

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

JILL L OMALLEY

Claimant

FOCUS SERVICES LLC

Employer

APPEAL 20A-UI-07126-AW-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 04/12/20

Claimant: Respondent (2)

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Eligibility – A&A – Able to, available for, work search
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(2)j – Benefit Eligibility Conditions – Leave of Absence
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10) – Availability Disqualifications – Leave of Absence
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment
PL 116-136, Sec. 2104 – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from the June 15, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that allowed benefits. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on August 4, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. Claimant participated. Employer participated through Carleano Grant, Hearing Representative, and Angie Greve-Pratt, Human Resources Manager. No exhibits were admitted. Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

ISSUES:

Whether claimant is able to and available for work.

Whether claimant was overpaid benefits.

Whether claimant is eligible for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant began her employment with Focus Services as a Customer Service and Sales Agent on June 18, 2019. On February 5, 2020, claimant went on maternity leave and expected to return to work on March 30, 2020. Prior to March 30, 2020, the parties agreed to extend claimant's maternity leave because claimant's childcare provider was closed due to Covid-19. Claimant filed an initial claim for unemployment insurance benefits effective April 12, 2020. On June 1, 2020, claimant returned to work full-time. Between April 12, 2020 and June 1, 2020, employer had work available for claimant. Other than the lack of childcare, claimant was able to and available for work from April 12, 2020 and June 1, 2020.

The administrative record reflects that claimant filed for and has received regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits in the gross amount of \$2,342.00 for the six-week period between April 12, 2020 and May 23, 2020. In addition to regular unemployment insurance benefits,

claimant also received Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) in the gross amount of \$3,600.00 for the six-week period between April 12, 2020 and May 23, 2020.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant was on a leave of absence and, thus, is not eligible for benefits.

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".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(2)j provides:

Benefit eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

j. Leave of absence. A leave of absence negotiated with the consent of both parties, employer and employee, is deemed a period of voluntary unemployment for the employee-individual, and the individual is considered ineligible for benefits for the period.

(1) If at the end of a period or term of negotiated leave of absence the employer fails to reemploy the employee-individual, the individual is considered laid off and eligible for benefits.

(2) If the employee-individual fails to return at the end of the leave of absence and subsequently becomes unemployed the individual is considered as having voluntarily quit and therefore is ineligible for benefits.

(3) The period or term of a leave of absence may be extended, but only if there is evidence that both parties have voluntarily agreed.

Between April 12, 2020 and June 1, 2020, claimant was on an approved leave of absence and, thus, is not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. Accordingly, benefits are denied effective April 12, 2020.

The next issue to be determined is whether claimant has been overpaid benefits. For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant was overpaid benefits, which must be repaid.

Iowa Code section 96.3.(7) states:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

Benefits were paid to which claimant was not entitled. The administrative law judge concludes that claimant has been overpaid UI in the gross amount of \$2,342.00 for the six-week period between April 12, 2020 and May 23, 2020. Claimant is required to repay those benefits.

PL 116-136, Sec. 2104 provides, in pertinent part:

(b) Provisions of Agreement

(1) Federal pandemic unemployment compensation.--Any agreement under this section shall provide that the State agency of the State will make payments of regular compensation to individuals in amounts and to the extent that they would be determined if the State law of the State were applied, with respect to any week for which the individual is (disregarding this section) otherwise entitled under the State law to receive regular compensation, as if such State law had been modified in a manner such that the amount of regular compensation (including dependents' allowances) payable for any week shall be equal to

(A) the amount determined under the State law (before the application of this paragraph), plus

(B) an additional amount of \$600 (in this section referred to as "Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation").

....

(f) Fraud and Overpayments

(2) Repayment.--In the case of individuals who have received amounts of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to which they were not entitled, the State shall require such individuals to repay the amounts of such Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to the State agency...

Because claimant is disqualified from receiving UI, claimant is also disqualified from receiving FPUC. The administrative law judge concludes that claimant has been overpaid FPUC in the gross amount of \$3,600.00 for the six-week period between April 12, 2020 and May 23, 2020. Claimant is required to repay those benefits.

NOTE TO CLAIMANT: This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits due to disqualifying separations, but who are currently 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 under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

DECISION:

The June 15, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is reversed. Claimant was on an approved leave of absence. Benefits are denied effective April 12, 2020. Claimant has been overpaid regular unemployment insurance benefits in the gross amount of \$2,342.00 for the six-week period between April 12, 2020 and May 23, 2020, which must be repaid. Claimant has been overpaid Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation in the gross amount of \$3,600.00 for the six-week period between April 12, 2020 and May 23, 2020, which must be repaid.



Adrienne C. Williamson
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August 11, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

acw/sam