

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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**ALEXIS V SENFT**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 20A-DUA-00771-B2T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 07/05/20**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

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Iowa Code § 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal  
PL 116-136, Sec. 2102 – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance  
20 CFR 625 – Federal Pandemic Assistance

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Claimant filed an appeal from the September 21, 2020, reference 01, decision that denied PUA benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on December 3, 2020. The claimant did participate. Claimant's exhibits A-C were admitted to the record. Claimant agreed to waive time and notice and have the issue of a timely appeal address at the hearing.

**ISSUES:**

Whether the appeal is timely?

Is the claimant eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A decision was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record on September 21, 2020. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by October 2, 2020. The appeal was not filed until October 16, 2020, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. Claimant stated she is chronically ill and does not pick up the mail herself. Claimant stated that her mother gets the mail, and that she wasn't sure when she felt good enough to open the mail. After opening the mail, it took a period of time before claimant felt that she would be well enough to address file the appeal in this matter. This all added up to claimant filing a late appeal.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part:

The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week

with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. . . . Unless 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.

The ten calendar days for appeal begin running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

Pursuant to rules Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.2(96)(1) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code Section 96.6-2, and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See, *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

**DECISION:**

The September 21, 2020, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.



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Blair A. Bennett  
Administrative Law Judge

December 10, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

bab/mh