

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

AN ROA UTRIA
Claimant

TYSON FRESH MEATS INC
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-16548-AD-T
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 04/18/21
Claimant: Appellant (3)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Filing – Timely Appeal
Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Eligibility – Able and Available

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On July 28, 2021, An Roa Utria (claimant/appellant) filed an appeal from the July 14, 2021 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits from April 18 through May 29, 2021 based on a finding claimant was unavailable for work.

A telephone hearing was held on September 20, 2021. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. Claimant participated personally and with the assistance of a Spanish interpreter. Tyson Fresh Meats Inc. (employer/respondent) did not register a number for the hearing or participate.

Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

ISSUE(S):

- I. Is the appeal timely?
- II. Is the claimant able to and available for work?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

Claimant began working for employer in December 2015. Claimant was out of work due to the pandemic beginning around April 2020. She was unable to return to work in the week ending June 12, 2021. There was work available prior to that time but she was unable to return to work due to a lack of childcare. Claimant returned to work when she was able to secure childcare. Claimant filed a claim for benefits each week from the benefit week ending April 24, 2021 through the benefit week ending June 12, 2021.

The Unemployment Insurance Decision was mailed to claimant at the above address on July 14, 2021. That was claimant's correct address at that time. The decision states that it becomes final unless an appeal is postmarked or received by Iowa Workforce Development Appeals Section by

July 24, 2021. However, if the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, the appeal period is extended to the next working day. Claimant appealed the decision on July 28, 2021.

Claimant did receive the decision. After receiving the decision claimant contacted the Department for clarification. She was told she would receive a call back regarding her claim. Claimant waited approximately a week but did not receive a call back. Claimant then called back in and was told the decision was final and she could appeal.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal was timely. The July 14, 2021 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits from April 18 through May 29, 2021 based on a finding claimant was unavailable for work is MODIFIED in favor of respondent.

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part: “[u]nless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision.”

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(1)(a) provides:

1. Except as otherwise provided by statute or by division rule, any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document submitted to the division shall be considered received by and filed with the division:
 - (a) If transmitted via the United States Postal Service on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark, or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark on the envelope in which it is received; or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion.
 - (b)
 - (c) If transmitted by any means other than [United States Postal Service or the State Identification Data Exchange System (SIDES)], on the date it is received by the division.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2) provides:

2. The submission of any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document not within the specified statutory or regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the division that the delay in submission was due to division error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service.

There is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and the Administrative Law Judge has no authority to change the decision of representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). The ten-day period for appealing an initial determination concerning a claim for benefits has been described as jurisdictional. *Messina v. Iowa Dept. of Job Service*, 341 N.W.2d 52, 55 (Iowa 1983); *Beardslee v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979). The only basis for changing the ten-day period would be where notice to the appealing party was constitutionally invalid. *E.g. Beardslee v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979). The question in such cases becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. Iowa Employment Sec. Commission*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Employment Sec. Commission*, 212

N.W.2d 471 (Iowa 1973). The question of whether the Claimant has been denied a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal is also informed by rule 871-24.35(2) which states that "the submission of any ...appeal...not within the specified statutory or regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the division that the delay in submission was due to division error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service."

The administrative law judge finds the delay in appealing was due to Department error or misinformation. This is a good cause reason for delay and the administrative law judge therefore concludes the appeal is timely. Because the appeal is timely, the administrative law judge has jurisdiction to address the underlying issues.

Iowa Code section 96.4(3) provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Any reduction in work was caused by claimant being unavailable for work due to a lack of childcare. Benefits are therefore denied from the benefit week ending April 24, 2021 through the benefit week ending June 12, 2021.

While this decision denies regular, state benefits, the evidence indicates claimant may be eligible for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). Further information on PUA, including how to apply, is set forth below.

DECISION:

The administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal was timely. The July 14, 2021 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits from April 18 through May 29, 2021 based on a finding claimant was unavailable for work is MODIFIED in favor of respondent. Claimant was unavailable for work during the weeks filed and is therefore ineligible for benefits in those weeks.



Andrew B. Duffelmeyer
Administrative Law Judge

Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax (515) 478-3528

September 22, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

abd/ol

Note to Claimant:

If you disagree with this decision, you may file an appeal with the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. If this decision denies benefits, you may be responsible for paying back benefits already received.

Individuals who are disqualified from or are otherwise ineligible for **regular** unemployment insurance benefits but who are unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.