintiffs' counsel to demonstrate their performance. It also mandates that defendants provide adequate notice to food stamp applicants and a mechanism for certain members of the class to have individual problems resolved. Plaintiffs can return to the Court to enforce the injunction if defendants fail to comply with it.

The lawsuit, *Bell, et al. v. Murphy, et al.*, was filed in April 2009. In the Complaint, plaintiffs challenged Indiana's ongoing and persistent failure to timely process the applications, which has caused thousands of needy households to go without desperately needed assistance and to suffer hunger as a result. "The failure to timely process applications has been a terrible and costly problem for years. With the state's recent decision to re-assume many administrative functions from the private vendors and the Court's issuance of the consent preliminary injunction, we expect the state to turn its program around and comply with the law and the court order," said Shaw Friedman, one of the attorneys representing the plaintiffs. "The injunction benefits the thousands of Indiana families and individuals who are hungry and need food stamps in order to get by. The law recognizes their rights to have their applications timely processed, and now we have a means for ensuring that the state honors those rights," said Tedde Tasheff, of the National Center for Law and Economic Justice, co-counsel for plaintiffs.

Plaintiffs were represented by the National Center for Law and Economic Justice, Bryan Cave LLP and Friedman & Associates, P.C.

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