

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

MELODY TRENT
Claimant

WALMART INC
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-13352-AD-T
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION

OC: 09/27/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Filing – Timely Appeal
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35 – Filing

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On June 1, 2021, Melody Trent (claimant/appellant) filed an appeal from the November 12, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based on a finding she voluntarily quit work on September 30, 2020 for personal reasons.

A telephone hearing was held on August 10, 2021. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. Claimant participated personally. Walmart Inc. (employer/respondent) participated by Store Manager Erin Heim.

Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

ISSUE(S):

I. Is the appeal timely?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

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

The Unemployment Insurance Decision was mailed to claimant at the above address on November 12, 2020. 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 November 22, 2020. 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 June 1, 2021.

Claimant received the decision around the end of November 2020. However, she did not review the decision closely to see that she could appeal and the deadline for doing so. She appealed later after speaking with an IWD representative.

The administrative law judge notes claimant was allowed federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) effective October 4, 2020. This decision only impacts her eligibility for regular, state unemployment insurance benefits. It does not impact her eligibility for PUA.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal was untimely. The November 12, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based on a finding she voluntarily quit work on September 30, 2020 for personal reasons is therefore final and remains in force.

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.

(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.

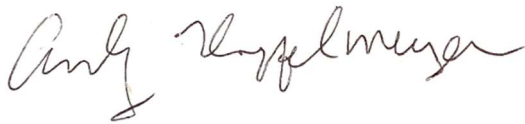
There is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and the Administrative Law Judge has no authority to change the decision of representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). 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 delay in appealing was due to claimant failing to closely review the decision to see she had the right to appeal and the deadline to do so. This is not a good cause reason for delay and the administrative law judge therefore concludes the appeal is not timely. Because the appeal is not timely, the decision has become final and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to change it.

DECISION:

The administrative law judge concludes the claimant’s appeal was untimely. The November 12, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based on a finding she voluntarily quit work on September 30, 2020 for personal reasons is therefore final and remains in force.



Andrew B. Duffelmeyer
Administrative Law Judge
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August 13, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

abd/kmj